

**URBAN POPULATION GROWTH AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES:
RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN KIRA MUNICIPALITY, WAKISO DISTRICT**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
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Declaration

I, Namuli Margaret Precious, hereby declare that this dissertation titled: "Urban Population Growth and Access to Social Services: Residents' Perceptions in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District" is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university or institution of higher learning for the award of any academic award.

All sources of information used in this study have been duly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with academic standards.

Signature 

Date 15th April, 2026

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Approval

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

Supervisor: Mr. Kabanda Martin

Signature: 

Date: 14th/04/2026

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for providing me with strength, wisdom, and guidance throughout my academic journey.

I dedicate this work to my parents and my family for providing me with unwavering support, love, and encouragement. Your sacrifices and trust in me have been my foundation for success.

I dedicate this research work to all communities facing rapid urbanization challenges, hoping that it will contribute to increased access to social services and better living conditions.

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Abstract

This study examined residents' perceptions of urban population growth on access to social, economic, and infrastructural services in Kira Municipality, Uganda. Guided by Urban Growth Theory, the study employed a qualitative phenomenological design with 23 participants selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Data was collected through using individual semi-structured interviews lasting 5-15 minutes, audio recordings in English and analyzed thematically.

Findings revealed severe overcrowding in healthcare and education, a two-tier system where quality correlates with ability to pay, and a “middle income trap” excluding those too wealthy for free services but too poor for private care. Economic benefits of growth were unevenly distributed while infrastructure failures like poor roads, unreliable water, and electricity outages had life threatening consequences like patient deaths from ambulance delays. The majority of participants perceived service access had worsened though business owners reported improved livelihoods.

The study concludes that population growth has outpaced service provision, creating a crisis of access requiring urgent policy intervention.

Keywords: Urban population growth, social services, residents' perceptions, Kira Municipality, Uganda, urbanization, service accessibility, infrastructure.

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Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and definition of key terms. The chapter provides the foundation for understanding the research problem and the approach taken to investigate it.

1.1 Background of the Study

Urbanization is one of the most significant demographic trends shaping the twenty-first century, particularly within developing countries. According to the United Nations (2023), over 56% of the world's population currently resides in urban areas, a proportion projected to reach 68% by 2050. In sub-Saharan Africa, urbanization is occurring at a record-breaking speed, frequently without corresponding improvements in infrastructure and service delivery (UN-Habitat, 2022). This rapid urban expansion has generated complex governance challenges, particularly regarding equitable access to essential social services like education, healthcare, water, and sanitation. The increasing disparity that exists between population growth and service provision has, therefore, been especially felt in Uganda, where urban centers have grown significantly over the years (World Bank, 2019).

Urbanization levels in Uganda have been influenced by a number of factors, for instance; urbanization is attributed to a high rate of rural-urban migration, natural population growth, and administrative changes that have seen areas previously classified as rural transformed into urban centers (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2024). The 2014 Uganda Population and Housing Census showed that the percentage of the population in urban areas was 18%. This has been rising from the 12% recorded in 2002. This trend is bound to continue. The World Bank (2020) noted that the urban population was projected to grow to 21 million by the year 2040. The proportion of the national population in urban areas was projected to be 40%.

The increased population, therefore, has resulted in an increased demand for social amenities such as education, healthcare, and housing, among others, hence congestion, particularly in urban centers (Nkurunziza, 2020).

Kira Municipality, in Wakiso District, is an example of all these processes and changes, particularly those relating to urbanization in Uganda. Kira has traditionally been perceived as a small urban settlement, but today it has changed to become one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Uganda. According to UBOS (2024), its population has increased from 317,157 in 2014 to an estimated 459,827 as of 2024, indicating an annual growth rate of 6.68%. The increased rate of growth has put immense pressure on various social amenities such as education, healthcare, water, sanitation, and physical infrastructure, which have not increased at such an alarming rate (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.). For instance, Namugongo Division, with over 189,500 inhabitants, has only one public healthcare facility, which recently upgraded from Health Centre II to III, yet it is overextended. Again, although Kira Municipality has an estimated 46 secondary schools, only 70.9% are easily accessible, yet most of them are owned by private individuals, hence limited accessibility, particularly for poor households.

This is an indication of the national problems that have developed as a result of rapid urbanization, which is beyond the administrative capabilities of the local authorities to provide basic amenities for the growing populations. According to the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development (MLHUD) study (2019), although the urban population greatly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Uganda, social infrastructure is still critically underdeveloped. This is because the urban population is growing, while the facilities are operating far beyond their capacity; schools are overcrowded, while teaching materials are inadequate (World Bank, 2019). This is a major impediment to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11, which is focused on ensuring inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities (United Nations, 2023).

From perspective of social work, social services have been seen as an important factor related to social well-being and equality. Social services, such as healthcare and education, are important in promoting social inclusion, the development of human capital, and empowerment (Midgley, 2014). However, in the face of rapid

urbanization, the lack of access to social services is likely to affect vulnerable groups, especially women, children, the disabled, and the urban poor (UN-Habitat, 2022). In Kira Municipality, the disparities are obvious, especially in the uneven allocation of social facilities, schools, healthcare centers, and water sources. The urban poor, especially in densely populated informal settlements, are likely to face numerous challenges in accessing social services, hence contributing to social exclusion and urban poverty.

Despite the numerous studies done on urbanization and service delivery in Uganda, little attention has been given to the perceptions of the people on the effects of urbanization on the availability and accessibility of social services. The perceptions of the people are important because they mirror the actual views and experiences of the people, and they are instrumental in the formulation of policies and urban planning (Nkurunziza, 2020). The main aim of the study is, therefore, to examine the perceptions of the people in Kira Municipality on the effects of urbanization on the availability and accessibility of social, economic, and infrastructural services, especially the challenges and coping mechanisms they have developed.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rapid expansion of population in urban areas has also presented a problem in terms of accessibility and availability of social services, especially in new urban centers such as Kira. The population in urban areas has grown rapidly in Uganda, and new urban centers such as Kira are no exception, with the population growing rapidly over the last decade, a phenomenon that has surpassed even the average growth rate for both the population and urban areas (UBOS, 2024). The rapid expansion has put pressure on social services such as education, healthcare, water, and sanitation, which have not kept pace with population growth.

This service delivery gap can be seen in various aspects of life. Namugongo Division has a large and growing population and only one public health facility serving the population. This facility recently upgraded from Health Centre II to III but is highly overwhelmed with a long waiting period and a lack of drugs (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.). Moreover, while the municipality has a number of secondary schools, only a

few are accessible and are privately owned (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.). This growing gap between the population and the service delivery facilities has resulted in overcrowded schools and long queues at the health facilities.

However, while these challenges are noted in the municipality of Kira, little research has been conducted on how the people of Kira perceive the effects of the rapid population growth on the service delivery in the municipality. This is a critical gap in the existing literature on the effects of rapid population growth in Uganda and the world at large, as the perceptions of the people of Kira can determine the health-seeking behavior and the level of satisfaction with the governance of the municipality (World Bank, 2020).

The rapid population growth in the Kira Municipality has outgrown the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural facilities in the region, and the perceptions of the people of Kira on the effects of the rapid population growth on the service delivery in the region are unknown.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To evaluate the impact of urban population growth on access to social services in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- I. To evaluate the perception of the residents on access to social services in Kira municipality.
- II. To evaluate the perception of the residents on access to economic services in Kira Municipality.
- III. To evaluate the perception of the residents on access to infrastructural services in Kira Municipality.

1.4 Research Questions

- I. What are the perceptions of the residents on access to social services in Kira municipality?
- II. What are the perceptions of the residents on access to economic services in Kira municipality?
- III. What are the perceptions of the residents on access to infrastructural services in Kira municipality?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The aim and objectives of the current study are to explore and analyze the perceptions of the residents on the implications and impacts of urban population growth on the accessibility and availability of social, economic, and infrastructural services in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District, Uganda. The main goal is to find out the extent to which urbanization impacts the provision, affordability, and quality of social, economic, and infrastructural services from the perspective and point of view of the end-users and consumers of these services. The main aim is to provide insights and guidelines for policymakers, social workers, and urban planners on the strategies and ways through which the provision and accessibility of social services, economic services, and infrastructural services can be improved and enhanced in Kira Municipality and other urban areas in Uganda.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine how urban population growth affects residents' accessibility to social, economic, and infrastructural services in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District, Uganda.

Geographically, the study is focused on the three divisions found in Kira Municipality, which are Namugongo, Kira, and Bweyogerere.

In terms of themes, the study aims to explore residents' perceptions and understandings on the following themes:

Social services such as education, health services, and sanitation.

Economic services, such as employment and income generation.

