

THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF EMOTIONAL CHILD NEGLECT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF LIRA CITY, WEST DIVISION

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DECLARATION

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I Adong Elizabeth Marylyn hereby declare that this dissertation was produced out of my own effort with the guidance of my supervisor and has never been submitted to any other institution for any award.

Signature.....

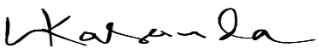
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APPROVAL

This research report has been supervised and approved by me and is therefore ready for submission to the School of Social Sciences in Uganda Christian University.

Signature 

Date.....27...../....April...../.....2026.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation report to the almighty God whose providence, protection and sustenance has made it possible for me to achieve the university education standards, my parents Mr. Julius Peter Ocari and Mrs. Lillian grace Ocari, for their unwavering support towards my education, my siblings whose encouragement, motivation and support cannot be under estimated and all my friends who wish me well in this academic struggles. Thank you for inspirational words towards my dissertation writing experience, may God bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the long term consequences of emotional child neglect on child development; a case of West Division, Lira City. It specifically focused on; establishing the psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development, and exploring the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City.

The study was carried out using a descriptive survey research design. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews and during data collection; both simple random and purposive sampling methods were used. A sample size of 80 respondents who are children that have benefited from child development initiatives from the two NGOs which are Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda and interviews with the key informants who are staff of these two NGOs was used in the study.

However, the research findings have shown that emotional neglect of children in Lira has adverse long-term consequences on child development, which are seen in terms of psychological difficulties such as depression, anxiety, poor self-image, unstable emotions, and poor relationship skills, in addition to behavioral issues such as aggression, isolation, antisocial behavior, and difficulty in social interactions. It can be concluded from these results that, without appropriate interventions, such negative consequences could extend into adulthood and affect their lives adversely.

Finally, the study recommended the need for early psychosocial support, strengthened parenting programs, school-based social and behavioral interventions, effective child protection monitoring and referral systems, and community awareness initiatives to address and prevent the long-term psychological and behavioral effects of emotional child neglect on children's development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research sought to analyze the long-term effects of emotional neglect of children on child development with respect to a case of West Division, Lira City. All the research background, research problem, research purpose, objectives, research questions, importance, significance, and conceptual framework are addressed in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, emotional child neglect is a major public health issue that impacts millions of youngsters, especially in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, India, and Japan (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2023). Neglected children in America face the potential for lifetime difficulties with depression, anxiety, social skills, and other mood disorders (Mehta et al., 2023). Children who have been neglected emotionally show a greater tendency towards mood symptoms, aggression, and difficulties controlling emotions in the United Kingdom and Germany (VanMeter et al., 2021). Similar findings indicate emotional neglect to be related to problems with social and emotional development and difficulty forming attachments in Asia including Japan and India (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). Studies indicate that underreporting results from the covert nature of emotional neglect leading to delayed prevention efforts in all these global locations (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2023). Therefore, in recent years, prevention programs in such countries prioritize early detection, parental education, and psychological support to address the adverse developmental outcomes associated with emotional neglect (Mehta et al., 2023).

Moreover, the combination of genetic and environmental factors leads to the further intensification of the impact of emotional neglect on children in all of the US, Europe, and some Asian countries (Warrier et al., 2021). The findings from the research conducted among the children from Germany and France reveal that neglected children tend to experience social isolation, depression, and anxiety in their teen years (VanMeter et al., 2021). In addition, while in Japan emotional neglect affects the level of loneliness experienced by children and their inability to have successful relations with peers, in India, emotional neglect causes delayed social

and cognitive development (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023; Ho & Schermer, 2024). Low rates of detection can be explained by emotional neglect's covert character and invisibility in the caregiving process. Finally, there is evidence showing that the impact of emotional neglect such as impaired coping mechanisms, poor psychosocial adjustment, and the likelihood of developing psychological disorders is observed in all of these nations (Mehta et al., 2023).

In Africa, especially sub-Saharan countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, where it has a great influence on child development (Bywaters et al., 2022). Evidence indicated that neglected children in these countries had poor development concerning their cognitive skills and emotional aspects, aggression, and vulnerability to mental disorders (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2023). Moreover, studies demonstrated that children from disadvantaged households in South Africa suffer from emotional neglect, and it has a detrimental impact on their social and moral development (Mehta et al., 2023). Research in Nigeria indicated that neglected children tend to perform poorly at school and show weak stress mechanisms, which is a result of several years of neglecting children (Warrier et al., 2021). In addition, long-lasting emotional neglect of children in Ghana was associated with anti-social behavior, difficulty managing emotions, and social problems (VanMeter et al., 2021). It can be seen that emotional neglect becomes more complicated in sub-Saharan African countries due to various socio-economic issues.

Geographically, in East African countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania, emotional neglect affects the development of children in urban and peri-urban areas (Debowska et al., 2024). Children that are emotionally neglected in Rwanda and Tanzania suffer more from anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal compared to other children that receive regular attention (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2023). Emotional neglect that results in underdeveloped cognition and social skills among children arises due to factors such as urbanization, family instability, and migration (Mehta et al., 2023). Emotionally neglected children in Kenya suffer chronic stress and lack adequate attachment skills, causing them to perform poorly academically and socially (Ho & Schermer, 2024). Despite attempts at addressing this problem through measures such as educating caregivers and creating community awareness in these countries, much remains to be done about its high prevalence (VanMeter et al., 2021).

Emotional neglect among children is becoming increasingly common in Uganda, especially in urban areas like Lira City due to numerous social and economic factors (Sserwanja et al., 2021).

Within Lira City, West Division, neglected children have been shown to lack the ability for emotional regulation, social skills, and academic achievements (Walakira et al., 2025). The prolonged neglect results in increased stress response mechanisms and higher risks of developing different disorders and conditions related to stress (Nanteza et al., 2024). It has been observed that children in Lira who are neglected suffer from social withdrawal, lack of self-confidence, and behavioral problems, which become persistent throughout their lives (Mbabazi et al., 2024). Given limited access to psychosocial aid in such instances, organizations like Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda play significant roles.

1.2 Problem statement

Neglect with emotional impact continues to pose a serious problem in relation to child development within the West Division, Lira City (Atim et al., 2023). It has been established that more than 40% of those neglected show depression and emotional issues, and close to 29% of young children suffer from stunting, with aggression and delinquency becoming more widespread as an indicator of poor social and moral development (Mbabazi et al., 2024; World Health Organization, 2022). In general terms, it has been found that about 35% of children across Uganda have either been abused or neglected, leading to various developmental problems (Sserwanja et al., 2021). Such trends demonstrate that neglect continues to undermine the developmental health of children (WHO, 2022).

While attempts have been made by the Government of Uganda and development partners such as UNICEF to develop child protection interventions, neglect-induced developmental concerns persist (Walakira et al., 2025). It has been established that current interventions have not addressed the ongoing psychological and behavioral issues related to neglect with a significant degree of success (UNICEF, 2025; WHO, 2024). Many vulnerable children thus continue to develop issues related to emotional problems, behavior, and general development.

In an ideal world, kids ought to be raised in nurturing and safeguarded settings in which caregivers offer sufficient psychological nurturing, direction, and attention, thereby aiding their cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical growth (Walakira et al., 2025). Nonetheless, the prevalence of emotional neglect in communities like West Division, Lira City indicates that there is some disparity between the existing scenario and what is expected of child-rearing and

protection services (Atim et al., 2023). Thus, this research was deemed necessary to analyze the lasting impacts of emotional neglect on child development in West Division, Lira City.

1.3 General objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to examine the long-term consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in West Division, Lira City through a descriptive research design.

1.4 Specific objectives of the study

- i. To establish the psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City.
- ii. To explore the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What are the psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City?
- ii. What are the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City?

1.6 Scope of the study

This study was done based on three scopes namely content, geographical and time which are outlined further below.

1.6.1 Content scope

The study concentrated specifically on determining the impact that the psychological effect of emotional child neglect had on children's growth, and also the behavioral impact of emotional child neglect on children's growth in Lira City.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The research was conducted in West Division, Lira Town Council in the Northern part of Uganda. West Division was selected because it has many vulnerable children, and the social, economic, and protective problems affecting child development in an urban setting can be identified here. The area provides a good setting for examining how the mistreatment of a child affects his/her psychological, social, emotional, and moral development.

