AN ASSESSMENT OF CHILD HEADED FAMILIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ADJUMANI DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF ADJUMANI TOWN COUNCIL

BY

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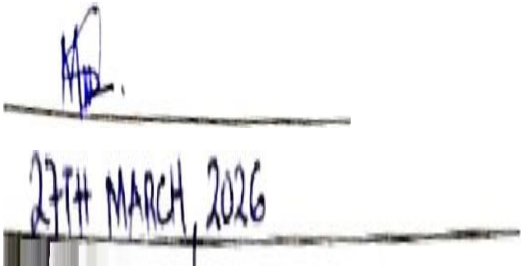
RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

JULY, 2025

DECLARATION

I, MUREO ROBINA, declare that this research report is my original work and has never been submitted anywhere for an award of any academic qualification.



APPROVAL

This is to certify that MUREO ROBINA has completed the research Report on Assessment of Child Headed Families in selected Primary Schools in Adjumani District: A case Study of Adjumani Town Council under my close supervision and it's now ready for submission to the university for examination.

NYOLONGA COLBERT (MSD, BSW, CHA)

27/03/2026

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear brother Apiku Innocent for his continuous and unwavering support towards my academic journey and I ask God to richly bless him.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In total decency and humility, I am grateful to the Almighty God for his enabling grace, love, blessings, strength and protection throughout my life and in the course of the research work. Besides, every great accomplishment in life is a result of cooperate efforts, just as it takes a community to raise a child, it took a team to author the success of my research work. I therefore in a special way acknowledge the report to the Almighty God for his enabling grace upon my life as well to my lovely siblings Kayodi Fiona, Idere Jonathan, Adrawa Charles, Mandre Isaac and Apiku Innocent for the continuous support and love, my academic supervisor Mr. Nyolonga Colbert for his time, guidance, encouragement, constructive support and supervision at all the stages of the research , my friends, Nancy, moreen, Agnes, Jacinta, and primrose, for helping me in the due course of the research work. I equally dedicate this work to all the staffs of Uganda Christian University for their unwavering efforts to impart knowledge for my holistic development. Lastly, I also extend my sincere heartfelt gratitude to Uganda Christian University for designing the research program to enable students to apply the theories learned in class to real life. Thanks to all the lecturers of the various course units for offering me the knowledge that greatly facilitated my competence during the research work. I also appreciate the respondents for their participation in my research work. May God bless them all abundantly.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATC……. Adjumani Town Council

CHFs…….…. Child Headed Families

DV…….....Dependent Variables

E.G……...…For Example

HIV/ AIDS……...…. Human Immune Deficiency Virus

IV……..…Independent Variables

UBOS……. Uganda Bureau of Statistics

UN…….……. United Nations

UNDP……...…United Nations Development Program

UNICEF……. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted on an assessment of child headed families and academic performance in selected primary schools in Adjumani District, a case study of Adjumani Town council. The objectives were to ascertain the Welfare of child headed families, to find out the Academic performance of children from child headed families and to assess the relationship of child headed families and academic performance of children in Adjumani Town council. The research analyzed the welfare of child headed families, the academic performance of child headed families and It further explored the relationship of child headed families and academic performance. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and community organizations improve community resilience, and enhance academic knowledge in the critical area. This study used a cross-sectional survey design. The designed involves gathering data from a population sample at a particular time. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to achieve the study objectives. The data collection tools included questionnaires and interviews, enabling the researcher to get firsthand information. The quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and patterns in the study topic. Qualitative data from interviews was thematically analyzed to extract key themes and insights. Validity was enhanced by seeking the approval and opinion of the supervisor before proceeding to collect the data there after.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study focuses on an assessment of child headed families and academic performance in selected primary schools in Adjumani Town Council, Adjumani district. Chapter One addresses the background of the study. It clearly states the problem statement. Meanwhile it also states the research objectives, research questions, and the study's scope, significance, justification, as well as conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

Child-headed families (CHFs) are a growing phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa, largely driven by HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and poverty. The HIV/AIDS epidemic alone has orphaned millions of children, many of whom assume parental responsibilities for siblings (Foster, 2006). In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide left over 60,000 CHFs, while South Africa reported 0.67% of children living in such households (Tsegaye, 2010). These households often lack adult supervision, financial stability, and psychosocial support, which directly impacts children's education. Studies across Africa show that children in CHFs face higher dropout rates, poor academic performance, and vulnerability to exploitation compared to peers in stable households (Evans & Skovdal, 2014).