Infrastructural services, such as roads, water, and housing.

In terms of research approach, this study seeks to use a qualitative approach, which will enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of residents' perceptions and attitudes regarding accessibility to these types of services in the face of rapid urbanization.

In terms of time, this study seeks to cover a period from 2014 to 2024, a period during which there has been rapid population growth in the municipality, as revealed by UBOS (2024).

The study period, therefore, covers a period of rapid population growth, and its relevance lies in its ability to enable a deeper exploration and analysis of residents' perceptions and attitudes regarding accessibility to these types of services in the face of rapid urbanization and population growth.

1.7 Justification of the study

This is because the growth in urban populations is still a major challenge to sustainable development in Uganda, especially in rapidly growing urban centers such as Kira. The growth in urban populations is characterized by an increased need for social, economic, and infrastructural services, which often outgrows the available resources and planning capacity of local governments (World Bank, 2020). The need to undertake this study is also justified on the following grounds:

It is important to generate evidence on the perceptions of the local population regarding the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services in the face of rapid urbanization growth. Although urbanization and the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services have been extensively studied in Uganda, the perceptions of the local population have remained largely unexplored, yet they are important in understanding the urbanization process and the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services (Nkurunziza, 2020). The perceptions of the local population are important because they play a significant role in the utilization and participation in the development and provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services in the local communities.

The case of Kira Municipality is an important and unique case that provides an opportunity to undertake an important and relevant study on the perceptions of the local population regarding the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services in the face of rapid urbanization growth. Kira Municipality is rapidly growing and is among the largest urban centers in Uganda. Kira Municipality was previously a peri-urban center, but its growth and expansion have led to its elevation to the status of a municipality (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.; UBOS, 2024). The Municipality is characterized by inadequate health facilities, road infrastructure, and access to clean and potable water (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.; UBOS, 2024).

This study is important because, through its focus on Kira Municipality, the local and wider Ugandan communities, as well as the wider global academic and development communities, will benefit from the insights generated and the contributions made to the literature on urbanization and the provision of social, economic, and infrastructural services.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study has various dimensions of significance:

Policy makers

This study would be significant in providing evidence-based information to local government authorities, especially the Kira Municipal Council and the Wakiso District Local Government, in the formulation of policies that are sensitive to the actual needs of the people of Kira town. This would be helpful in the formulation of urban planning strategies and the allocation of resources as the population continues to grow (World Bank, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2022). This research may also be significant in the formulation of national policies concerning the management of intermediate cities and the formation of municipalities.

Researchers and Academics

This research would add to the existing body of knowledge concerning urbanization and the delivery of social services in developing countries, with special attention in Uganda. Past research has focused more on the quantitative measurement of urbanization, statistics, and expansion rather than the feelings of urban dwellers concerning urbanization. Therefore, this research would bridge the critical gap in the existing literature concerning the perceptions of urbanization. This would help in the better understanding of the concept of urbanization and its effects on the daily lives of urban dwellers in accessing basic needs. The research would be helpful in providing students and scholars in the fields of social work, social administration, urban studies, and development studies with reliable information.

Practically

This study will be important to community development practitioners, social workers, and non-governmental organizations operating in urban areas, as it will enable them to know areas that need urgent attention for service delivery. Understanding the experiences of the people will enable stakeholders to develop appropriate interventions geared towards promoting social equity and development in Kira Municipality and other growing towns in Uganda.

Methodological contribution

The use of a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the perceptions of the people would be a significant contribution to the methodological literature, as this approach would help future researchers to appreciate the value of including the perceptual and experiential dimensions of urban service delivery.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Urban Growth Theory, which provides an explanation of the effects of urban population growth on the spatial, economic, and social structures of cities.

Origins and Development: The theory is based on the works of classical urban theorists, including Burgess (1925), who first proposed the concept of the "concentric zone model" of urban development, which was later extended by Alonso (1964) through the "bid rent theory of urban land use." The modern urban growth theory combines the demographic, economic, and spatial perspectives in understanding the process of urban development and the implications of urban development on the distribution of urban resources (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

Core Propositions: The theory argues that the growth of urban population results in the expansion of cities in both the horizontal direction, which is known as "sprawl," and the vertical direction, which is known as "densification," thereby affecting the distribution of social services in the urban area. The theory further argues that the rapid growth of the urban population outstrips the provision of urban infrastructure, which results in the unequal distribution of social services, including education, healthcare, housing, and sanitation services, particularly among the poorer segments of the urban population living in the urban fringes or informal settlements.

Application to the Ugandan Context: The application of this theory to the Ugandan context is important because cities such as Kira are currently undergoing the exact problems that this theory addresses. The theory offers an understanding of how urbanization influences the delivery of services.

Justification for Use: The Urban Growth Theory is the most appropriate theory to use for this study. This is because this theory offers an understanding of how urbanization directly influences the delivery of social services. The Urban Growth Theory directly addresses the issue of urban planning, resource distribution, and

inequality, which are the main issues to be investigated in the study. The use of this theory will offer an understanding of how urbanization influences the delivery of services to the people of Kira Municipality.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Urban population growth has thus been identified as an event in Uganda's rapidly changing urban centers, which has greatly impacted access to social, economic, and infrastructural services among urban residents. Kira Municipality, in Wakiso District, has been identified as one of the rapidly growing urban centers in Uganda, offering various opportunities and challenges associated with urban population growth among its residents. This chapter undertakes an in-depth literature review of various literature on urban population growth and access to urban services, with emphasis on the following three thematic areas of interest in this study: residents' perceptions of access to social services, residents' perceptions of access to economic services, and residents' perceptions of access to infrastructural services. Various scholarly works, reports, and literature on urban population growth and access to urban services have been used in this study, offering an analytical tool for understanding the impacts of urban population growth in Kira Municipality.

2.1 Access to Social Services in Urbanized Communities

Access to social services such as education, health care, and sanitation remains an essential factor in the process of urban development and the urban populace. There have been studies on the effects of rapid urban growth on social services in urban centers in Uganda.

2.1.1 Healthcare Access in Urban Areas

Research on the accessibility of healthcare services in urban areas in Uganda indicates the challenges that are being faced. Balaba (2008) conducted research on the socio-economic development of Kira Town Council, indicating the effects of urban growth on healthcare services. The research indicated that while the privatization of healthcare services improved the availability of healthcare, the cost of the services made them unaffordable, creating inequality among the urban populace.

The Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2021-2022) indicated that urban centers, among them Kira, are characterized by overcrowding in public healthcare facilities, causing long waiting times and overworking of the personnel, leading to reduced quality of services. The report indicated that the ratio of health facilities to the urban populace is far below the set standards, and informal settlements are the most affected areas.

Research Consult Uganda (2021) conducted a study on the perceptions of the urban populace on the accessibility of healthcare services in Wakiso District, indicating the challenges being faced in the urban areas. The research indicated that the urban populace perceived the accessibility of healthcare services as inconsistent and unreliable, and while private clinics dominated the provision of healthcare services, the cost of the services made them unaffordable to the urban poor, while public facilities, on the other hand, lacked the requisite facilities, and drug stock-outs and lack of personnel were common. The study indicated that the urban populace in urban centers, among them Kira, had to travel long distances to access healthcare services, and the cost of transport was an added burden on the urban populace.

Tumwine (2019) conducted research on the utilization of maternal healthcare services in urban centers in Uganda, indicating that while the urban populace generally had better access to healthcare services compared to the rural populace, disparities existed among the urban populace. The women in informal settlements encountered challenges in the utilization of healthcare services, and the quality of the services was very poor, leading to less utilization compared to the women in formal settlements.

2.1.2 Education Access in Urban Areas

The same can also be said in terms of access in education in rapidly urbanizing cities. In fact, the Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2022) found an emerging education access gap between the people living in planned and unplanned areas within the same municipalities. In terms of the challenges being faced by the people living in informal areas, these included the distance from education facilities, highly overcrowded classes, and high school fees.

According to the Kira Municipal Council (n.d.), although the municipality is home to 46 secondary schools, only 70.9% are easily accessible to the populations, and most are privately owned. The implication is that the populations, especially poorer ones, are unable to afford the high fees charged in private schools and are forced to use poorly resourced public schools or have to walk long distances to access education in affordable private schools.

Research on the differences between formal and informal settlements in Kira Municipality (PMC, 2021) revealed that the populations residing in formal areas are more satisfied with the educational services because they are close to the schools, while the populations residing in informal areas cited that the schools are overcrowded, poorly staffed, and lack facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities.