1.6.3 Time scope

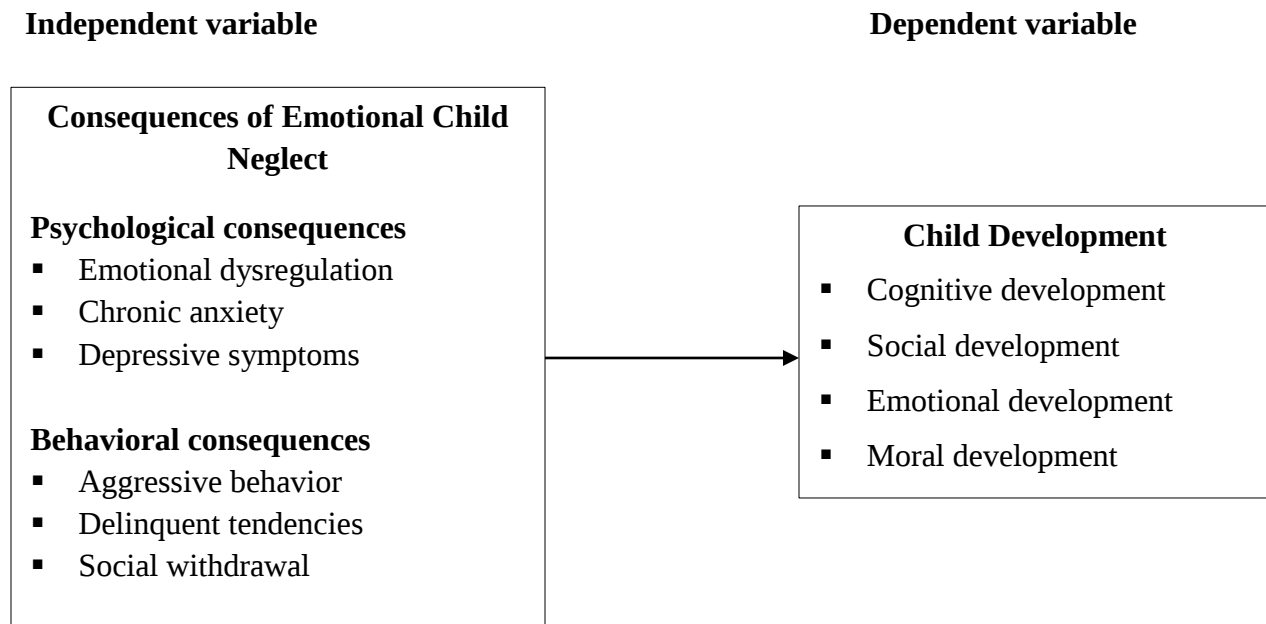
The data collection process for this research was carried out for two months, starting from February to March 2026. The examination of documents and articles was primarily focused on a five-year period ranging from 2021 to 2025, which allowed determining the prevalence of poor experiences among children and evaluating the role of carers, social workers, and child welfare agencies in promoting the psychological, social, and moral development of children during the past five years in West Division, Lira City.

1.7 Justification of the study

It was imperative that this study be conducted because there was an urgent need to address the problem of child neglect in West Division, Lira City. Neglect affects the moral, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of children in a significant way. Although various efforts have been put in place to address the problem of neglect, little is still known about the actual impact of neglect and the factors that inhibit children from achieving their optimal development. Through the exploration of the types and extent of neglect, and its implications on child development, this study sought to fill the knowledge gap and provide recommendations for strengthening the child welfare framework within the community.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: *Adopted from Costa (2024) and modified by the researcher (2024)*

According to the conceptual framework for the West Division, Lira City study, long-term effects of emotional child neglect shown by psychological (emotional dysregulation, chronic anxiety, and depressive symptoms), and behavioral (aggressive behavior, delinquent tendencies, and social withdrawal) directly affect child development outcomes including cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development. The framework posits that prolonged neglect causes psychological instability, bad behaviors, and poor physical health, which in turn limit learning ability, interpersonal relationships, emotional stability, and moral reasoning, so impeding general child development.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study would enable managers and staff in West Division, Lira City, to better design and implement care, protection, and child development programs by helping them understand how long-term child neglect influences children's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development.

These findings would be useful to the authorities, especially to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, among others, for formulating sound policies and programs that will enable comprehensive development of these vulnerable children through the provision of factual information on neglect.

In addition, the study will provide insights on areas that require attention in the provision of child support services and make constructive recommendations towards improving care institutions' practices, early childhood development programs, and psychosocial interventions.

Lastly, the research will be able to contribute to the existing knowledge on the topic and provide a base for other scholars who may decide to conduct research in this field of children's welfare, their early development, and the effects of neglect on Ugandan institutionalized children.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The current chapter highlights the literature or theories that were developed by previous scholars concerning or similar to the current topic of research, which focuses on the impact of neglect on the development of children. The literature review has been done according to the objectives of the current research.

2.1 The psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

In this regard, Lippard and Nemeroff (2023) focused on the tragic clinical implications of child neglect and how it directly contributes to the development of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and depressive conditions among children. On the same note, Mehta et al. (2023) conducted research aimed at elucidating the consequences of childhood maltreatment based on the biological, psychological, and social impacts, and they concluded that childhood neglect makes individuals more vulnerable to psychological problems. For instance, neglected children become susceptible to internalizing problems and psychological issues such as emotional dysregulation. Consequently, neglect is associated with mental instability among children, resulting in various psychological disorders later in life (Warrier et al., 2021). Furthermore, VanMeter et al. (2021) reported that adults who experience neglect during their childhood tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety, depression, and psychopathology. Overall, there is a clear connection between childhood neglect and psychological distress.

Ho and Schermer (2024) examined the correlation between neglectful parenting and childhood loneliness, highlighting how neglected children display high levels of social isolation and attachment problems, thus affecting their emotional development. Similarly, Lippard and Nemeroff (2023) point out that emotional dysregulation caused by neglect can be seen in mood irregularities, lower resilience, and difficulty in coping with stressors. In addition, Debowska et al. (2024) conducted a nationwide survey in Uganda and discovered that neglected children demonstrated high levels of depression, anxiety, and withdrawal behavior. Therefore, the psychological impact of neglect is not limited to any particular setting, indicating its universal

presence in the form of emotional issues caused by poor caregiving worldwide (World Health Organization, 2022).

In his study, Wilson (2024) examined the relationship between child neglect and aggression, finding that victims of neglect usually exhibit their frustration in externalizing ways by becoming angry and violent. In the same vein, Lee et al. (2026) showed that extended neglect makes children more susceptible to being delinquent, antisocial, and withdrawn because of their unfulfilled emotional requirements. From the above findings, it is evident that psychological impacts of neglect do not only affect the child internally but also externally, including socially and behaviorally. Therefore, they significantly contribute to child development (Kirsch et al., 2025). Furthermore, Moreira et al. (2024) pointed out that neglect at critical stages of development leads to poor emotional regulation, further aggravating the maladaptive behavior pattern of the child.

According to Khoury et al. (2025), maternal neglect in childhood was associated with elevated levels of cortisol hormone and maladaptive brain development in the limbic region of infants, thereby indicating biological factors behind the adverse psychological impacts of childhood neglect. Likewise, Warrier et al. (2021) pointed out that childhood neglect can aggravate the risk of mental illness, including depression and anxiety disorders, in individuals who are already genetically vulnerable to such diseases. In addition, Lippard and Nemeroff (2023) pointed out that neglected children tend to respond more intensely to stress, lack emotion regulation skills, and have poor coping mechanisms, resulting in compromised psychological resilience.

In another study conducted by Sserwanja et al. (2021), the researchers found increased anxiety, depressive symptoms, and emotional disturbances amongst children in Uganda amid the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This indicated an escalation in the vulnerability of institutionalized and vulnerable children. In a similar study carried out by Debowska et al. (2024), it was found that neglected children in Uganda displayed psychological weaknesses such as poor self-worth, stress, and emotional isolation that impeded their socialization and cognitive growth. Furthermore, it was reported by McCoy and Keen (2022) that psychological effects of neglect can interfere with learning, retention, and interactions with others, thus affecting child development.