Uganda has been significantly affected by HIV/AIDS, civil unrest, and refugee influx, all contributing to the rise of CHFs. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2016) estimated over 24,000 child-headed households nationwide. In northern Uganda, decades of conflict and displacement worsened the situation, leaving many children without parental care.

Adjumani District, hosting large numbers of South Sudanese refugees, has seen a rise in CHFs as children assume responsibility for siblings amidst scarce resources (Save the Children, 2018). These children often struggle with food insecurity, lack of school fees, and psychosocial stress, which undermines their academic performance (Kyomya, 2019).

1.1.1 Historical background to the study.

Child-headed families (CHFs) have emerged as a significant social issue globally, particularly in regions affected by conflict, disease, and extreme poverty. The phenomenon is most pronounced

in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the HIV/AIDS epidemic has dramatically increased the number of orphans. According to UNICEF (2020), millions of children have lost one or both parents, placing them in the role of primary caregivers for younger siblings.

The phenomenon of child-headed families (CHFs) gained global attention in the late 20th century, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and armed conflicts. By the early 2000s, millions of children had lost one or both parents to AIDS, leaving many to assume parental roles for siblings (Foster, 2006). In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide created over 60,000 CHFs, while South Africa reported that 0.67% of children lived in such households (Tsegaye, 2010).

Globally, CHFs are characterized by poverty, food insecurity, lack of adult supervision, and psychosocial distress. These conditions directly affect children's ability to access and succeed in education (Evans & Skovdal, 2014).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, CHFs are most prevalent in countries heavily affected by HIV/AIDS and civil wars. Studies in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Kenya reveal that children in CHFs often drop out of school due to caregiving responsibilities, lack of school fees, and stigma (Tsegaye, 2010). The absence of adult caregivers means children must balance household responsibilities with schooling, often leading to poor academic performance. NGOs and community-based organizations have attempted interventions, but gaps remain in addressing the educational needs of these vulnerable children (Evans & Skovdal, 2014).

Uganda has faced multiple crises such as; HIV/AIDS, civil unrest, and refugee influx—that have contributed to the rise of CHFs. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2016) estimated over 24,000 child-headed households nationwide. The northern region, in particular, was heavily affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency, which displaced families and left many children orphaned.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic also played a significant role, with thousands of children losing parents and assuming caregiving roles (Kyomya, 2019). Government and NGO interventions, such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and child protection programs, have attempted to support vulnerable children, but challenges persist in ensuring academic success for CHFs.

Adjumani District, located in northern Uganda, has unique challenges due to its proximity to South Sudan and its role as a major refugee-hosting area. The influx of South Sudanese refugees has increased the number of CHFs, as children are left to care for siblings in the absence of parents (Save the Children, 2018).

Local reports highlight that CHFs in Adjumani faces Economic hardship like Lack of school fees and basic needs, Psychosocial stress like Trauma from conflict and displacement, and Educational barriers like Irregular attendance, poor performance, and early dropouts. Despite interventions by NGOs and humanitarian agencies, CHFs in Adjumani Town Council remain marginalized in education, making it critical to assess their academic performance and welfare conditions.

In many African countries, traditional family structures have been disrupted by economic hardships, armed conflict, and health crises, leading to a rise in households led by children. This trend is evident in countries like South Africa, where a 2006 study indicated that approximately 0.67% of children lived in child-headed households (Foster, 2006). In Rwanda, the aftermath of the 1994 genocide resulted in an estimated 60,000 child-headed households (Tsegaye, 2010).

Uganda has not been immune to these challenges. The 2016 National Household Survey revealed about 24,063 child-headed households, primarily due to the effects of HIV/AIDS and civil unrest. In regions such as Adjumani District, where there is a significant influx of South Sudanese refugees, the situation is exacerbated by the need for children to care for siblings amidst limited resources and support structures. Studies indicate that these children face numerous barriers, including food insecurity, lack of access to education, and increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse (Save the Children, 2018). (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Children often bear the burden of caring for siblings and facing numerous challenges, including food insecurity, lack of education, and emotional distress (Save the Children, 2018). Studies have shown that these children frequently drop out of school and encounter forced marriages and early pregnancies (Kyomya, 2019). Existing support systems, including humanitarian organizations, provide some assistance, yet their effectiveness remains a concern (Palliative Care Association of Uganda, 2021). Research focusing on CHFs in Adjumani can illuminate the specific challenges faced by these children, the impact of the refugee crisis, and the educational outcomes for those in such precarious situations, ultimately informing policies and programs to better support vulnerable families in the region

1.1.2 Theoretical background

Child headed families defined as house hold a led by minors who take on parental responsibilities due to absence of adult care givers are increasing prevalent in contexts impacted by socio-economic challenges an in Adjumani District, factors like poverty, illness, and displacement contribute to the rise of these families (Mugisha 2018) the unique circumstances faced by child headed households necessitate a closer examination of their academic performance, particularly in primary schools.