A study on woman empowerment and income in Kira Municipality (Journal of Economic and Social Research, 2020) revealed that empowered women tend to invest significantly in the education of their children, especially girls, as they value education as an important investment in family health and education. However, the educational inequality gap continues to marginalize some populations, especially women, and perpetuate intergenerational poverty. The report further noted that the areas which are rapidly urbanizing lack the expansion of facilities in terms of education. This has negative effects on the populations in terms of gender equality.

2.1.3 Water and Sanitation Access

Access to clean and safe water and appropriate sanitation facilities can be considered an important aspect of service delivery in urban areas. According to the Uganda Water and Environment Sector Performance Report (2023), although the country has recorded improvements in access to water and sanitation facilities at the national level, there are considerable disparities between urban and rural areas and within urban areas themselves. In many municipalities, including Kira, the water supply infrastructure has lagged behind the population growth rate.

According to the Kira Municipality Physical Development Plan (2020-2040), inadequate water and sanitation facilities are some of the challenges facing the municipality, especially in the informal areas where the population uses shared

facilities such as latrines and sometimes practices open defecation or buys water at very high prices from private vendors. This situation has resulted in considerable health risks due to outbreaks of water-borne diseases.

Study on the willingness of tenants to contribute financially towards improved environmental amenities in Kira Municipality (Research Consult Uganda, 2021) established that the residents are willing to contribute financially towards improved water and sanitation facilities but are concerned about accountability and transparency on the part of the local authorities. This implies a level of awareness and a willingness on the part of the people to contribute towards the improvement of infrastructure as a public good.

2.2 Access to Economic Services in Urbanized Communities

Access to economic services such as employment opportunities, financial inclusion, markets, and support for business development is an essential factor in defining urban well-being. The perception of access to economic services for urban dwellers in Kira Municipality is linked to governance and private sector engagement.

2.2.1 Employment and Livelihood Opportunities

The Baseline Report on Local Economic Investments in Kira Municipality, authored by Kira Municipal Council (2021), noted that the people of Kira Municipality experienced a challenge of job opportunities, yet the population was growing rapidly in the municipality. While the economy in the municipality is growing rapidly, especially in construction, trade, and services, this has not led to the availability of job opportunities to match the growing population.

Residents participating in this study indicated that although local authorities provided various economic services such as employment, business development, and markets, they were hindered by bureaucratic processes, corruption, and poor infrastructural development.

In its Physical Development Plan, 2021, Kira Municipality acknowledged the importance of a participatory approach in providing economic services, citing a problem of poor coordination among local authorities and private sector investors, which affected the expansion of local economic services. This resulted in perceptions by residents regarding a regulatory rather than facilitatory approach by local authorities to entrepreneurship and local economic development.

2.3 Access to Infrastructural Services in Urbanized Communities

Infrastructures are physical structures through which urban services are delivered, e.g., roads, drainage, water, electricity, and housing. Access to infrastructural services in Kira Municipality has been extensively researched in various planning and development reports.

2.3.1 Transport Infrastructure

Kira Municipality Development Status Report (2019) stated that the urban population is growing at a faster rate than the growth of infrastructural facilities in terms of transportation, which has led to urbanization problems like traffic, road conditions, and poor drainage services. This shows that the residents perceive the infrastructural services as reactive rather than preventive, meaning the services are only delivered when the public complains or when disaster strikes, like flooding. The findings from the Integrated Transport Infrastructure Services Annual Budget Monitoring Report (Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, 2023) showed that the delays in maintenance, lack of funds for maintenance, and corruption in awarding contracts are the major problems facing infrastructural services in Kira Municipality. Moreover, the findings from the residents showed that the residents are dissatisfied with the road conditions, especially during the rainy season when most of the roads are impassable due to flooding. are impassable due to flooding.

Studies on Drainage and Road Access Challenges in Kira Municipality (Kira Municipal Council, 2021) showed that the lack of adequate infrastructures in the municipality is attributed to inefficiency in planning, lack of maintenance, and corruption in awarding contracts, which has led to inequalities in infrastructural provision, especially in urban areas, where most of the road conditions are good compared to the informal settlements.

2.3.2 Spatial Inequalities in Infrastructure

The Kira Municipal Physical Development Plan (2020-2040) identifies infrastructure construction problems which occur because development control measures fail to operate effectively and funding for infrastructure development remains insufficient. Informal settlements lack proper roads, drainage systems, and sanitation facilities, unlike formal estates, which have been well planned and have

regular maintenance. These inequalities have a profound impact on how people perceive inclusion in urban development. Research on infrastructural inequalities between formal and informal settlements (PMC, 2021) was conducted, and it found that infrastructure distribution between formal and informal areas showed clear differences because schools and health centers in formal areas had better equipment than those in informal areas which faced crowding and sanitation problems.

2.3.3 Environmental Infrastructure

Research has become more focused on environmental systems in urban studies because researchers study waste management systems and drainage systems as part of their research work. The Research Consult Uganda study Assessment of Tenants' Willingness to Pay for Improved Environmental Amenities in Kira Municipality (2021) found that residents showed willingness to pay for better waste management and drainage systems but they needed local authorities to provide them with transparent and accountable information.

Other media reports on infrastructural dynamics in Kira Municipality include those published by The Daily Monitor in 2016, which revealed that infrastructures such as improved roads and drainage had been developed in the municipality following a visit by Pope Francis, but residents felt that such infrastructures were temporary and favored central areas, while peripheral areas remained neglected.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in the study on urban population growth and access to social services in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District, Uganda. A clear methodology is essential in determining the reliability of the study results, which can be evaluated to ascertain the severity of the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The chapter will include the research philosophy and paradigm, research design, area of study, study population, sampling methods, sample size, data sources, data collection, research instruments, considerations of validity and trustworthiness, data analysis, considerations of ethics, limitations of the research, among other aspects.

This chapter will give an insight into the research process, which involved individual interviews with 23 people, each lasting 5-15 minutes, all audio recorded in English.

3.1 Research Design

The study uses a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to study the perceptions of residents on access to social, economic, and infrastructural services. Qualitative research designs are distinguished by their focus on gaining an understanding of the situation from the perspective of the people involved, examining meanings, and describing processes in natural settings (Patton, 2015).

The phenomenological method is focused on gaining an understanding of the essential nature of lived experiences, how individuals experience something, and what they mean to them about that experience (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological method is an appropriate choice for the study because the study is focused on gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of the residents on access to services in the midst of rapid urbanization. By using the phenomenological method, the study is expected to gain an understanding of the essential nature of the lived experiences of the residents.

The phenomenological method is an appropriate choice for the study because it is focused on gaining an understanding of the perceptions of the residents. The phenomenological method is focused on the "lifeworld" of individuals, examining the meanings, understandings, and experiences of individuals (van Manen, 2016). The phenomenological method is an appropriate choice for the study because it is focused on gaining an understanding of the perceptions of the residents.

3.2 Study Area

The study is conducted in Kira Municipality located in the Wakiso District of Uganda. Kira Municipality is located in the central part of Uganda, 12 kilometers northeast of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. It is bordered by Kampala in the southwest, Wakiso District in the north and west, and Mukono District in the east.

Kira was established as a Town Council in 1991 and later upgraded to a Municipal Council in 2015. Kira is divided into three divisions: Namugongo, Kira, and Bweyogerere. Kira covers an area of 98.8 square kilometers and is one of the most densely populated areas in Uganda after Kampala (Kira Municipal Council, 2023).

Kira was chosen as the study area due to several reasons. First, Kira is one of the fastest-growing urban centers in Uganda with a population growth rate significantly higher than the national and urban growth rates (UBOS, 2024). This makes Kira an interesting place to study the relationship between urbanization and access to service provisions. Second, despite being a fast-growing and upgraded urban center, Kira has experienced challenges in service provision in the recent past (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.). This makes the study of the relationship between urbanization and access to service provisions interesting and important in the area. Third, the fact that Kira has both formal and informal settlements provides a platform to study the differences in access to service provisions between the formal and informal areas of the municipality. Fourth, the fact that Kira is a bedroom community of Kampala and located near the capital city of Uganda provides a platform to study the effects of urbanization on access to service provisions.

3.3 Sources of Data

3.3.1 Primary Data

The primary data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews with the participants. The primary data are considered the main source of data to answer the research questions, as they give an insight into the perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of the residents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary data was collected individually, avoiding the influence of other respondents' opinions on the participants' views.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

The secondary data was collected from academic articles, reports, dissertations, government documents, etc. The secondary data have multiple functions, and they are considered an important source of data as they give an idea of the setting of the research location, the literature setting, and they are helpful in data interpretation (Bowen, 2009).

3.4 Population and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Study Population

The study population includes the people living in Kira Municipality, local leaders, health workers, teachers, and community development officers. The people living in the area, local leaders, health workers, teachers, and community development officers are all important actors and service providers in the provision and use of social services. As such, these individuals are important sources of information, especially regarding the experience and service provision (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The people living in the area include individuals and households living in the three divisions of Kira Municipality. The perspectives of the people living in the area are important because they help to illustrate the experiences and perspectives that are affected by the growing population.