2.2 The behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

For instance, Lee et al. (2026) examined the effect of neglect on aggressive and criminal behavior and found out that neglected children tend to exhibit greater levels of externalized behaviors such as physical aggression and verbal aggression than their non-neglected peers. On the same point, Wilson (2024) suggests that neglected children exhibit considerable tendencies towards delinquency, theft, and other rule breaking activities especially in adolescence. Lippard and Nemeroff (2023) state that neglect affects a child's capacity to regulate his/her emotions and impulses and, therefore, leads to behavioral dyscontrol. At the same time, Debowska et al. (2024) conducted a national-level study of Ugandan adolescents and found that neglected children exhibited a tendency to engage in aggressive encounters with peers and adults. All these studies prove the link between child neglect and psychological and behavioral problems.

Further, according to Moreira et al. (2024), the patterns of neglect in intergenerations indicate that children who have undergone neglect by their parents tend to imitate antisocial behavior, which shows that the process of neglect affects behavioral modeling and learning. This is consistent with findings by Kirsch et al. (2025), who conducted studies on the use of multisystemic therapy among children undergoing neglect with externalizing behaviors. As a result, they found that children undergoing neglect with such behaviors as aggressiveness and defiance can significantly decrease such behaviors through interventions. Additionally, according to Mehta et al. (2023), neglect impacts the development of prosocial behaviors because neglect prevents children from learning to share, cooperate, and empathize.

Ho and Schermer (2024) concentrated their research efforts on the effects of parental neglect in relation to the development of social withdrawal and antisocial behavior, finding that children who experience emotional neglect tend to react to the lack of support in an aggressive manner, along with avoiding social situations. VanMeter et al. (2021) demonstrated that neglected children tend to develop conduct disorders and oppositional defiant behaviors that can continue throughout adulthood. Finally, Chavda and Nisarga (2023) note that children from single-parent homes and those who suffer from neglect tend to have more issues such as disobedience, truancy, and conflicts with peers, which stems from poor and insufficient supervision by adults.

According to Palmer et al. (2024), the form of neglect studied by child protection agencies was found to include behavioral signs of aggression, antisocial behavior, and rebelliousness, which were the earliest detectable signs prompting intervention. In the same manner, McCoy and Keen (2022) noted that behavioral problems among neglected children like hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and rule violations are often driven by emotional dysregulation and undeveloped needs. Lippard and Nemeroff (2023) added that neglected children are more vulnerable to peer pressure, making them prone to participating in deviant acts. Collectively, these research findings suggest that the behavioral outcomes of neglect are important cues of psychosocial maladaptation and should be significant considerations in child protection practices.

Furthermore, Sserwanja et al. (2021) explored the impacts of enhanced child neglect amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda and established an emergence of increased cases of behavior problems such as irritability, peer and caregiver aggression, and school delinquencies among others. Also, Debowska et al. (2024) reported that there was a likelihood of neglected children in Uganda engaging in antisocial behavior and being defiant and engaging in interpersonal confrontations as a result of context and environment. Moreover, Bywaters et al. (2022) indicated that poverty-induced neglect further complicates issues of behavioral problems because children who lack proper supervision and stimulation engage in behavioral problems like aggression and antisocial behavior. These evidences show that behavioral outcomes arising from neglect are not only a result of family dynamics but environmental issues too and therefore require immediate intervention programs aimed at addressing behavioral problems.

2.3 Literature gap

In spite of all the attention drawn to this topic, several aspects of neglected children's development that remain unclear need to be investigated further. To start with, most studies emphasize the importance of establishing certain common characteristics of children who suffer from neglect; however, the effects of different types of neglect – be it emotional or supervisory – on their various stages of development are underresearched. Moreover, the majority of current investigations are either cross-sectional or carried out in wealthy countries, which means that the problem of the lack of longitudinal or culturally sensitive research requires attention. Besides, there appears to be insufficient research into the ways neglected children develop biologically, socially, and environmentally, as well as into the interaction between these processes. It is also

necessary to consider what steps could be taken to help these children by developing culturally sensitive intervention programs for them.

2.4 Conclusion on the themes

It is clear from the literature review that emotional child neglect has many impacts on the development process of the child, especially concerning psychological development and behavior. It has been reported that emotionally neglected children develop problems such as psychological disturbances like anxiety, depression, inability to control emotions, loneliness, and poor self-esteem, to name a few. Similarly, emotional neglect also results in behavioral problems, such as aggression, isolation from society, delinquency, defiance, and impulsiveness, in emotionally neglected children (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2023; Debowska et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2026). These behavioral and psychological problems lead to dysfunctional relationships, ineffective emotion control, improper peer and guardian interactions, as well as poor academic results in school settings. As can be seen, these are likely to accumulate over time and create challenges for future cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development. From the above evidence, it seems that more emotional child neglect is bound to cause adverse behavioral and psychological results in children.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research design, topic under investigation, information sources, target population and sampling procedures, variables and their indicators, level of measurement, data collection process, data collection tools, data quality, data processing, analysis, and ethical considerations have been elaborated upon in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

A research design can be viewed as a plan, structure, and strategy of research to guide the selection of the tools to address the research problem (Kothari & Crag, 2014). Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that research design deals with the detailing of procedures that are adopted to carry out the research study. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research designs are used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present, and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2005). The study fitted within the provisions of descriptive survey research design because the researcher collected data and reported the way things were without manipulating any variables.

The study used a mixed methods approach involving the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in studying the effects of ACEs on children staying at Naguru Reception Centre in Uganda. For the quantitative method, questionnaires will be administered to children who have been staying at the centre for more than five years to examine the effects that they have suffered as well as their development. For the qualitative approach, key informants such as the heads of the center, caregivers, and social workers will be interviewed to determine the effects of the ACEs and what can be done about them. Child welfare and educational records will also be examined.

3.2 Area of study

This study was carried out in West Division, Lira City located in the Northern Region of Uganda. West Division was chosen because it has a great number of vulnerable children and the major social, economic, and protection issues impacting kid development in this urban environment. The place offers a good backdrop for studying how child abuse affects a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and moral growth over time. In here, the study specifically focused on two NGOs which focus on dealing with children that have faced issues of child neglect in Lira city and these NGOs are; Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda

3.3 Study population and sample size

According to Hensen, M.C. (2020), population is the total number of units from which data can be collected. According to statistics from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda HRM (2026), there is a total of 100 children aged 12 to 18 years that have benefited from child development initiatives from these two NGOs and these were included in the study as the target population. The study population also included key informants who are top management of these two NGOs, social workers and the Probation and Social Welfare Officer at Lira District totaling to 5 key informants. Furthermore, to determine the sample size, the researcher used the formula of Slovin's (1960) which include;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

“n” is sample size, “N” is population, “e” is error (0.05) or level of confidence 95%

“N” (population) = 100 children aged 12 to 18 years that have benefited from child development initiatives from these two NGOs

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + 100(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + 100(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + (0.25)}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1.25}$$

$$n = 80$$

Therefore, the sample size of the study was 80 children aged 12 to 18 years that have benefited from child development initiatives from these two NGOs.

3.4 Sampling methods

Simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures were utilized during the conduct of this research. For the respondents between ages 12 to 18 who have been beneficiaries of child development programs from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, simple random sampling method was adopted for respondent selection for this study. In conducting simple random sampling, a list of all possible respondents was compiled from the record books of the two NGOs. Subsequently, respondents were selected randomly from the total number of possible respondents, such that every respondent had an equal probability of being chosen as a participant in the study. Simple random sampling was particularly suitable for this group of respondents since it ensures the absence of any form of selection bias and increases the generalizability of results.

In selecting the key informants, purposive sampling method was used where the researcher identified staff members from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda who were knowledgeable about issues concerning the development of children. Key informants sampled for this study included the organization's top management, social workers, and the Probation and Social Welfare Officer at Lira District, who have specialized knowledge in the area of child care and development. The choice of purposive sampling was appropriate because the researcher is able to get detailed and deep information from the sampled key informants, who have first-hand knowledge of the conditions faced by neglected children.

3.5 Sources of data

Primary Data: Primary data is vital in every aspect of research since it provides factual data about the findings of experimentation or observation carried out by an individual. In regard to the field, primary data was obtained through personal interviewing and questionnaire completion

among select respondents for opinions on the subject. The researcher collected the primary data personally through the use of questionnaires and interviews.