This study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which posits that individuals must satisfy basic needs psychological, safety, love/ belonging, and esteem before achieving higher levels goals (Maslow, 1943) and in many cases, children in these families struggle to meet their basic needs, which adversely affect their ability to focus on education. Additionally, Social Capital Theory that focus on the importance of social networks and relationships for educational success (Bourdieu, 1986). Child headed families often lack access to supportive adults and resources which can limit their academic potential.

Existing literature underscores the connection between family ability and academic performance. Studies have consistently shown that children from stable family environments tend to achieve better academic results compared to those from disrupted homes (Mason et al 2015). Interventions that provide educational resources, mentorship, and psychological support have also demonstrated positive effects on the academic performance of children in challenging situations (Nabunya et al 2017).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943): Maslow's theory posits that human motivation is structured in a hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. For children in child-headed families (CHFs), basic needs such as food, shelter, and security are often unmet. This undermines their ability to concentrate on higher-order needs like education and personal development. In Adjumani, CHFs frequently struggle with hunger, insecurity, and lack of emotional support, which negatively impacts their academic performance (Maslow, 1943).

Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988): Social capital refers to the resources embedded in social networks and relationships that individuals can draw upon to achieve goals. In educational contexts, parental involvement and mentorship are critical forms of social capital. CHFs lack adult guidance, reducing their access to educational support, role models, and networks

that foster academic success. This absence of social capital contributes to poor performance and higher dropout rates among CHF pupils (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988).

Resilience Theory: Resilience theory emphasizes the ability of individuals to adapt positively despite adversity. Children in CHFs often face extreme challenges, yet some demonstrate resilience through coping strategies, peer support, and community interventions. Resilience factors—such as NGO support, extended family networks, and cultural coping mechanisms—can mitigate the negative effects of poverty and trauma on academic performance (Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa, 2017). This theory highlights the importance of strengthening protective factors in Adjumani's CHF context.

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979): Bronfenbrenner's ecological model explains child development within nested systems: microsystem (family, school), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (community structures), and macrosystem (cultural and policy environment). For CHFs, the absence of parents disrupts the microsystem, while poverty and displacement affect the exosystem. Policies such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and NGO interventions form part of the macrosystem that can either support or fail CHF pupils. This theory underscores the need for multi-level interventions in Adjumani.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969): Attachment theory stresses the importance of secure relationships with caregivers for healthy emotional and cognitive development. CHFs lack parental figures, leading to insecure attachments and psychosocial distress. This affects concentration, motivation, and academic achievement. In Adjumani, CHF pupils often struggle with grief and trauma, which undermines their ability to thrive in school (Bowlby, 1969).

Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1993): Human capital theory views education as an investment that enhances productivity and future earnings. For CHFs, barriers to education—such as lack of fees, caregiving responsibilities, and poor performance—limit their ability to accumulate human capital. This perpetuates cycles of poverty and vulnerability. In Adjumani, assessing CHF academic performance is crucial for understanding how these children can be supported to build human capital and break intergenerational poverty.

1.1.3 Conceptual background

Child-headed families are households where minors assume parental roles due to the absence, death, or incapacity of adult caregivers. This phenomenon is most prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa,

where HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and poverty have orphaned millions of children (Foster, 2006). In Uganda, CHFs are increasingly visible in refugee-hosting districts such as Adjumani, where displacement and conflict exacerbate family breakdowns (Save the Children, 2018).

Key characteristics of CHFs include; Leadership roles by minors where Children act as heads of households, making decisions on food, shelter, and education. There is also Economic vulnerability where there is Limited access to income, school fees, and basic needs. Another characteristics is the Psychosocial stress where Grief, trauma, and stigma affect emotional well-being. And then, Educational challenges where Irregular attendance, poor performance, and early dropouts (Kyomya, 2019).

Academic performance refers to the measurable outcomes of learning, typically assessed through grades, test scores, and teacher evaluations. It is influenced by multiple factors including family support, socio-economic status, and psychological well-being (Mugumya et al., 2022). For children in CHFs, academic performance is often compromised due to; Caregiving responsibilities by balancing household duties with schoolwork; Financial constraints by Inability to afford school fees, uniforms, or materials; Psychological burdens where Trauma and stress reduce concentration and motivation; and Social stigma where discrimination from peers and teachers undermines self-esteem.