The local leaders include elected Local Council officials, Local Council executives, and administrative officers. The perspectives of local leaders are important because they help to illustrate the experiences and perspectives that are affected by the growing population.

The health workers include individuals working at health facilities that offer health services to the people living in the area. The perspectives of health workers are important because they help to illustrate the experiences and perspectives that are affected by the growing population.

The teachers include individuals working at schools that offer educational services to the people living in the area. The perspectives of teachers are important because they help to illustrate the experiences and perspectives that are affected by the growing population.

The community development officers include individuals working at the local authorities that coordinate community development activities, including social service provision. The perspectives of community development officers are important because they help to illustrate the experiences and perspectives that are affected by the growing population.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling aims to find individuals who are knowledgeable about social services and urbanization and can give detailed and relevant information (Palinkas et al., 2015).

In the use of the purposive approach, maximum variation sampling was used to obtain a wide variety of information. This means participants were selected from different divisions, such as Namugongo, Kira, Bweyogerere, and also from different socioeconomic classes, genders, age groups, and roles, such as residents, service providers, and local leaders.

Maximum variation sampling helps to find common patterns and themes that exist among different groups and also helps to understand different experiences from different groups (Patton, 2015).

In addition, snowballing was also used, especially when targeting hard-to-reach groups. Participants were asked to give recommendations on other participants who could give relevant information (Noy, 2008).

3.4.3 Sample Size

A total of 23 participants were involved in the study, and this is sufficient for the qualitative method, as the focus is not on the numbers but the depth of understanding. In phenomenological studies, the number of participants is usually few, as the intention is not to generalize the data to the entire population but to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The sample was recruited based on the concept of data saturation, which is the point where further data collection is not likely to add new insights (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). In this case, the data saturation was achieved after conducting the interviews with the diverse participants from the three divisions of Kira Municipality. The last interviews were conducted to confirm the ideas that had already been developed in the previous ones.

The participants were recruited from different categories to ensure that they offered diverse views on the issues being researched. The participants included the local residents from the three divisions, as well as the health workers, teachers, and other professionals, such as an architect and an electrician. The participants' location was mainly in Kira division, especially the Kyaliwajjala area, while others came from Namugongo and Bweyogerere. However, some chose to remain anonymous regarding the division they came from

This diversity of participants ensured that the study obtained multiple perspectives on the effects of the growth of the urban population on access to social services. This included business people who could give perspectives on the economic opportunities available, health workers who could give professional perspectives on the delivery of health care services, and ordinary people who could give perspectives on their lived experiences.

The number of participants in the study was 23, which is appropriate for a qualitative study where the richness of the obtained information is more important than the number of participants. Qualitative research aims at obtaining a deep understanding of the phenomena of interest, as noted by Patton (2015). Participants of this study were purposively selected because of their knowledge and experience of the social services in Kira Municipality and thus could give meaningful perspectives on the study's research questions.

3.5 Procedure for Data Collection

3.5.1 Individual Semi-Structured Interviews

Individual Semi-structured interviews were employed as the main data collection tool. Semi-structured interviews involve using an interview guide with set interview questions, but they allow for flexibility to explore topics of interest to the participant (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). The choice of individual interviews over focus group interviews was made for the following reasons:

This method was considered appropriate for this study because it allows for flexibility and structure at the same time. The interview guide ensured that all issues were addressed among all interviewees, thus enabling easy comparison. Additionally, it gave participants an opportunity to voice their opinions freely and introduce issues that may have not been considered in the interview guide (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews were conducted with all 23 participants individually, including residents, leaders, health workers, teachers, and a community development officer. The interviews took between 5-15 minutes, with an emphasis on short yet significant information regarding the interview questions. The short interview duration was considered appropriate and justified for this study because it was based on an interview guide with set and well-defined topics, and all participants were selected based on their knowledge regarding the issues, thus enabling them to offer rich information within a short duration.

These interviews took place at locations of the participants' convenience and privacy, which included participant's homes, workplaces, community areas, health facilities, schools, and local council offices.

3.5.2 Audio Recordings and Transcription

With the participants' informed consent, the interviews were recorded in audio format to ensure the accurate transcription of the responses. All the participants were proficient in the English language and agreed to the audio recording of the interviews.

After the interview with each participant, the audio recording of the interview was transcribed into the English language. Transcription of the interview is the process of converting the spoken language into written text while maintaining the meaning and context of the spoken language.

To ensure the confidentiality of the participants' responses, the transcripts of the interviews were anonymized by deleting the personal identifiers and assigning a code to the transcript of the interview with each participant. Participants who were residents of the local council area were assigned codes ranging from R1 to R19, health workers were assigned codes ranging from HW1 to HW3, and the teacher was assigned the code T1.

These codes are used in the dissertation wherever the exact quotations of the participants' responses are included.

Audio recordings of the interviews are stored on devices that are password protected and can only be accessed by the researcher.

Audio recordings of the interviews with the participants are stored on devices and are scheduled to be deleted after five years of the publication of the dissertation.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

3.6.1 Interview Guide

According to my supervisor, an interview guide consisting of three core questions was formulated to guide the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). The three-question format was intended to ensure that the major themes of the study are addressed while still allowing for the inclusion of additional questions depending on the responses obtained from the interview subjects. This is consistent with best practice guidelines for qualitative interviews, where a limited number of questions can produce a lot of useful information through skillful use of probes (Kallio et al., 2016).

The Three Core Questions

Question | Research Objective Addressed | Purpose

Question 1: How has population growth in Kira Municipality affected your access to social services such as education and healthcare? | Objective 1: Captures perceptions of education and healthcare access.

Question 2: How has population growth affected economic opportunities and livelihoods in this area? | Objective 2: Investigate a soul for employment and income-generating activities.

Question 3: How has population growth affected infrastructure like roads, water, and housing in this community? | Objective 3: Examines physical infrastructure and housing.

Probing Techniques:

These three questions were used to gain deeper insights into the subjects. The researcher used different types of probing questions to gain more information. Probing questions were used to gain more details, clarification questions to gain more details, example questions to gain specific examples, and comparative questions to gain specific comparisons over time. Silent questions were also used to gain more information.

Interview Flow:

The three questions provide an interview flow. The interview flow is to introduce oneself, build rapport with the participant, ask question 1 with probing questions on social services, ask question 2 with probing questions on economic services, ask question 3 with probing questions on infrastructural services, and finally thank the participant and allow any final comments. The interview flow is expected to last about 5-15 minutes.

3.7 Quality Control

In qualitative research, the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' are replaced with 'trustworthiness,' which is further divided into 'credibility,' 'transferability,' 'dependability,' and 'confirmability' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is the confidence that one has in the truth of the research findings. There are different techniques used to establish credibility. These are:

Prolonged Engagement: The researcher engages with the study area for an extended period of time, both before, during, and after the study.

Triangulation: Multiple sources were used to gain more knowledge. The researcher used 23 participants from different categories.

Member Checking: The researcher checked with some of the participants to see if they had any problems with the accuracy of the findings.

Peer Debriefing: The researcher discussed the study with the research supervisor to gain more insights.

Audio Recording: The researcher used word-for-word recording to gain more accuracy.

3.7.2 Transferability

The transferability of qualitative research findings relates to how applicable they are to other contexts. Although qualitative research does not seek statistical generalization, thick description allows readers to make their own evaluation of how applicable the findings are to their own contexts (Geertz, 1973). The study has provided detailed descriptions of Kira Municipality, participants, research processes, and contextual factors influencing perceptions.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is the reliability and consistency of the results over time. An audit trail was maintained, and all the decisions made in the course of the research, data collection methods, interview contexts, transcription, and analysis and coding schemes are documented. This allows the external reviewer to follow the entire research process and assess its logical consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings are grounded in the data rather than researcher bias. Strategies to enhance confirmability included maintaining reflexive journals documenting researcher assumptions and reactions, grounding interpretations in participant quotations and seeking disconfirming evidence that challenged emerging patterns and preserving audio recordings as references.

3.7.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was not conducted for this research due to time constraints and the qualitative nature of the study. However, the interview guide was reviewed by the research supervisor to ensure clarity and alignment with the research objectives. The three core questions were designed to be straight forward and accessible to all participants.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

3.8.1 Transcription and Data Preparation

Audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in English, the original language of the recordings. Transcription procedures included immediate transcription soon after each interview while context was fresh, verbatim capture of all words, hesitations, and emphasis were relevant, accuracy checking by re-listening while reading and formatting transcripts with line numbers for easy reference during analysis.