Secondary Data: Secondary data involves the manipulation and collection of data by individuals other than the one involved in research. In research that is based on history, secondary data sources include scholarly books and articles. This particular source provides means for obtaining secondary data from pre-written literatures such as electronic books, journals, articles, and periodicals.

3.6 Data collection instruments

3.6.1 Questionnaires

There were closed questions with a number of options available that respondents had to pick the one that best suited their perception concerning their experiences and developmental outcomes (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2005). Respondents' responses were restricted to what was found on the questionnaire to avoid other variables from influencing the findings (Sarantakos, 2005). In gathering information about the impact of child neglect on growth and development, a questionnaire was formulated based on the variables identified. The target respondents are children between 12-18 years of age who have been beneficiaries of child development programs run by Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda. A Likert Scale will be used which will range from (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) not sure, (2) disagree, to (1) strongly disagree. A Likert Scale will be used because it gives many choices and helps in analyzing the data easily. These questionnaires will be administered to 80 children after receiving permission from them through the two NGOs that meet the specified criteria.

3.6.2 Interview guide

The rationale behind developing an interview guide is to systematically gather qualitative data from key informants, while retaining the flexibility to ask deeper questions. An interview guide enables consistency across all interviews, providing opportunities to dig deeper into certain aspects and obtain explanations when required (Ragin, 2009). Key informants were top managers, social workers at Purewish Foundation Uganda, and Joy For Children Uganda, as well as the Probation and Social Welfare Officer at Lira District, because they have a vast

understanding of the experiences of these children and services offered to them. The interview guide was developed using semi-structured questions, which revolved around the consequences of neglecting children, coping strategies adopted by the children, and their developmental outcomes, in line with the study's theoretical framework.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

Upon being introduced through a letter of recommendation, the researcher sought interviews and questionnaire instructions by approaching some organizations such as Lira City, Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda to perform his research among the various respondents.

3.8 Validity and reliability of the research instruments

3.8.1 Validity

Validity was conducted to measure whether the questions are valid to capture the required information (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020). Researchers conducted an evaluation of the questions with the aim of measuring whether the questions would capture the required information. Researchers conducted Content Validity Index (CVI) to determine whether the research tool is valid. The following is the calculation of the validity of the research tools.

Content validity Index (CVI) = Relevant items by all judges as suitable

Total number of items judged.

The CVI exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Duckett, 2021), it suggested that the questionnaire was effective for data collection.

3.8.2 Reliability

The concept of reliability within research refers to consistency, stability, and the degree of confidence that a study's findings can be replicated or reproduced. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Mellinger & Hanson, 2020). A preliminary study was conducted using 5 respondents, and the analysis of the reliability of the test was done using the SPSS software program. The computation of the coefficient was based

on the equation below. The reliability coefficient was higher than the recommended value of .70 (Duckett, 2021), meaning that the questionnaire was fit for data collection.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Analysis of quantitative data

The statistical analysis for quantitative data was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 software and data was presented using frequency and percentages for descriptive statistics as well as mean and standard deviation for each of the variables in the study. Strongly agree and agree responses were categorized together as agree while strongly disagree and disagree were categorized as disagree. Pearson's correlation statistics was used to find out the relationship between the variables at 99% and 95% confidence limits. Positive correlation means there is a direct relationship between the two variables while negative correlation implies an inverse relationship between the two variables. The level of influence that the independent variables had on the dependent variable was determined using regression analysis using ANOVA statistics of beta and t-value among others (Jopling, 2019).

3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative data collected through key informant interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Information from top management, social workers of Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, and the Probation and Social Welfare Officer at Lira District was organized into major themes related to the effects of child neglect, coping mechanisms, and developmental outcomes. These themes reflected categories such as physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as interventions and support systems provided by the two NGOs. The findings were presented in narrative form, reflecting the perspectives of the interviewees. Additionally, qualitative findings were triangulated with quantitative results to assess the convergence or divergence between the children's self-reported experiences and the staff's observations.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethics have been strictly maintained in the process of conducting the current study since the storage of data will be done in a secure manner, and it will only be used for research purposes, in

accordance with the law on privacy (Chervenak & McCullough, 2021). Informed consent was sought from all the participants involved in the study by providing a clear explanation about its objective, methods, and risks, as well as having them sign a consent form indicating voluntary participation in the process (Skinner, 2020). Anonymity was guaranteed by de-identifying or coding any of the participant's information so that there will be no disclosure of individuals' identities in the research findings (Pietilä et al., 2020). Data confidentiality was assured by restricting access to data pertaining to the research project to those members only who were part of the research team, along with employing data that had been aggregated, in case there was any leak. Plagiarism guidelines for ethical behavior in research were strictly adhered to.

3.11 Study Methodological Constraints

Questionnaire Guide Limitations: The questionnaire guide was limited by unanswered questions and therefore the limitations. The interview guide was limited by the inability to respond to questions posed in them. They were limiting in that they needed sufficient time in order to answer them.

Research material availability: It was difficult for the researcher to conduct the study because he did not have enough study materials for the study. The problem was sorted out in that the researcher searched for other study material online.

Non-cooperative respondents: Those that refused to cooperate and give necessary information posed problems in carrying out the study. This was handled in that the researcher showed them an introduction letter which indicated that all the information given would be confidential.

Time: The research was limited in that the researcher did not have sufficient time in conducting the research due to exam period, part-time job amongst others. He handled this issue by increasing the allocated time for research and trying as much as possible to balance his life with studies.

Finances: The study was limited in that the research lacked sufficient resources and funds in case of additional academic fees. This was sorted out through soft loans from friends and family

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

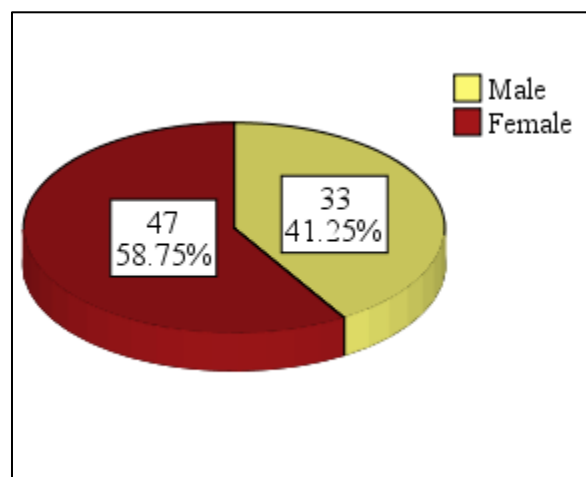
The results of the analysis conducted to investigate the particular objectives of the research and in relation to the literature review will be presented and analyzed in this chapter. The data collection method used for carrying out the research involved administering questionnaires to 80 children aged between 12 and 18 years, who have been beneficiaries of child development projects implemented by Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, and conducting interviews with the key informants – the top management officials of the selected NGOs.

4.1 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

4.1.1 Gender of the respondents

The figure below summarizes the gender of the respondents who are children aged 12 to 18 years that have benefited from child development initiatives and the data in the figure was interpreted below.

Figure 2: Gender



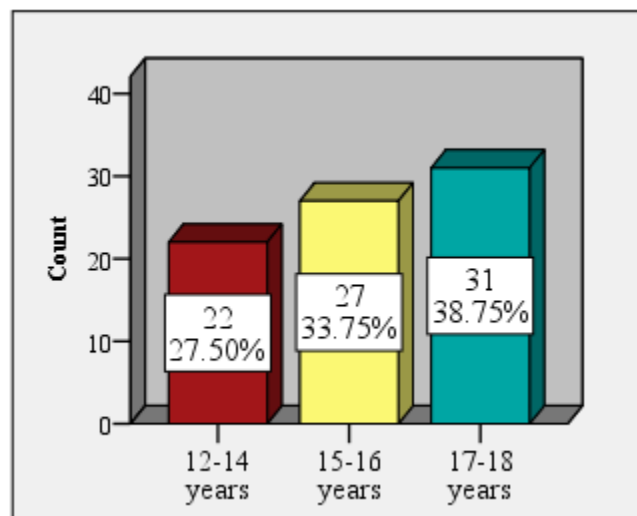
Source: *Primary data*

It was found that the percentage of females is greater at 58.7% than that of males, which was 41.3%. It can be interpreted from the results that there were more girls involved in the study rather than boys. It could mean that the girl population is more dominant in the NGOs under consideration or is more approachable when collecting data. Alternatively, it could mean that girls are more active in child support initiatives or are more affected by the lack of emotional support.