The conceptual link between CHFs and academic performance lies in the interplay of socio-economic, psychological, and educational factors. Socio-economic deprivation, limits access to school resources. Meanwhile, Psychological distress reduces learning capacity and classroom engagement. Absence of parental guidance diminishes motivation and academic support. And Community and NGO interventions can mitigate challenges and improve resilience (Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa, 2017). This relationship underscores the need for targeted interventions in Adjumani Town Council to support CHF pupils academically. The study conceptualizes the relationship between independent variables (child-headed family conditions) and dependent variables (academic performance outcomes). This framework guides the study in assessing how CHF conditions influence academic outcomes in Adjumani primary schools.

1.1.4 Contextual background

It highlights the significant socio-economic challenges faced by this region in northern Uganda, including high poverty rates, limited access to quality education, and the lingering effects of conflict and displacement. These factors contribute to the prevalence of child-headed families, where children take on adult responsibilities due to the loss of parents from illness, migration, or conflict-related violence. In this environment, these children often experience emotional stress, financial instability, and a lack of educational resources, which hinder their academic performance through irregular school attendance and difficulties in focusing on their studies. Additionally, cultural attitudes towards education and gender roles influence family dynamics, affecting boys and girls differently. Understanding the specific needs and circumstances of child-headed families in Adjumani is essential for developing targeted interventions, as this research aims to illuminate the resilience these children may exhibit and the community and institutional support necessary to enhance their educational outcomes, ultimately informing policies and programs that can better support vulnerable children and help them break the cycle of poverty.

Adjumani District, located in northern Uganda, is one of the country's major refugee-hosting areas, accommodating thousands of South Sudanese refugees. This influx has placed pressure on local resources, including education, health, and social services (Save the Children, 2018). Poverty levels remain high, with many households struggling to meet basic needs. In such conditions, children often assume adult responsibilities, leading to the emergence of child-headed families (UBOS, 2016).

Uganda's Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy was designed to increase access to schooling. However, in districts like Adjumani, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and high dropout rates persist (Kyomya, 2019). Children in CHFs face additional barriers such as; Financial constraints of Lack of school fees, uniforms, and scholastic materials; Caregiving responsibilities of balancing household chores and sibling care with school attendance; and Psychosocial stress of Trauma from conflict and displacement undermines concentration and motivation. These factors contribute to poor academic performance and irregular attendance among CHF pupils.

Cultural attitudes toward education, particularly for girls, influence school participation. In some communities, girls in CHFs are more vulnerable to early marriage and exploitation, further limiting

their educational opportunities (Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa, 2017). Social stigma also affects CHF pupils, as peers and teachers may discriminate against them, reducing their sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Government and NGO interventions in Adjumani aim to support vulnerable children through child protection programs, psychosocial support, and educational subsidies. However, gaps remain in addressing the specific needs of CHFs. Policies often focus on orphans broadly, without tailoring interventions to the unique challenges of children who head households (Evans & Skovdal, 2014). This study is therefore situated within a context where CHFs are marginalized in education, despite existing policies and interventions. Assessing their academic performance in Adjumani Town Council provides evidence for designing more inclusive and effective educational strategies.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, child-headed families (CHFs) have emerged as a critical social issue, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and poverty have orphaned millions of children. These children are forced to assume adult responsibilities prematurely, often becoming caregivers for siblings while struggling to meet basic needs. Studies show that children in CHFs face food insecurity, lack of school fees, and psychosocial distress, all of which negatively affect their education (Foster, 2006; Evans & Skovdal, 2014). Despite international interventions, academic performance among CHF pupils remains significantly lower than their peers in stable households. In Uganda, the situation is equally concerning. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2016) reported over 24,000 child-headed households nationwide, with northern Uganda disproportionately affected due to decades of conflict and displacement. While the government introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) to increase access, CHF pupils continue to face challenges such as irregular attendance, poor performance, and early dropouts (Kyomya, 2019). Existing policies and NGO interventions often fail to address the unique needs of CHFs, leaving gaps in educational support. Adjumani District presents a particularly complex context. As one of Uganda's largest refugee-hosting areas, it has experienced a rise in CHFs due to the influx of South Sudanese refugees and the breakdown of family structures (Save the Children, 2018). CHF pupils in Adjumani Town Council primary schools struggle with economic hardship, caregiving responsibilities, psychosocial stress, and social stigma. These challenges contribute to poor academic performance, yet localized research on the relationship between CHFs and educational outcomes in Adjumani remains limited. Without empirical evidence, policymakers and educators