Each interview yielded approximately 1-2 pages of transcribed text, resulting in a total data set of approximately 25-35 pages of transcripts from the 23 participants. This volume was manageable for thorough manual analysis while providing rich, focused insights.

3.8.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted as the qualitative data analysis method, and the six-phase thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021) was adopted. The six phases are appropriate for the analysis of short, focused interview data as they enable the systematic analysis and identification of patterns and themes within the data.

Phase Description Application in This Study

Phase 1. Familiarization. The transcripts are read and re-read, and the audio is listened to and re-listened to, and initial impressions are taken down in the form of memos.

Phase 2. Generating initial codes. The data is coded systematically, and the codes are compiled into code lists. Each transcript was coded with 5-10 codes, and the codes are written in the margins of the transcripts.

Phase 3. Searching for themes. The codes are organized and analyzed by patterns and relationships, and the initial theme maps are developed.

Phase 4. Reviewing themes. The themes are reviewed, combined, and/or eliminated to ensure that the themes capture the essence of the data.

Phase 5. Defining and naming themes. The themes are given names that capture the essence of the data, and the definitions are written down.

Phase 6. Producing the report. The themes are presented, and the data is presented with the use of quotes and the integration of literature and theory.

3.8.3 Data Saturation

Data saturation was reached after conducting about 18-20 interviews, and the remaining 3-5 interviews were used to confirm and reinforce the emerging themes without providing any significant new information. This level of data saturation with a sample size of 23 is supported by the literature on qualitative research, which argues that even small sample sizes are sufficient to reach data saturation if the sample is purposively selected based on their knowledge, the interview is focused on specific topics, and the research questions are well defined (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Indicators of Saturation

Indicators of saturation included repetition, where the interviews repeated the earlier findings, no new codes emerging from the interviews, theme stability, where the emerging themes were sufficient to cover all the data collected, and confirmation patterns.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance when research involves human participants. This study has adhered to ethical principles and guidelines, as recommended by Resnik (2020).

3.9.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from relevant bodies before data collection started. An introductory letter from the university was obtained, and permission to carry out research in Kira Municipality was obtained from relevant authorities.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all 23 participants before they participated in the study. This was achieved by describing the research purpose, research procedures, and research use, describing the participants, interview time, interview format, interview medium, disclosure of research risks, explanation of voluntary participation, explanation of confidentiality, requesting permission, and providing an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

Participants were asked if they were willing to take part in an interview lasting 5-15 minutes, individually, and audio recording in English, and if they were aware of any risks associated with participating in the research, such as those associated with everyday conversation, and if they were aware they were free to withdraw from the research at any time without any penalty.

Participants were also asked for permission to audio record and were given an opportunity to ask questions before giving consent to participate in the research.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participant confidentiality was protected through several measures. Identifying information was removed from transcripts and replaced with participant codes. Audio recordings were stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher. Recordings were deleted from recording devices after transfer to secure storage. Published findings use codes and avoid identifying details.

Data storage and retention included audio recordings stored on encrypted, password-protected computer, transcripts stored in secure cloud storage, consent forms stored separately from data in locked cabinet and data retained for five years post-publication, then securely deleted.

3.9.4 Respect for Participant Autonomy

Participants were treated as partners in the research process rather than merely sources of data. This was demonstrated through respect for their time with brief 5-15minute interviews, valuing their views and experiences, providing opportunity to ask questions and offering to share findings with participating communities.

3.9.5 Ethical Use of Audio Recordings

Specific ethical considerations for audio recordings included explicit permission obtained from all 23 participants, transparency about purpose of recordings, secure storage on password protected devices, access to limited researcher and supervisor and participant control to request recorder be paused or stopped at any time.

3.10 Methodological Constraints

The following methodological limitations are noted:

- I. Generalizability. The qualitative nature and sampling strategy make this study non-statistically generalizable to the entire Kira Municipality or other urban areas. The thick description, however, offers readers an opportunity to make an evaluation for transferability to other areas.
- II. Brief interview time. The 5-15 minutes may be too brief to explore all the intricacies of a particular experience. The focused nature of the questions maximized the information gained, and the 23 interviews offered triangulation to ensure saturation.
- III. Self-reported nature. The perceptions may be influenced by social desirability or recall biases. The triangulation of different categories of participants and the use of audio recordings to ensure accuracy, as well as anonymous nature to ensure honesty, are responses to this limitation.
- IV. Cross-sectional nature. The perceptions are based on a snapshot rather than a longitudinal approach. The focus on perceptions of change partially addresses this concern.
- V. Rapidly changing context. The results may become dated as Kira Municipality continues to urbanize. The intent is to capture those changes that are enduring and consistent.

- VI. English language only. The use of English for all interviews may have excluded those less comfortable with the language. All 23 participants were comfortable with English, and the researcher was prepared to accommodate those who may have been more comfortable speaking Luganda.

- VII. Single researcher. The use of a single researcher may introduce a level of bias into the results. The use of peer debriefing, journaling, and member checking are responses to this potential limitation.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data collected from 23 participants through individual semi-structured interviews in Kira Municipality. The data were derived from audio recorded interviews conducted in English, each lasting approximately 5-15 minutes, with community residents, health workers, teachers, and other professionals. The presentation, analysis, and interpretation are organized according to the three research objectives: (1) to examine residents' perceptions of access to social services (education and healthcare); (2) to explore residents' perceptions of access to economic services (employment and income generating activities) and (3) to analyze residents' perceptions of access to infrastructural services (roads, water supply, and housing). Quotations from the participants are used to clarify the themes, and participant codes are used to ensure anonymity while also helping the reader identify the participant categories.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

A total of 23 participants participated in the study. The participants were drawn from the three divisions of Kira Municipality, namely Namugongo, Kira, and Bweyogerere.

The participants included residents, health workers, teachers, and other professionals.

Of the total participants, the largest number consisted of residents. The study included shop owners and a student and a middle-income earner as participants who had different job backgrounds. The health workers included a pharmacist, a nurse, and a hospital staff member. The teachers included a head teacher from Namugongo and another teacher from Kira. The other professionals included an architect and an electrician.

Most of the participants resided in Kira division, including the Kyaliwajjala area, while others resided in Namugongo and Bweyogerere. However, a few participants chose to remain anonymous regarding their division of residence.

To ensure anonymity, each participant was given a unique code. The resident participants were coded as R1, R2, R3, and so on, up to R19. The health workers were coded as HW1, HW2, and HW3, while the teacher was coded as T1. The other professionals, namely the architect and the electrician, are not coded as they are not part of the main participant groups.

In regard to the question on the general perceptions, most participants perceived that the services had worsened as the population increased. However, a significant number of the participants had an average point of view, arguing that the services had improved while the population increased, and also that the services had worsened while the population increased. Some participants, especially the business owners, perceived that the services had improved as the population increased, as the increased population meant more customers.

4.2 Summary of Findings

In this section, a summary of the main findings under each of the three research objectives is presented.

4.2.1 Objective 1: Access to Social Services

Healthcare Access

The study revealed serious overcrowding and long queues in healthcare facilities. For instance, a resident from Kira said, "You go to the health facility looking for services, but the lines are long, and the medical staff are few. So, it is actually congested, and services tend to be slow" (R9, Resident, Kira). Another participant said, "I was there last week, and trust me, that line, there were so many. The guy didn't even give me attention. He just thought my headache was minor. But when I checked somewhere else, I actually had malaria" (R8, Student, Kira).

Drug stockouts were common, and a participant said, "When the population is high, there are different people that come with different conditions. Sometimes those drugs are not available. If they are available, there are so many people coming, and you will end up with stockouts" (HW1, Pharmacist, Namugongo). Another participant said, "When we go

there, they write for us chits that you go to the clinic" (R15, Middle income resident, Kira).

The main problem with the project stemmed from inadequate staff members. One nurse recommended, "If the government could try and increase more nurses and midwives to reduce congestion, it would help a lot" (HW2, Nurse, Kira). One participant noted, "The skilled people are few compared to the semi-skilled and unskilled. The number of people who require assistance far exceeds the number of people who aid assistance" (R8, Student, Kira). The current privatization of healthcare has led to a two-tier system where quality of care is determined by one's ability to pay. One health worker noted, "The hospitals that are there are private and not everyone can afford them. They only take insurance. If you're not in that line, you don't really benefit" (HW2, Nurse, Kira). One resident noted, "Services are rendered to people who have money, but for us who are middle income earners, we get no access" (R15, Middle income resident, Kira).

Another major issue noted was corruption and favoritism. One resident noted, "When you go to a health center, when you are not known, they are not going to work on you. They just refer you to local clinics. But people who are known go there and get medication" (R15, Middle income resident, Kira).