4.1.2 Age bracket of the respondents

Figure 1 below shows the age range of the respondents that comprise children aged between 12 and 18 years, who have been beneficiaries of the development programs for children. The information in the above figure has been analyzed below.

Figure 3: Age bracket



Source: *Primary data*

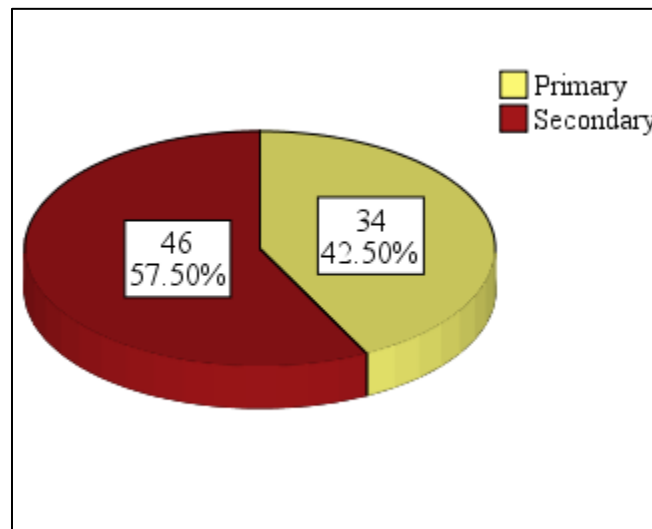
From the findings, it can be observed that the highest percentage of participants belonged to the 17-18 age category, accounting for 38.7% of the total number, while those belonging to the 15-16 age group constituted 33.8%. Lastly, the lowest percentage of participants consisted of those in the age category of 12-14 years, representing 27.5% of the total. The predominance of

adolescent participants in their later teenage years implies that they could effectively contemplate the effects of emotional neglect in the future.

4.1.3 Level of education of the respondents

As depicted in the figure that follows, the educational status of the respondents who are 12-18 years old children who have been part of the child development programs was analyzed.

Figure 4: Level of education



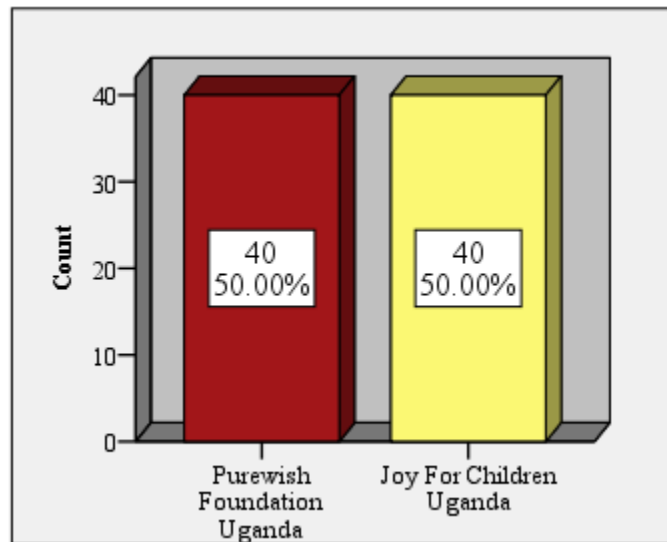
Source: *Primary data*

As per the results, the respondents who have secondary education were 57.5%, whereas those having primary education were 42.5%. From the above results, it is clear that most of the children have completed their secondary education levels, thus, showing high educational exposure to the participants. Nevertheless, there is still a significant number of children at the primary level of education; this can be because of emotional neglect influencing education.

4.1.4 NGOs respondents have been benefiting from

The figure below shows the NGOs from which the children aged between 12 and 18 years old who have received assistance through child development projects have been receiving aid, while the information shown in the figure was analyzed below.

Figure 5: NGO you have been benefiting from



Source: *Primary data*

According to the results, the respondents were evenly split between Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda with 50.0 percent each. This shows an even participation of the respondents from the two NGOs in the research. This even participation contributes to the validity of the research because it will be possible to compare the experiences of the children equally in both organizations.

4.2 Psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

Table 1 shows the answers from the respondents on the psychological effects of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City using a Likert Scale: SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; NS= Not Sure; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree.

Table 1: Psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

Statements	Extent of agreement and disagreement				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
I often feel sad or depressed without a clear reason.	42 52.5%	24 30.0%	00	10 12.5%	4 5.0%
I sometimes feel anxious or worried about small things.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	6 7.5%	11 13.7%	5 6.3%
I have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork or learning activities.	19 23.7%	38 47.5%	7 8.8%	15 18.7%	1 1.3%
I feel lonely even when I am around others.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	5 6.3%	20 25.0%	00
I frequently feel worthless or unimportant.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	10 12.5%	12 15.0%	00
I find it hard to trust adults or caregivers.	24 30.0%	40 50.0%	00	16 20.0%	00
I have nightmares or bad dreams related to past experiences.	20 25.0%	42 52.5%	00	18 22.5%	00
I feel afraid of being abandoned or ignored.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	00	5 6.3%	1 1.3%
I often feel nervous or tense in social situations.	19 23.8%	53 66.3%	00	7 8.8%	1 1.3%
I struggle to control my emotions when upset.	21 26.3%	54 67.5%	00	4 5.0%	1 1.3%
I feel easily stressed when faced with challenges.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	00	4 5.0%	2 2.6%
I experience low self-esteem and lack confidence in myself.	20 25.0%	58 72.5%	00	2 2.5%	00
I often compare myself to others and feel inferior.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00

I feel emotionally hurt when caregivers do not pay attention to me.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	00	5 6.3%	20 25.0%
I sometimes blame myself for things that go wrong.	14 17.5%	55 68.7%	3 3.8%	8 10.0%	00

Source: *Primary data*

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics on the psychological effects of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City. The research findings in Table 1 show that 82.5% of the respondents indicated that they often feel sad or depressed for no apparent reason. In contrast, 17.5% of the respondents disagreed with the question statement, showing that emotional child neglect results in constant feelings of sadness and depression in children, meaning that emotional child neglect affects psychological stability negatively.

Further, the study found that 72.5% of the respondents agreed that they occasionally feel worried or anxious over trivial issues, with 20% disagreeing and 7.5% being unsure of whether they felt such emotions due to emotional child neglect. Emotional child neglect can cause children to develop high anxiety levels, meaning that the neglected children may develop excessive worrying over nothing.

Additionally, the research indicated that 71.2% of the respondents agreed that they had difficulties concentrating on studying, with 20% disagreeing and 8.8% being unsure. As shown by the findings above, emotional child neglect negatively impacts cognitive skills, and the affected children perform poorly academically since they cannot focus on studies.

In addition, the results indicated that 68.8% of the respondents agreed that they feel lonely even when there are others around them, 25.0% disagreed, while 6.3% were unsure of what they experienced. The results show that due to emotional neglect, people get feelings of being alone because children affected by emotional neglect feel emotionally alone among those around them.

Furthermore, it was revealed that 72.5% of the respondents agreed that they often felt worthless or meaningless, while 15.0% disagreed, and 12.5% were not sure about what they experienced. It means that emotional neglect reduces self-worth.

Results obtained also indicate that 80.0% of the respondents agreed that they find it hard to trust adults or their caregivers, 20.0% disagreed. Due to emotional neglect, the relationship of trust gets broken because children have problems establishing attachment and relationships.

In addition, results indicated that 77.5% of the respondents agreed that they had bad dreams about what happened in the past. The results show that emotional neglect leads people to undergo mental torture or traumas.

The third key finding of the study shows that 92.6% of the respondents are fearful of being abandoned or neglected by other people, while 7.6% of them disagreed. From this finding, we can conclude that most of the emotionally neglected children are scared of abandonment.

In addition, the third key finding of the study shows that 90.1% of the respondents had feelings of nervousness or anxiety when associating with other people, while 10.1% disagreed. Emotional neglect can affect social anxiety and this explains why there are people with social anxiety disorders in society.