lack the information necessary to design effective interventions tailored to the realities of CHF pupils in this district. Therefore, the problem this study addresses is the lack of comprehensive, localized research on how child-headed family conditions affect academic performance in primary schools in Adjumani Town Council. This gap in knowledge undermines efforts to promote inclusive education and threatens the achievement of national development goals such as Uganda Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on quality education.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The major objective of the study was to assess the welfare and academic performance of children from child headed families in selected primary schools within Adjumani Town Council, Adjumani District in order to produce productive and creative youths to be the future leaders of tomorrow.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

To ascertain the Welfare of child headed families in Adjumani Town Council

To find out the Academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

To assess the relationship of child headed families and academic performance of children in Adjumani Town council.

1.5 Research Question

The research sought to address the following research concerns:

What is the current status of welfare among child headed families in Adjumani Town Council, and how does it affect their children's academic performance?

How do environmental factors, such as distance from school and resource availability influence the academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council?

What is the relationship between the psychological impact experienced by children in child headed families and their academic performance, specifically in terms of reading duration and overall achievement in primary schools in Adjumani Town Council?

1.6 Study scope

The study was carried out in Adjumani Town council, Adjumani district Uganda.it involved sample of children from selected primary schools specifically targeting those identified as part of child headed households in Primary school children.

1.6.1 Content of the Study

This study assesses child headed families and academic performance and to objectively ascertain the Welfare of child headed families, find out the Academic performance of children from child headed families and to assess the relationship of child headed families and academic performance of children in Adjumani Town council.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The geographical scope of this research focuses on Adjumani Town Council in Adjumani District Uganda, located approximately 4.1-degree N latitude and Adjumani is around 3.4 Degrees E Longitude. This area is situated in the Northern Region, bordered to the north by Moyo district and the Albert River, to the south by Pader District, to the east by Koboko district, and to the west by the democratic Republic of Congo. Adjumani Town Council is organized into several administrative units, including12 cells and more but this study specifically examined selected primary schools within Adjumani Town Council considering only 3 cells, particularly those known inclusive education policies and support programs for child headed families, to gain insights into the academic performance of these vulnerable children within their unique socio—cultural context.

1.6.3 Time scope of the study

This is 2021-2025 cross sectional study that employed a survey method for observation of academic performance across multiple terms and provide comprehensive understanding of the welfare conditions of the child headed families considering only 4 cells in Adjumani Town Council, Adjumani District due to the time allocation.

1.7 Significance of the study

By highlighting the realities of child headed families, the study raised awareness within the community, fostering supportive environment and encouraging local organizations to provide assistance and resources.

The study will contribute to the existing body of literature on child welfare and education serving as a foundation for future research on related topics, such a mental health and socioeconomic impacts on academic performance.

The study will emphasize on the interconnectedness of welfare and academic performance that would promote holistic view that recognizes the importance of comprehensive support foe vulnerable children in achieving educational success.