Another major issue noted was the challenge facing residents, especially during nighttime. One resident noted, "If you have a child who gets sick at 2am, you aren't going to a government hospital. They are too far or understocked. You have to go to a private clinic, which is very expensive" (R18, Resident, Kira). A hospital staff member revealed patient abandonment, "Most of the patients that come into the hospital are just being abandoned. When it's time for discharging them, they have no next of kin. We get forced to lug them out, which is not the best way, but we have to cater for other people" (HW3, Hospital Staff, Kyaliwajjala).

Education Access

The study found extreme overcrowding in government schools. A resident described, "You find a class of 400 students in a stream because most students are enrolling

because of that high population" (R7, Resident, Kira). Another resident observed, "Schools are now more crowded than before. Some classrooms have many people" (R11, Resident, Kira).

Private schools have proliferated but at high costs. A resident noted, "More schools have been constructed, especially private schools" (R13, Resident, Kira). However, another resident stated, "The schools are many in the area, but the problem is they are private and they are really highly putting up the rates" (R17, Resident, Kyaliwajjala).

The expensive fees for private schools make it impossible for low-income families to access educational opportunities. Residents explained that "Education is really expensive at all levels" and "The high rates of dropouts are very many" and "Children, early stages, they don't go to school" (R12, Resident, Kira). The access depends entirely on your wallet. If you lose that job, your access to these schools is very limited" (R18, Resident, Kira). Trained teachers tend to seek employment in better-paying private schools. The resident observed, "Even the schools that were put there to offer free education are unable to offer the education because the teachers are not well trained and the trained ones are all going to private schools which are costlier" (R14, Resident, Kira).

For those who cannot afford the private schools around the area, the distance is a safety issue. The student participant observed, "Some people are forced to go to neighboring places like Namugongo. That distance... anything can happen to a kid" (R8, Student, Kira).

4.2.2 Objective 2: Access to Economic Services

Population growth has brought both opportunities and challenges in the economic sector. One shop owner said, "It has boosted economic growth. I get more clients now than those years" (R19, Shopkeeper, Kyaliwajjala). Another one said, "My sales have increased because of the people in Namugongo" (R2, Shop owner, Namugongo).

Despite the expansion of opportunities, there are also those who claim that there are less jobs due to overpopulation. One resident said, "There are less jobs since people are overpopulated. People have to come up with small scale businesses which do not earn as much" (R1, Resident, Kyaliwajjala).

Competition has also been a problem in this sector. One resident said, "There is competition in our jobs. In this spare shop, so many people have opened up" (R4, Resident, Bweyogerere). Another one said, "When there are very many people, many are providing labor. But those providing labor get little because of its survivability. Someone is giving it out at a cheaper price" (R3, Head Teacher, Namugongo).

Businesses also complain about taxes, and one said, "I own a shop, but I pay different taxes. I pay the landlord, ground rent, and revenue to the government" (R2, Shop owner, Namugongo).

Unemployment has also led to a lot of crimes in the community, and one resident said, "There's been a lot of crime since people are overpopulated and there are less jobs. At the end of the day, they resort to scamming residents to earn extra money" (R1, Resident, Kyaliwajjala).

The architect explained gentrification through his complex statement which included the following explanation about rapid gentrification between demand and supply. The situation causes prices to increase. Local residents experience negative effects. The arrival of rich people to an area results in improved service providers entering that same area" (R10, Architect, Anonymous).

4.2.3 Objective 3: Access to Infrastructural Services

Roads and Transport

The community frequently expressed their dissatisfaction because the roads were in their current state. The residents said, "Our roads have so many potholes at the moment" (R17, Resident, Kyaliwajjala); "The roads are terrible with serious potholes" (R6, Resident, Anonymous); "Many roads are still narrow and not well maintained" (R11, Resident, Kira). The community struggles to handle traffic because it has become a major problem. A resident reported, "There is a lot of traffic. Movement becomes difficult, especially in the rainy seasons" (R11, Resident, Kira). Another added, "To get to a place in time, you have to take like two hours. From Namugongo to town you need two hours. That makes our businesses really difficult to access" (R5, Resident, Kira).

A hospital staff member explained life or death consequences, "We have feeder roads with massive potholes. Ambulances get delayed. If you move fast, you may injure yourselves. If you move slow, you waste time for the patient. In the long run, you either end up losing the patient or yourselves" (HW3, Hospital Staff, Kyaliwajjala).

Road encroachment was highlighted, "What used to be a road, people are settling in those roads. People have nowhere to pass because they are overcrowded and need to settle and build" (R18, Resident, Kira).

Water Supply

Frequent water outages were reported. A hospital staff member stated, "We've experienced a lot of water outage. The pipes are breaking most of the time" (HW3, Hospital Staff, Kyaliwajjala). Another resident noted, "Access to clean water is unreliable" (R11, Resident, Kira). "Some places experience water shortages, especially during the dry spell" (R13, Resident, Kira).

Uneven distribution was noted: "A few are getting water but others are not receiving it" (R9, Resident, Kira). "It is hard to reach the deeper areas. It creates scarcity" (R12, Resident, Kira).

The cost of water was also noted, "The water bills tend to be high" (R9, Resident, Kira). "The bills have increased. It has been hard to pay all bills at once because they hike the prices" (R14, Resident, Kira).

The use of alternative and expensive sources of water is a risk when piped water is not available. "We get forced to pay water trucks to bring water. But sometimes it's dirty. We have to filter and add chemicals to purify it" (HW3, Hospital Staff, Kyaliwajjala).

The nurse was concerned about the safety of water used for food businesses, "Those making chips, those cooking fish... you can't trust where they're getting their water. They have to get water from elsewhere" (HW2, Nurse, Kira).

Electricity

The extension of electric connection was noted, "The coverage has expanded. More households receive power" (R13, Resident, Kira). "At least the highest population has got electricity" (T1, Teacher, Kira).

The problem of power outage was noted, "We still have power outages due to high demand" (R13, Resident, Kira).

The electrician noted that power outage is a problem because of high demand, "There are very many people. There is high demand. When demand goes high, it leads to transformer overloading. That's when transformers explode. It gives us a hard time replacing them" (R16, Electrician, Kyaliwajjala).

The problem was severe, "Three hospitals share one transformer. When the overload becomes tense, the transformer explodes. Fixing it takes a week. We have patients on life support. When electricity goes, reviving that patient is on a scale of zero. We cannot sterilize instruments for surgeries" (HW3, Hospital Staff, Kyaliwajjala).

The problem is also caused by illegal connections and vandalism, "Illegal connections cause houses catching fire. Young boys vandalize transformers. They believe the oil treats wounds. They steal the oil. They also steal copper wires to sell" (R16, Electrician, Kyaliwajjala).

Housing and Settlement Patterns

Severe overcrowding was cited. "We are so crowded. People are occupying each and every part" (R17, Resident, Kyaliwajjala). "It has brought overcrowdedness" (R4, Resident, Bweyogerere).

Increase in the number of informal settlements was cited. "There is an increase in informal settlements" (R13, Resident, Kira). "The slum areas are developing day by day" (R15, Middle income resident, Kira).

Environmental degradation was cited as being caused by the growth in the urban population. "People have done deforestation to get space to build houses" (R4, Resident, Bweyogerere). "There is environmental degradation, like grabbing land from wetlands. People are settling in wetland areas" (R19, Shopkeeper, Kyaliwajjala). "People are cutting trees. There are very few trees. Even in some compounds, you will not find trees" (R19, Shopkeeper, Kyaliwajjala).

Increase in the cost of rent was cited. "There is a serious high cost of rent and private services" (R13, Resident, Kira).

Overall Assessment

In the case of the overall assessment, the majority of the respondents indicated that the growth in the urban population had negatively affected the accessibility and availability of social services. However, some respondents indicated that the growth in the urban population had positively affected the accessibility and availability of social services despite the challenges.

4.2.4 Emerging Themes and Patterns

Investigation of the interview transcripts highlights several intersectional themes prevalent across the different areas.

The Two-Tier System. The analysis shows that, across healthcare, education, and infrastructure, there is a pattern of private sector service delivery which creates a system that provides different service levels based on customer payment capacity. People who have the financial means to attend private schools and use private healthcare services receive better quality service. People who lack financial resources to access these services must endure treatment at understaffed and inadequate public facilities.

The Middle Income Trap. The people who fall into the middle category, who are neither poor nor rich, are the ones who are complaining the most because they are locked out of both, the free public service and the relatively cheaper and better quality service offered in the private sector. They are too rich to qualify for government assistance and they are too poor to afford quality service in the private sector.