The findings indicated that 93.8% of the respondents agreed that they had difficulties managing their emotions when agitated, while 6.3% disagreed. This means that there is difficulty in emotion regulation as a result of emotional neglect and that is why the children might find it difficult to regulate their emotions and reactions to any situation.

Moreover, the findings revealed that 92.6% of the respondents agreed that they found themselves stressed easily when faced with situations that made them feel challenged, while 7.4% disagreed. In other words, emotional neglect can affect resilience in terms of coping with situations.

Further findings from the analysis indicated that 97.5% of the respondents agreed that they have low self-esteem and lack confidence in themselves. In fact, 2.5% of the respondents disagreed with this statement, implying that emotional neglect has a great impact on the development of one's self-esteem.

Similarly, the findings indicated that 95.1% of the respondents agreed that they compared themselves with others and felt inadequate. Only 4.9% disagreed with this statement, meaning that emotional neglect encourages inferiority complex among children.

In addition, it was also noted that 68.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they feel psychologically affected whenever their caregivers do not show interest in them, whereas 31.3% disagreed with the same statement. The above results indicate that lack of attention from the caregiver is highly related to the emotional wellbeing of children. This suggests that children have high levels of sensitivity to neglectful behaviors.

Lastly, the study indicated that 86.2% of the respondents agreed with the assertion that they blame themselves whenever something goes wrong, whereas 10.0% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, and 3.8% had no clue regarding whether to agree or disagree. It can be concluded that emotional neglect triggers self-blaming attitudes in children, suggesting that children blame themselves when exposed to certain behaviors.

From the above findings, it is quite clear that emotional neglect of children has great impacts on psychological development of children in Lira City. From the results obtained, it can be observed that emotional neglect contributes significantly to depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues, emotional instability, and so forth. It is important to note that emotional neglect of children is highly detrimental to psychological wellbeing of children.

4.2.1 Psychological effects of emotional child neglect

From the interviews conducted with the key informants who are the staff members from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, they were asked for their views on the psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City and their responses were as follows;

The main informants, who are employees of Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, revealed that emotional abuse affects the psychological development of the children growing up in Lira City. Without any particular reasons, they found that the majority of the children suffer from depression, anxiety, and emotional disturbance. The lack of emotional affection, acceptance, and emotional security from the side of the parents contributes to the poor perception and low self-respect of such children. As a result, they feel neglected, isolated, and unworthy, which affects their emotional state as a whole and their ability to cope with everyday challenges.

Moreover, emotional neglect may affect the capability of the children to establish trustful bonds with other people. In particular, a lot of the children were viewed as distant, scared, and unable to express their thoughts, even when talking to social workers and caregivers. It was emphasized that such children have problems with emotional regulation, leading to frequent changes of mood, high sensitivity, and inability to cope with stress situations. In this way, the mentioned issues hinder the holistic development of the children because they influence their interpersonal interaction, educational processes, and psychological well-being.

Moreover, it was indicated by the interviewees that long-term emotional neglect can lead to even more severe psychological problems, such as depression, chronic anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Children might have nightmares, abandonment fears, and constant anxiety that continue despite being enrolled in helpful interventions, according to the informants. In addition, it was pointed out by the interviewees that without addressing these psychological implications promptly, they might carry on into their teenage years and adulthood, negatively impacting their personal and professional lives and their overall well-being. Hence, the importance of providing psychological assistance and ongoing care for the children in preventing the psychological repercussions of emotional child neglect is evident. Among the major interviewees were those who mentioned that,

“.....Many of these children feel unloved and unimportant, and this deeply affects their confidence and emotional stability.....” **Key informant 1**

“.....Emotional neglect makes children fearful and withdrawn, and it takes a long time for them to trust anyone again, even when they are in a safe environment.....” **Key informant 2**

4.3 Behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

Table 2 summarizes respondents' responses on the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 2: Behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

Statements	Extent of agreement and disagreement				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
I often act aggressively toward peers or siblings.	20 25.0%	48 60.0%	00	2 2.5%	10 12.5%
I avoid interacting with other children or adults.	13 16.2%	60 75.0%	00	4 5.0%	3 3.8%
I sometimes engage in risky behaviors without thinking of consequences.	22 27.5%	50 62.5%	00	2 2.5%	6 7.5%
I find it hard to follow rules at school or home.	14 17.5%	55 68.7%	00	3 3.8%	8 10.0%
I have difficulty controlling my temper.	11 13.8%	49 61.2%	00	20 25.0%	00
I withdraw from activities that involve teamwork or cooperation.	19 23.8%	57 71.3%	00	4 5.0%	00
I sometimes lie or deceive to get attention or approval.	5 6.3%	60 75.0%	00	15 18.7%	00
I avoid sharing my feelings or problems with others.	19 23.7%	38 47.5%	00	15 18.7%	8 10.0%
I sometimes bully or intimidate others.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	00	5 6.3%	20 25.0%
I often feel restless or fidgety in class or at home.	23 28.8%	35 43.7%	00	10 12.5%	12 15.0%
I engage in behaviors that are harmful to myself or others.	23 28.8%	51 63.8%	00	5 6.3%	1 1.3%
I struggle to make friends or maintain social relationships.	21 26.3%	34 42.5%	00	5 6.3%	20 25.0%
I sometimes act out to express frustration or sadness.	26 32.5%	34 42.5%	00	20 25.0%	00
I find it difficult to follow instructions from adults.	25 31.3%	37 46.2%	00	8 10.0%	10 12.5%
I sometimes isolate myself from social events or gatherings.	18 22.5%	50 62.5%	00	4 5.0%	8 10.0%

Source: *Primary data*

Table 2 represents the descriptive statistics on the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City. According to the study above, 85.0% of the

respondents agreed that they often act aggressively toward peers or siblings, whereas 15.0% disagreed with the statement. It means that emotional neglect in children is highly correlated with aggression, and therefore, the probability of emotionally neglected children showing aggression is high as they vent their frustrations towards others.

The results showed that 91.2% of the participants strongly believed that they tend not to interact with other children and even adults, while 8.8% of them refuted this claim. This shows that emotional neglect results in withdrawal, meaning that such children find it hard to engage in socialization.

Moreover, the research found that 90.0% of the respondents admitted that they were prone to engaging in dangerous actions without contemplating their implications, while 10.0% did not agree. It is clear from this that emotional neglect is connected to impulsive and risky behavior, meaning that children may not be properly guided and instructed.

Additionally, it was revealed that 86.2% of the respondents agreed that they found it difficult adhering to school and/or home regulations, while 13.8% did not agree. This clearly shows that emotional neglect impacts discipline negatively, meaning that children may become defiant because of being inadequately supervised.

Besides, the research revealed that 75.0% of the respondents agreed that they had trouble keeping their temper under control, while 25.0% did not. This indicates that emotional neglect influences anger management adversely, which means that children may have problems dealing with their emotions and resort to aggression in response.

It was also observed in the results of the research that 95.1% of the participants felt that they avoided taking part in group activities which include cooperation. Conversely, only 5.0% did not feel that way. From this result, one can conclude that emotional neglect makes individuals unwilling to participate in cooperative activities as they lack trust or confidence.

It was observed in the results of the research that 81.3% of the participants agreed that they at times lied to gain attention and approval of others, while only 18.7% of them disagreed. The conclusion drawn from this is that the emotional neglect of a child may force them to behave in such a way to gain attention.

From the results, it was also evident that 71.2% of the participants felt that they did not share their emotions with other people, while 28.7% of them disagreed.

Also, the results showed that 68.8% of the respondents agreed that sometimes they bully or threaten other people, while 31.3% disagreed. Therefore, emotional neglect causes antisocial behavior like bullying; hence, children may externalize the feelings by doing harmful things to other people.

In addition, the results showed that 72.5% of the respondents agreed that sometimes they get restless or cannot sit still at school or at home. Hence, emotional neglect causes problems such as restlessness and inability to focus on what one needs to do.

Further, the findings show that 92.6% of the respondents agreed that sometimes they engage in self-destructive behavior. The respondents also said that at times they act in ways that can harm themselves or others. The percentage who disagreed was 7.6%. Hence, there is a relationship between emotional neglect and harmful behaviors.

Finally, the findings show that 68.8% of the respondents agreed that sometimes they experience difficulties in making friends or maintaining social relationships. Hence, emotional neglect impacts socialization among children.