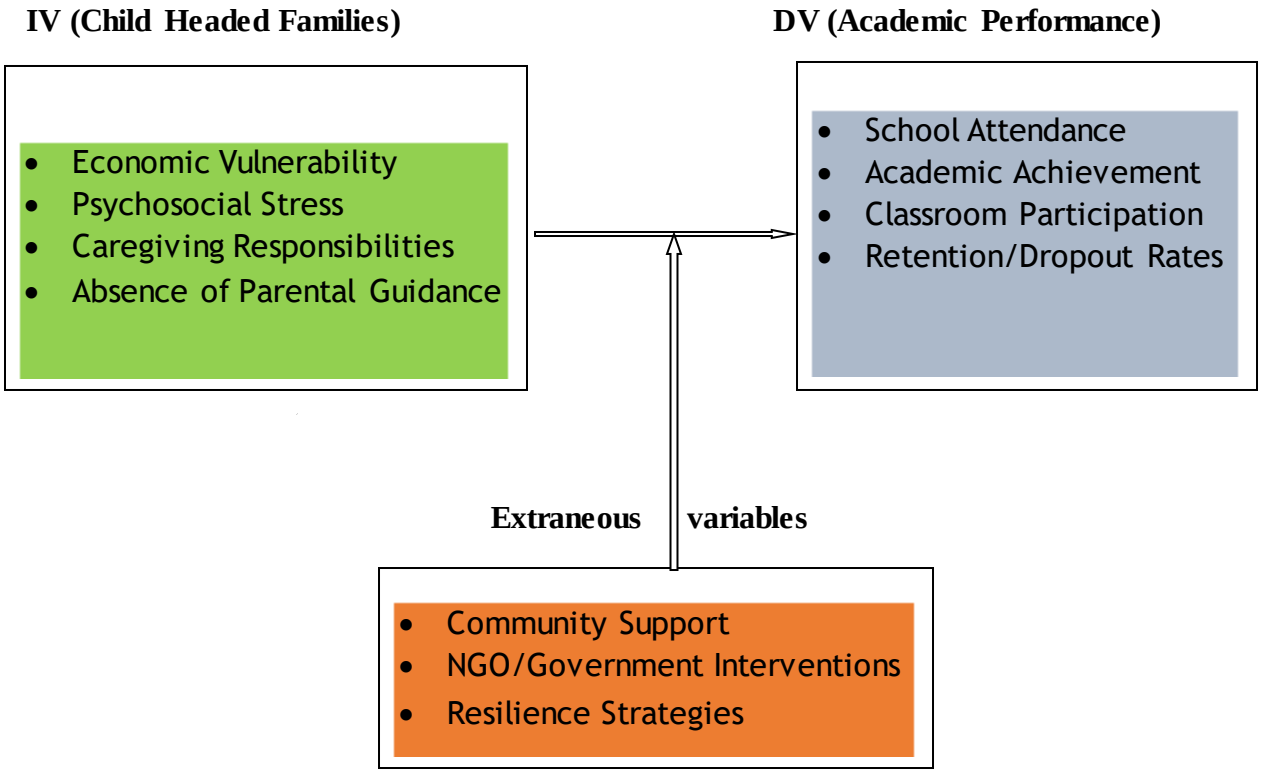
The findings empowered various stakeholders like teachers, parents and the community leaders by equipping them with knowledge to better support children from child headed families and ultimately enhancing their academic performance.

The study also provided valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by child headed families in Adjumani Town Council, Adjumani District that will in return contribute to a better understanding of their vulnerabilities and need.

1.8 Justification of the study

This study aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform policymakers and local authorities, leading to effective strategies tailored to support these families. Addressing the challenges faced by child-headed families not only improves individual well-being but also has broader social and economic implications, fostering community resilience and reducing poverty levels. Additionally, this research will contribute to the limited body of literature on child-headed families in Uganda, particularly in the context of post-conflict recovery, providing insights valuable to academics, NGOs, and government agencies. Engaging with the local community throughout the research process can further empower community members and facilitate the identification of culturally appropriate solutions. Thus, this study is justified by the pressing needs of child-headed families and its potential to influence educational policies and practices, improve community resilience, and enhance academic knowledge in this critical area.

1.9 Conceptual framework showing the Relationship between Child Headed Families and Academic Performance



Sources: Adopted from Geoff Foster (2006) and D. M. Kyomya (2019), Modified by the researcher

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Child-Headed Family (CHF): A household in which a minor (usually below 18 years) assumes the role of head due to the absence, death, or incapacity of adult caregivers. The child is responsible for decision-making, caregiving, and provision of basic needs for siblings (Foster, 2006; Kyomya, 2019).

Economic Vulnerability" The state of financial instability experienced by CHF households, characterized by lack of school fees, food insecurity, and inadequate scholastic materials. It directly affects children's ability to access and remain in school (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2016).

Psychosocial Stress: Emotional and psychological strain experienced by children in CHFs, often resulting from trauma, grief, stigma, and anxiety. This stress undermines concentration, motivation, and overall academic performance (Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa, 2017).

Caregiving Responsibilities: The duties undertaken by children in CHFs, including sibling care, household chores, and income-generating activities. These responsibilities often conflict with school attendance and participation (Evans & Skovdal, 2014).

Absence of Parental Guidance: The lack of mentorship, motivation, and educational support from parents or guardians. This absence reduces children's access to role models and guidance necessary for academic success (Mugumya et al., 2022).

Academic Performance: The measurable outcomes of learning, typically assessed through school attendance, grades, test scores, classroom participation, and retention/dropout rates. It reflects the extent to which pupils achieve educational objectives (Kyomya, 2019).

School Attendance: The regularity and punctuality of pupils in attending classes. Poor attendance is often linked to caregiving duties and economic hardship in CHFs (UBOS, 2016).