Spatial Inequality. The people who reside near main roads and commercial zones receive better services than those who live in the residential areas. The rising population level in the area between two population centers has created greater social inequality in the community.

Infrastructure-Health Nexus. The analysis shows that problems between different sectors of the study area are interconnected. The bad state of the roads causes ambulance delays which ultimately lead to fatalities. The hospital requires electricity to operate its facilities because power outages disrupt essential services such as surgical procedures and sterilization processes. People depend on trucked-in water because of the water shortage which provides water at high costs that may harm their health.

Divergent Perceptions by Role. The analysis indicates that people hold dual perceptions because their economic positions determine their assessment of things. Business owners and traders display positive attitudes toward things while ordinary people demonstrate negative feelings. Health workers and teachers have a double perspective, and this shows that there is no one truth to the question of whether population growth is an improvement or a deterioration for people living in Kira Municipality.

4.2.5 The Paradox of Growth

A participant captured this paradox nicely. "As it improves, it creates challenges" (R12, Resident, Kira). The quote describes Kira Municipality's urban development process which results in new facilities and roads but causes problems because the population grows faster than the city can develop.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents three parts which include the research findings, the study conclusions, and the evidence-based recommendations. The chapter presents three parts which include the research findings, the study conclusions, and the evidence-based recommendations.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature and the theoretical framework.

5.1.1 Discussion of Findings on Access to Social Services

The first research objective was to examine the perceptions of residents on access to social services such as education and health in Kira Municipality.

Healthcare Access

The finding on the severe overcrowding of public health facilities in Kira Municipality with long queues and rushed medical attention is consistent with the existing literature on the topic.

According to the Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2021-2022), urban centers such as Kira Municipality are characterized by severe overcrowding of public health facilities with long queues and rushed medical attention.

The finding on the situation in Kira Municipality is consistent with the existing literature on the topic.

According to the Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2021-2022), urban centers such as Kira Municipality are characterized by severe overcrowding of public health facilities with long queues and rushed medical attention.

The situation at the public health facility in Kira Municipality, where a participant waited hours only to be misdiagnosed (R8, Student, Kira) is a dangerous situation.

This finding on the situation in Kira Municipality is consistent with the existing literature on the topic.

According to the Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2021-2022), urban centers such as Kira Municipality are characterized by severe overcrowding of public health facilities with long queues and rushed medical attention.

The study on the situation in the region, which the people in Namugongo Division of Kira Municipality rely on since they only have one public health facility to rely on (Kira Municipal Council, n.d.), was confirmed by the findings of the participants on the situation in the region.

The study which indicated that most hospitals in Kira are private, implying that the quality of services in hospitals depends on one's ability to pay, is supported by Balaba (2008) who indicated that the privatization of health services improved the availability but reduced the affordability of the services, especially in the low-income households.

The exclusion mechanism based on the use of insurance, as indicated by the nurse in the study, HW2, "they only take insurance. If you're not in that line, you don't really benefit," has not been discussed in most literature.

The "middle-income trap," which the participant indicated, i.e., people who are too rich to access free services but too poor to access private services, is a new contribution to the literature, which has mainly been focusing on the poor in the exclusion mechanism.

The study which indicated that access to public health facilities depends on "knowing someone" (R15) has not been discussed in most literature, implying that corruption in the access to public health services is not only about money but social capital as well.

The most alarming of these is the issue of patient abandonment (HW3), which refers to the practice of bringing patients to hospitals but then abandoning them. This is an indicator of the failure of social support structures, which are a consequence of rapid urbanization, as discussed in the literature on the effects of urbanization on traditional family structures (Chant & McIlwaine, 2016).

Education Access

The most alarming of the findings in the education access section is the one on extreme overcrowding in government schools, which has classes of up to 400 students (R7, Resident, Kira), far more alarming than the concerning figures in the

Uganda State of Urban Sector Report (2022). This is an extreme departure from acceptable educational standards, implying that the value of education in these settings is merely to control the numbers.

The proliferation of private schools is in line with the Kira Municipal Council's (n.d.) observation that most secondary schools in the region are privately owned. This study provides depth to the literature, which merely observes the trend, while the currentThe finding that education access "depends entirely on your wallet" (R18) and that job loss can terminate children's education reveals the precarity of educational access in a privatized system. This aligns with the Journal of Economic and Social Research (2020) study, which found that unequal access to quality education perpetuates intergenerational poverty.

The finding that trained teachers gravitate toward better paying private schools, leaving government schools with less qualified staff (R14), reveals a mechanism through which educational inequality is reproduced as "brain drain" from public to private institutions.

5.1.2 Discussion of Findings on Access to Economic Services

The second research aim aimed at exploring residents' perceptions regarding access to economic services in Kira Municipality.

The finding regarding how population growth creates opportunities and challenges is supported by the Baseline Report on Local Economic Investments (Kira Municipal Council, 2021). The fact that business owners have an increased number of customers due to population growth (R2, R19) affirms this finding. The Urban Growth Theory demonstrates this challenge because workers experience two main obstacles which include facing intense competition and receiving low wages according to R3 and R4.

The available literature does not provide extensive coverage of how multiple businesses establish market saturation by selling their products at reduced prices. It affirms how having an increased number of people in the market does not necessarily translate to increased wealth.

The research discovered that small business owners face several tax obligations which verify the results of the study (R2). The study about Revenue Collection Strategy (UCU, 2020) shows how small business operators experience strong market competition and they must pay various expenses which include landlord costs and ground rent and government revenue obligations. The relationship between unemployment and crime (R1) proves that economic exclusion leads to social unrest. The architect's research about gentrification (R10) provides a comprehensive explanation about how population increase results in gentrification. The research asserts its findings through evidence from global gentrification studies while providing a Ugandan viewpoint on how product demand increases complete with price rises and people moving away and wealthier individuals arriving and improved services coming with wealth.

5.1.3 Discussion of Findings on Access to Infrastructural Services

The third objective of the research aimed at analyzing the perception of residents on access to infrastructural services, such as roads, water, electricity, and housing, in Kira Municipality.

Roads

The discovery of massive potholes, narrow roads, and lack of maintenance is in line with the Kira Municipality Development Status Report (2019). The discovery that the roads are "not well maintained" (R11) is also in line with the reactive maintenance strategy, as noted in the Kira Municipal Physical Development Plan (2020-2040).

The discovery of severe traffic congestion on the road from Namugongo to town, taking two hours to travel (R5), is an economic consequence of inadequate infrastructure. The discovery that overcrowding is leading to encroachment on road reserves, hence narrowing the road and increasing traffic congestion (R18), is an indication of a self-perpetuating problem.

The hospital staff member's narrative of an ambulance being delayed due to bad roads and having to make impossible choices between speed and caution to reach the hospital on time to save lives (HW3) is an indication of life or death consequences of inadequate infrastructure, thus supporting Urban Growth Theory's assertion that urban growth without development will lead to deteriorating levels of service.

Water

The discovery of frequent outages and broken water pipes (HW3, R11) is in line with the Kira Municipality Physical Development Plan, which noted inadequate water supply as one of the major problems. The discovery of seasonal shortages of water (R13) is an indication of the impact of climate change on inadequate infrastructure.

Inequality in distribution of water, with some people getting water while others do not (R9, R12), is an indication of spatial inequality, as noted in the PMC Report (2021) on the difference between formal and informal settlements.

Increased water bills (R9, R14) indicate that even if water is accessible, its cost might act as a barrier to its use. Usage of expensive, sometimes dirty, water trucks (HW3) and perceptions around water safety in food businesses (HW2) also extend public health implications to areas outside healthcare facilities.

Electricity

Expanding electricity coverage, with most households able to access electricity (R12, R13, T1), can be seen as a positive development. However, frequent outages due to transformer overloading (R13, R16) indicate that expansion has not been matched with expansion in terms of ability to supply.

The discovery that multiple hospitals use one transformer (HW3) points to critical failures in our infrastructures, with a single point.

5.1.4 Integration of Findings with Theoretical Framework

The findings have strongly supported some of the basic assumptions of Urban Growth Theory. In all service sectors, it was reported that the rate of population growth was higher than the rate at which service was being offered. The findings can be seen in the following quote: "The population is high, but the services are little." (R15)

The findings have supported some of the basic assumptions of Urban Growth Theory. In all service sectors, it was reported that the rate of population growth was higher than the rate at which service was being offered. The findings can be seen in the following quote: "The population is high, but the services are little." (R15)

It is proposed that Urban Growth Theory be extended to include the actions of the private sector in relation to service gaps and inequalities. The findings have supported some of the basic assumptions of Urban Growth Theory. In all service sectors, it was reported that the rate of population growth was higher than the rate at which service was being offered. The findings can be seen in the following quote: "The population is high, but the services are little." (R15)

5.2 Conclusions

This section contains conclusions based on the study findings, where all the research objectives have been addressed.