Similarly, from the findings of the survey conducted, it was found that 75.0% of the respondents agreed that they tend to act out of frustration or sadness at times while 25.0% disagreed with the statement. This shows that neglect is associated with behaviors that can be expressed as outburst in response to emotional neglect that is being experienced by the individual.

Furthermore, according to the findings of the research, 77.5% of the respondents agreed that they have difficulties in following orders from adults, while 22.5% did not agree with the statement. This reveals that the individual has a problem responding to authority figures as an effect of emotional neglect.

Finally, it was revealed that 85.0% of the respondents agreed that they sometimes avoid attending social gatherings or activities, while 15.0% did not agree with the statement. This shows that emotional neglect causes social isolation among children.

In general, based on the findings, it is evident that emotional child neglect has adverse effects on child development in Lira City due to the considerable level of agreement in relation to most of the statements. In particular, it is clear that emotional child neglect causes aggression, social withdrawal, impulsiveness, delinquency, and relationship formation problems. These findings mean that there are many behavioral problems related to emotional child neglect and affect children's behavioral development adversely.

4.3.1 Behavioral effects of emotional child neglect

From the interviews held with the key informants who are the staff members from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda, the opinions they had regarding the behavior associated with the emotional child neglect in affecting child development in Lira City included:

Key informants who work with Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda have indicated that in Lira City emotional child neglect affects child development negatively. They stated that many emotionally neglected children behave in an aggressive and disruptive manner; they are disobedient and rebellious, fight with their peers, and defy their elders. In their view, such behavior may emanate from hurt and irritation felt by children emotionally but unable to deal with due to lack of proper emotional guidance and support. Such problems limit children's ability to excel both in school and at home.

The respondents also said that emotional neglect makes children who are affected withdraw from society and have bad relationships with other people. Many youngsters were said to be distancing themselves from others, shying away from group events, and exhibiting little social involvement. Staff members underlined how challenging it is for these youngsters to build and sustain connections since they find it difficult to trust others. As a means of compensating for the absence of care and attention from parents, some kids were also observed to display attention-seeking actions including stealing, lying, or acting out.

Furthermore, the participants noted that emotional neglect might cause over time dangerous and maladaptive behaviors. Some kids showed a lack of decision-making ability, impulsive behavior, and disregard of rules. The employees also pointed out that these behaviors might continue and become more severe antisocial behaviors that could impair long-term development and integration into society without suitable intervention. They emphasized how important it is for

youngsters to unlearn bad habits and acquire good social and behavioral skills with constant instruction, therapy, and encouraging surroundings. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....Some children become very aggressive and difficult to manage because they are expressing the pain they have experienced.....” **Key informant 3**

“.....Others withdraw completely and avoid people, while some act out just to get attention because they feel ignored.....” **Key informant 4**

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the analysis of results with respect to the literature. This chapter also summarizes all results stated in chapter four in terms of questions raised in the research, concludes, recommends, and identifies future research areas.

5.1 Summary of findings

Conclusions based on the findings from both surveys and key informant interviews clearly show that emotional child neglect within Lira city has negative psychological implications on the growth of children. Most children who have been victims of neglect exhibit feelings of constant sadness, worry, self-loathing, and emotional instability; thus, they find it difficult to focus and control their emotions. In addition, emotional neglect can cause trust and bonding problems among children because of fear of being deserted by those close to them and hence shying away from interacting with others. Key informants from the Purewish Foundation of Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda indicated that neglect for extended periods leads to the development of various psychological disorders such as traumatic reactions, insomnia, and constant worrying among others.

Thirdly, from both the findings obtained through the survey and those gathered through key informant interviews, it is evident that emotional neglect has serious behavioral implications on the development of children in Lira City. Majority of the children had issues with aggressiveness, disobedience, and difficulties in regulating their temper; in addition, they were involved in acts that endangered their safety or health, breaking rules, and attention-seeking acts like telling lies. Furthermore, emotional neglect caused withdrawal, social isolation, problems with peers, and difficulties with cooperation, indicating social impairments and lack of trust. Moreover, key informants at Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda mentioned that these behaviors resulted from emotional trauma that could be exacerbated with time to become maladaptive or antisocial behaviors in children.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 Psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

The research findings found out that emotional child overlook in Lira town is strongly associated with chronic disappointment, anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional instability amongst youngsters. The findings relate with the literature by using Lippard and Nemeroff (2023), who discovered that kids experiencing forget about often develop temper issues, depression, and heightened vulnerability to psychological pressure due to lack of emotional guide. Similarly, Mehta et al. (2023) argued that forget disrupts emotional law and self-worth, main to chronic anxiety and problem coping with everyday stressors. however, the findings slightly diverge from Chavda and Nisarga (2023), who recommended that single parenting on my own does now not continually bring about continual mental disturbances, implying that contextual and environmental elements can also modulate the results of forget about on emotional results.

The results found that forgetting causes impairments in social interaction, attachment, and consideration, causing social avoidance and fear of rejection amongst the victims. These findings agree with Ho and Schermer (2024), who stated that the ignored children often find themselves experiencing loneliness and inability to develop a comfortable relationship, underscoring the importance of caregivers in developing social-emotional connections. Bywaters et al. (2022) have been instrumental in providing the connection between forgetfulness and social isolation, mentioning environmental stresses such as poverty as contributors. Contrarily, Wilson (2024) noted that some of the ignored children do not demonstrate social avoidance, stating that protection and resiliency could shield against neglect, whereas the prevalence of social problems observed in Lira town is relatively high.

The study results indicated that when emotional forget is for a long time, it causes additional mental fitness issues such as PTSD, nightmares, and anxiety, which might have effects on academic achievement, social interactions, and overall life consequences. The study results are consistent with Debowska et al. (2024), who found out that kid forget increases the chances of having PTSD, emotional dysregulation, and psychosocial issues among the Ugandan children. On the similar lines, Warrier et al. (2021) also mention the gene–environment interactions contributing to the effects of early forget on cognitive health. However, there have been studies

that claim that such negative consequences can be reduced if intervention measures are taken immediately, like Likhari et al. (2022).

5.2.2 Behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development

The study findings found out that emotional child forget in Lira city is strongly related to aggressive behaviors, disobedience, trouble controlling mood, and engagement in unstable or dangerous activities. The findings relate with the literature through Lee et al. (2026), who determined that kids uncovered to forget are much more likely to exhibit aggression, delinquency, and externalizing behaviors over the years. In addition, Moreira et al. (2024) stated that childhood emotional forget can occur in behavioral troubles such as lying, manipulation, and appearing out, as ignored youngsters try to advantage attention or cope with unmet emotional desires. In contrast, a few research endorse that not all omitted children broaden overt behavioral problems, highlighting man or woman resilience and environmental buffering factors (Palmer et al., 2024), which may additionally provide an explanation for the range in behavioral consequences located in Lira city.

From the results, it was determined that emotional forgetfulness leads to social isolation, withdrawal, negative peer relationships, and difficulty working together or obeying instructions. This result is consistent with McCoy & Kean (2022) when they pointed out that neglected children often find it hard to develop warm attachment relations and display social incompetence, leading to withdrawal and non-participation in teamwork activities. According to Global Health Organization (2022), neglect causes difficulties for children in trusting their caregivers and peers; thus, leading to issues in socialization and relationship formation. On the other hand, Altunpınar & Koçtürk (2024) suggest that children who receive compensatory services from school-based or community programs can still establish positive social relations despite the neglect, unlike the prevailing social issues in this study.

According to the research findings, the consequences of emotional neglect in terms of behavior can become entrenched into maladaptive or even criminal behaviors that may endanger their future outcomes socially and developmentally. The findings are supported by Khoury et al. (2025), who noted that neglect during early stages impacts neurodevelopmental pathways and stress responses, thereby leading to behavioral disorders and other social problems. Additionally,

Sserwanja et al. (2021) identified the link between forgetting in Ugandan children and the increased risk of antisocial behaviors and non-compliance with social expectations. On the contrary, according to Walakira et al. (2025), dependent care settings and psychosocial support among orphans and vulnerable children may protect against these behavioral threats.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, the effects of being emotionally ignored as a child in Lira town have huge and complex psychological implications for child development. Emotionally neglected children usually have feelings of despair, stress, low self-worth, unstable emotions, and an inability to regulate their emotions, which affect their concentration, coping skills, and cognitive development as a whole. The lack of emotional connections because of neglect causes social isolation, fear of abandonment, and relationship difficulties. Without immediate intervention in the psychosocial aspects, the psychological problems can lead to severe mental disorders, such as trauma reactions and constant fear, possibly leading to lower academic achievements and socialization skills.