Academic Achievement: The level of success attained by pupils in their studies, measured through grades, test scores, and teacher evaluations. CHF pupils often perform below average due to socio-economic and psychosocial challenges (Foster, 2006).

Classroom Participation: The degree of engagement in learning activities, including homework completion, group work, and active involvement in lessons. CHF pupils may show reduced participation due to fatigue or stress (Evans & Skovdal, 2014).

Retention/Dropout Rates: Indicators of whether pupils continue schooling or withdraw prematurely. CHF pupils are at higher risk of dropping out due to financial constraints and caregiving responsibilities (Save the Children, 2018).

1.11 Limitations

Negative attitudes of respondents limited information where some were not willing to provide the needed information.

High expectations from community members were challenging in the way that, some expected financial assistant from the researcher.

Lack of cooperation by some respondents also proved a challenge during the research data collection.

1.12 Delimitation

The researcher built a good rapport with respondents making it easier for them to fill in the questionnaires.

Respondent's consent was sought before engaging them into filling the questionnaires and answering the interview questions.

The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality as the information given were treated with deep secrecy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed related literatures on the study objectives. The researcher reviewed several literatures from electronic media, print media, journals, internet sources, documentary reviews and other related literatures.

2.1 The Welfare of Child Headed Families.

The overarching objective is to assess the welfare of child-headed families and its implications for academic performance, recognizing that welfare challenges manifest differently at global, continental, regional, national, and local levels.

At the global scale, the welfare of CHFs is shaped by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and armed conflicts, which have orphaned millions of children. The objective here is to examine how global crises undermine children's access to education and psychosocial well-being. For example, the HIV/AIDS epidemic created millions of orphans worldwide, many of whom became heads of households (Foster, 2006).

Across Africa, CHFs are concentrated in countries heavily affected by HIV/AIDS and civil wars. Welfare challenges include food insecurity, lack of school fees, and psychosocial trauma. For example, Rwanda's genocide left over 60,000 CHFs, while South Africa reported 0.67% of children living in such households (Tsegaye, 2010).

In East Africa, conflicts in South Sudan, Rwanda, and northern Uganda have produced large numbers of CHFs. Welfare issues include displacement, trauma, and poverty, which directly affect schooling. According to Evans & Skovdal (2014), Studies in Kenya and Ethiopia show CHFs often drop out due to caregiving responsibilities and stigma Objective: To analyze how regional conflicts and displacement affect CHF welfare and academic performance.

Uganda has over 24,000 child-headed households, driven by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and displacement (UBOS, 2016). Welfare challenges include economic hardship, lack of parental

guidance, and psychosocial stress. In an effort to evaluate how national policies such as; Universal Primary Education and welfare conditions influence CHF pupils' access to education. For example, despite UPE, CHF pupils face irregular attendance and poor performance (Kyomya, 2019).

Northern Uganda was heavily affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency, which displaced families and created CHFs. Welfare challenges include trauma, poverty, and disrupted schooling. In an effort to assess how post-conflict realities continue to affect CHF welfare and academic performance, Nabunya et al (2017) reports that, many CHFs in northern Uganda still struggle with psychosocial distress and lack of resources (Nabunya et al., 2017).

In the West Nile region, including Adjumani, hosts large numbers of South Sudanese refugees. Welfare challenges include resource scarcity, cultural stigma, and refugee-related vulnerabilities are very high. In trying to examine how refugee influx and regional poverty exacerbate CHF welfare challenges, Save the Children (2018), reports that, Refugee-hosting districts face higher rates of CHFs due to displacement and family breakdown.

Similarly, Adjumani District is a hotspot for CHFs due to refugee influx and poverty. Welfare challenges include economic deprivation, caregiving burdens, and psychosocial stress. To assess localized welfare conditions of CHFs and their impact on school attendance, participation, and performance. Kyomya (2019) reports that, CHF pupils in Adjumani often drop out due to caregiving responsibilities and lack of school fees.

At the micro level, in Adjumani Town Council primary schools reflect the cumulative welfare challenges of CHFs. To provide empirical evidence on how CHF welfare conditions (economic, psychosocial, caregiving, parental absence) directly affect academic performance in selected schools. This localized focus fills a gap in research and informs tailored interventions for CHF pupils.

The welfare of child-headed families, particularly in Adjumani District, is a pressing concern that significantly impacts their academic performance. Research indicates that these households often face severe socio-economic challenges, including financial instability and limited access to basic needs. Makiwane et al. (2006) and Borkowski et al. (2007) highlight how economic hardship can

adversely affect children's educational outcomes, making it essential to assess the socio-economic conditions of these families to identify barriers to academic success.