5.2.1 Conclusions on Access to Social Services

Conclusion 1: Healthcare access in Kira Municipality is characterized by severe overcrowding, under resourcing, and a two-tier system where people who cannot pay are excluded.

The study findings from the 23 participants show overwhelming evidence of overcrowding in all public health facilities due to rapid population growth. The privatization of healthcare means quality of care is determined by one's ability to pay, yet even some private facilities remain inaccessible to people who cannot pay for health insurance. The "middle-income trap" means people who earn more than what is required for free care but less than what is required for private care remain inaccessible. Corruption and favoritism characterize some facilities, where "knowing someone" sometimes determines whether you receive treatment or not. The abandonment of a patient proves a social support system that fails as a result of rapid urbanization.

Conclusion 2: demonstrates that educational access in the country faces serious challenges because government schools experience extreme overcrowding while expensive private schools dominate the educational system and schools display different levels of academic quality which creates an ongoing educational inequality.

The government schools operate under unworkable conditions because their classrooms accommodate 400 students which prevents teachers from delivering effective educational instruction. The rise of private schools emerged as a solution for the existing educational shortage yet these institutions remain unaffordable for low-income families. The departure of skilled educators to these schools creates staffing shortages in government schools which leads to a decline in educational quality that varies according to students' economic background. The poor are

forced to send their children to schools far off because those closer by are too expensive, raising safety concerns. Access to education is "wallet-dependent," and a layoff means an end to a child's schooling.

5.2.2 Conclusions on Access to Economic Services

Conclusion 3: The growing population offers opportunities and poses challenges to the economy, with uneven distribution of the two.

The business owners are benefiting from the increased number of potential customers, but the employees are suffering because of the high competition, which results in low wages. The high number of businesses also means that prices are undercut, and this negatively impacts the income of all. The business owners are also heavily taxed, and this may be detrimental to the economy that the local governments are trying to promote. The high unemployment rate is resulting in crime, and this is because people are forced to resort to crime to survive.

5.2.3 Conclusions on Access to Infrastructural Services

Conclusion 4: The state of the road infrastructure is very poor, with the condition and congestion of the roads having significant economic and, in some cases, life and death consequences.

The road infrastructure is characterized by massive potholes, narrow roads, and poor maintenance. The congestion caused by the large number of road users is also significant, and the road encroachment is self-perpetuating. The most alarming consequence is the death of patients because of the delay in the ambulances caused by the poor state of the road infrastructure.

Conclusion 5: The state of the water supply is very poor, and the cost of the service is on the increase, with the quality of the water being questionable, posing health hazards to the public.

The water supply is characterized by regular outages, broken pipes, and seasonal shortages. The access to the service is also very uneven, with some areas being consistently underserved. The cost of the service is on the increase, and the use of

expensive and dirty water trucks is the only solution to the problem. The question of the safety of the water is also raised in the food businesses.

Conclusion 6: The coverage of the electricity supply is very high, but the reliability is very poor, with transformer overloading being the main cause of the outages, and the consequences are life-threatening, especially in the healthcare facilities.

While the coverage is very high, with most households being connected, the outages are very regular, caused by the overloading of the transformers. The fact that the three hospitals are connected to only one transformer is very alarming, as the failure of the transformer causes the failure of the three facilities simultaneously. The operations in the hospitals are compromised, and the consequences are fatal, especially in the life-support and sterilization facilities.

Conclusion 7: The state of the housing is characterized by overcrowding, the growth of informal settlements, and the degradation of the environment, with the cost of the service being on the increase, driving the poorer section of the population out of the town.

The overcrowding and growth of informal settlements people show that housing needs people population growth. The environmental degradation through deforestation and wetland encroachment shows the ecological effects which result from unplanned urban development. The housing prices are rising because gentrification forces poorer people to leave their homes.

5.2.4 Overall Conclusions

Conclusion 8: Urban population growth in Kira Municipality has outpaced the provision of services in all sectors, leading to an access crisis.

The main discovery of this study is that the rate of urban growth has continually outpaced the ability of both public and private sector entities to provide services. The private sector has assisted in addressing certain gaps which they have done so because it results in adverse effects on impoverished people thus creating ongoing inequality.

Infrastructure failure creates systemic problems which begin with one sector and continue to impact multiple sectors until they reach dangerous levels of risk. The

spatial distribution of services leads to unequal service quality for people who live in different areas.

Conclusion 9: The urban development paradox in Kira Municipality shows that city growth creates both positive and negative impacts which different people experience according to their social status and geographic position and their responsibilities in the community. The urban growth paradox becomes evident through the statement which R12 participant made who said that "as it improves, it creates challenges" The construction of new roads leads to increased traffic jams which create problems. The electricity system expands while power outages experience an upward trend. The establishment of additional schools leads to higher school fees which students must pay. The first group of respondents believes that service quality has decreased whereas the second group shows more understanding of the situation. The service quality has declined according to most people while a considerable portion of the population holds more moderate opinions.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions presented in the study, the following are the recommendations targeted at the various stakeholders.

5.3.1 Recommendations for the Government and policy makers

Recommendation 1: Increase investment in public health infrastructure in relation to the increase in the population.

Government should invest in the development of more public health facilities in areas with high population growth rates like Kira Municipality. This would ensure that the population to facility ratio is met and maintained at a standard level. Government should expand and improve existing facilities to meet the increasing population demands. Government should ensure that the number of staff increases in relation to the population and focus on recruiting more skilled personnel in the health sector. Government should stop referring patients to private pharmacies due to a lack of medicine.

Recommendation 2: Improve the public education system to reduce reliance on private schools.

Government should invest in the development of more public schools in areas with high population growth rates like Kira Municipality and improve existing facilities to expand the student population. Government should reduce the number of students in a classroom to an educationally appropriate number. Government should improve the salary of public school teachers to attract and retain more qualified personnel and stop the brain drain to private schools. Government should make UPE free and eliminate the costs of hidden fees.

Recommendation 3: Use census data to inform infrastructure development.

Government should use the population data obtained from the census and survey to inform the development of infrastructure.

Recommendation 4: Invest in the development of road infrastructure in relation to the increase in the population.

Road construction should be done with an allowance for future traffic needs, not just for existing needs. Maintenance of roads should be regular and preventive, not corrective. Reserves on roads should be protected from encroachment through enforcement of planning regulations. Emergency service roads should be prioritized for upgrading since they have life and death consequences.

Recommendation 5: Invest in water infrastructure to ensure reliable and equitable supply.

Capacity needs to be increased for water systems to match the increased population. In this regard, "deeper" areas should be reached to ensure water supply. Affordable payment systems should be developed to ensure that water supply is not denied to some people due to cost constraints. Pipe maintenance and replacement needs to be enhanced to reduce water outages. Water quality needs to be monitored, especially for alternative sources like water trucks.

Recommendation 6: Upgrade electricity infrastructure to meet the growing demands.

Transformers need upgrades because their current capacity cannot handle existing operational demands. Critical facilities require dedicated transformers which will provide them with continuous power supply. The practice of multiple hospitals sharing one transformer is unacceptable and needs urgent attention. Programs to reduce illegal connections and vandalism should be enhanced, including education on the dangers of such practices.

Recommendation 7: Establish policy frameworks regarding affordable housing to combat overcrowding and promote sustainable eco-settlements.

The government needs to help build affordable housing which will benefit low and middle-income workers. Planning regulations need to be enforced because they protect wetlands from urban development and environmental harm. The implementation of rent control measures needs to proceed because they protect tenants from exploitation. Slum upgrading should be done for existing settlements.

Recommendation 8: The indispensable expansion of public healthcare infrastructure to fish or cut bait under forecast timescale shall see the color.

The hospital system needs upgrades to handle its growing demands. Existing medical facilities need additional bed capacity through new bed installations. The number of hospital beds needs expansion to accommodate the rising population. The medical staff needs expansion through additional doctor and nurse recruitment to meet growing demands. The current medical facilities require additional equipment through new equipment purchases.

Recommendation 9: Increasing school infrastructure that matches the increasing needs is a very necessary requirement.

Schools need to be updated because their current facilities cannot meet their increasing requirements. The school needs additional classrooms beyond its current classroom capacity. The school needs to hire additional teachers because

its current staffing cannot meet the growing demands. The school needs to acquire more textbooks to supply all its current classroom needs.

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5.5 Appendix

5.5.1 Interview Guide

- I. In your view, how has urban population growth in Kira Municipality affected access to social services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure?
- II. What challenges do residents face when trying to access these social services in this growing municipality?
- III. What improvements or changes have you observed in service delivery as the population has increased?