Ultimately, the research shows that emotional baby neglect results in significant behavioral consequences among those infants who experience this problem. The neglected children tend to exhibit aggressive behavior, disobedient nature, impulsive characteristics, and difficulty in controlling their emotions; they also act irresponsibly and may get involved in risky, violent, or rebellious activities. Furthermore, social withdrawal, isolation, unfavorable interpersonal relations with peers, difficulties working in groups, and compliance problems also occurred frequently in these cases, indicating low levels of social skills and poor consider abilities. According to key informants, such behavioral tendencies often emerge from unaddressed emotional distress and may become maladaptive and delinquent behavioral traits. Thus, this research highlights the critical necessity for timely, continuous, and effective intervention strategies aimed at promoting appropriate behavioral development and positive social adaptation among emotionally neglected infants.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings of this research, it is therefore recommended that the following issues be addressed as far as the effects of emotional neglect on children's development are concerned; West Division, Lira City.

5.4.1 Recommendations for practice

Firstly, the study recommends the importance of conducting early psychosocial interventions in the Lira metropolis, which could help young people facing emotional neglect, including counseling, therapy, and emotional support initiatives, allowing them to manage their emotions, build self-worth, and deal with their mental issues.

Also, the study recommends the importance of having parent education programs, which enhance awareness of the implications of emotional neglect and foster effective parenting strategies and interest in their children's well-being.

Additionally, the study recommends the importance of implementing behavioral control and social skills initiatives in schools and community networks, which would help foster cooperative behavior and healthy relationships between unnoticed young people.

In addition to that, the study recommends the necessity of establishing referral and monitoring systems in the infant protection services to identify neglected children early on and refer them to relevant social and intellectual health services.

Lastly, the research indicates the significance of developing educational initiatives within communities to inform the people about the psychological consequences of emotional neglect, thus ensuring children's protection from neglect in the future.

5.4.2 Social work policy recommendations

The study suggests the need for the government and other pertinent players to introduce and implement policies geared towards improving services in mental and psychosocial areas that would ensure all the children at risk receive the necessary professional assistance.

Additionally, there is a need for the introduction of policies that require all caregivers and parents to go through emotional, attachment, and developmental programs that would enable them to provide proper care for children.

Moreover, policies should be introduced to help ensure the integration of social work programs in schools to deal with the emotional and social well-being of children.

Finally, there should be the promotion of community sensitization campaigns aimed at making members aware of emotional neglect to prevent such problems from recurring.

5.4.3 Social practice gaps

The research also found out that there is inadequacy in the delivery of early psychosocial intervention services in relation to child emotional neglect in West Division, Lira Town because many affected children do not have access to counseling services, emotional support therapies, and other related services. Moreover, there is also a gap in parent and caregiver awareness as most parents and caregivers have poor understanding of emotional nurturing.

Another area of gap in the prevention of child neglect is the insufficient school and community supports to nurture positive social behaviors in children.

Finally, inadequate coordination of child protective services was noted especially on issues of monitoring and referrals. Furthermore, lack of community awareness regarding the negative psychological impacts of child emotional neglect contributes to its occurrence and prevalence.

5.5 Areas for further research

Future studies should focus on discovering the lengthy-term instructional effects of kids who enjoy emotional forget about in Lira city, along with their educational performance, school attendance, and development to better ranges of schooling.

Similarly further research ought to investigate the effect of emotional neglect on person intellectual health and social functioning, analyzing how early forget about impacts relationships, employment, and mental properly-being later in life.

Finally, further research should focus on assessing the effectiveness of intervention packages aimed toward mitigating the effects of emotional forget about, which includes counseling, parental training, and network-primarily based aid tasks, to pick out best practices for promoting healthful child improvement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

For children aged 12-18 years that have benefited from child development initiatives from Purewish Foundation Uganda and Joy For Children Uganda

Dear sir/madam

My name is Adong Elizabeth Marylyn; I am a student of SWASA at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on “the long term consequences of emotional child neglect on child development; a case of West Division, Lira City.” You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly dependent on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A. Bio Data

Please tick the most appropriate answer

1. What is your gender?

a) Male ☐

b) Female ☐

2. What is your age?

a) 12-14 years ☐

b) 15-16 years ☐

c) 17-18 years ☐

3. What is your level of education?

a) Primary ☐

b) Secondary ☐

c) Tertiary ☐

d) No education ☐

4. Which NGO have you been benefiting from among these two?

a) Purewish Foundation Uganda

b) Joy For Children Uganda

Section B: Psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City

Rate your degree of agreement on the psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

s. no	Statements	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	I often feel sad or depressed without a clear reason.					
2	I sometimes feel anxious or worried about small things.					
3	I have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork or learning activities.					
4	I feel lonely even when I am around others.					
5	I frequently feel worthless or unimportant.					
6	I find it hard to trust adults or caregivers.					
7	I have nightmares or bad dreams related to past experiences.					
8	I feel afraid of being abandoned or ignored.					
9	I often feel nervous or tense in social situations.					
10	I struggle to control my emotions when upset.					
11	I feel easily stressed when faced with challenges.					
12	I experience low self-esteem and lack confidence in myself.					
13	I often compare myself to others and feel inferior.					
14	I feel emotionally hurt when caregivers do not pay attention to me.					
15	I sometimes blame myself for things that go wrong.					

Suggest any other psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City other than the ones mentioned above?

.....

.....

Section C: Behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City

Rate your degree of agreement on the behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

s. no	Statements	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	I often act aggressively toward peers or siblings.					
2	I avoid interacting with other children or adults.					
3	I sometimes engage in risky behaviors without thinking of consequences.					
4	I find it hard to follow rules at school or home.					
5	I have difficulty controlling my temper.					
6	I withdraw from activities that involve teamwork or cooperation.					
7	I sometimes lie or deceive to get attention or approval.					
8	I avoid sharing my feelings or problems with others.					
9	I sometimes bully or intimidate others.					
10	I often feel restless or fidgety in class or at home.					
11	I engage in behaviors that are harmful to myself or others.					
12	I struggle to make friends or maintain social relationships.					
13	I sometimes act out to express frustration or sadness.					
14	I find it difficult to follow instructions from adults.					
15	I sometimes isolate myself from social events or gatherings.					

Suggest any other behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City other than the ones mentioned above?

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

For the key informants who are top management of the two selected NGOs

Dear respondent,

My name is Adong Elizabeth Marylyn; I am a student of SWASA at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on “the long term consequences of emotional child neglect on child development; a case of West Division, Lira City.” You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly dependent on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A: Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What position do you hold in tis NGO?
3. How long have you worked with this NGO?

Section B: Psychological consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City

4. In your experience, what psychological challenges do children face as a result of emotional neglect?
5. How does emotional neglect affect children’s emotional well-being and mental health over time?
6. What signs of low self-esteem or emotional distress have you observed among neglected children?
7. How does emotional neglect affect children’s ability to cope with stress or difficult situations?
8. What psychological support services are provided to children who experience emotional neglect?

Section C: Behavioral consequences of emotional child neglect on child development in Lira City

9. What common behavioral changes have you observed in children who experience emotional neglect?
10. How does emotional neglect influence children's social interactions and conduct at home or school?
11. What forms of aggressive or disruptive behavior are common among neglected children?
12. How does emotional neglect affect children's ability to follow rules and guidance from adults?
13. What interventions have been effective in improving the behavior of emotionally neglected children?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix

Appendix 3: university letter

 **UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

9th March, 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you **ADONG Elizabeth Marylyn** Registration number **M23B15/003**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Administration. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above-mentioned award.

Topic: "The long-term consequences of emotional child neglect on child development. A Case of West Division Lira City"

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Doreen Kukugiza
Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes
Tel: 0773395349
Email: dkukugiza@ucu.ac.ug

 09 MAR 2026

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

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