Emotional well-being is another critical factor in the welfare of child-headed households. Children in these families frequently deal with grief and the stress of adult responsibilities, which can hinder their ability to focus on learning. Bharath et al. (2010) found that emotional strain directly correlates with academic performance, as children preoccupied with survival often struggle to engage in their studies. Understanding their emotional health is vital for determining the need for psychological support services within schools.

The educational experiences of child-headed families reveal disparities in school attendance, engagement, and achievement compared to their peers. UNICEF (2013) emphasizes the necessity of evaluating these experiences to highlight the specific challenges faced by these children in the educational environment. By assessing their academic performance, this study aims to identify gaps and inform targeted interventions that could improve outcomes.

Lastly, understanding the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms, such as community programs and school-based initiatives, is crucial for enhancing the welfare of child-headed families. Ainsworth and Filmed (2006) note that tailored resources can significantly impact academic performance and overall well-being. This research will provide insights into what additional resources or interventions are necessary to support these vulnerable households effectively

This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the welfare of child-headed families in Adjumani District, emphasizing the interplay between socio-economic conditions, emotional well-being, and academic performance. By highlighting these critical aspects, the study aims to inform stakeholders and policymakers, fostering a more supportive educational environment that addresses the unique needs of these vulnerable children.

2.2 The Academic performance of Children from Child Headed Families

The academic performance of children from CHFs is a critical dimension of this study because it reflects how welfare challenges translate into educational outcomes. The specific objective is to assess the academic performance of CHF pupils in selected primary schools in Adjumani Town Council, focusing on the following dimensions:

To determine the extent to which CHF pupils attend school regularly and punctually despite caregiving responsibilities and economic hardship. Studies show that attendance is a key predictor of academic success; irregular attendance often leads to poor performance and eventual dropout. Studies show that CHF pupils often miss school due to household duties and lack of resources (Evans & Skovdal, 2014; UBOS, 2016).

In the area of academic achievement, studies show that, pupils from CHF perform below average. In an attempt to evaluate CHF pupils' performance in examinations, classwork, and teacher assessments compared to peers from stable households, Academic achievement reflects the ability to meet curriculum standards and progress through the education system is low. Research indicates that CHF pupils often perform below average due to psychosocial stress and lack of parental support (Foster, 2006; Kyomya, 2019).

In the Classroom Participation, children from CHF show reduced participation. In an objective to assess the level of engagement of CHF pupils in classroom activities, including homework completion, group work, and active involvement in lessons. The finding shows that**,** participation is essential for learning and skill development; low engagement signals barriers to effective education. CHF pupils may show reduced participation due to fatigue, stigma, or emotional distress (Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa, 2017).

Meanwhile, in Retention and Dropout Rates, there are high risk of dropping out of children from CHF. In an effort to analyze the extent to which CHF pupils remain in school or withdraw prematurely due to welfare challenges, the findings show that, CHF pupils are at higher risk of dropping out. Retention is a measure of educational sustainability; high dropout rates among CHFs undermine national goals of universal education. CHF pupils are at higher risk of dropping out due to financial constraints and caregiving responsibilities (Save the Children, 2018).

To compare the academic performance of CHF pupils with those from non-CHF households in Adjumani Town Council, it shows that, parental involvement is strongly correlated with academic success. This highlights disparities and provides evidence for targeted interventions. Parental involvement is strongly correlated with academic success, and its absence disadvantages CHF pupils (Mugumya et al., 2022).

The academic performance of children from child-headed families is often compromised due to a range of socio-economic and emotional challenges. Research has consistently shown that these children face significant barriers to educational success. For instance, Makiwane et al. (2006) highlight that the lack of financial resources in child-headed households often results in increased absenteeism and lower school engagement, which negatively affects academic outcomes. This financial instability can limit access to essential educational materials, further exacerbating the situation.

Emotional challenges also play a crucial role in the academic performance of these children. Bharath et al. (2010) found that the psychological stress associated with the responsibilities of care giving can detract from children's focus and motivation in school. Children who are burdened with adult responsibilities often struggle to balance their academic demands with their home life, leading to decreased performance in their studies. This emotional strain can manifest as decreased concentration, lower grades, and higher dropout rates.

Moreover, the educational experiences of children in child-headed families often differ from those of their peers. UNICEF (2013) reports that these children frequently have lower levels of school attendance and engagement, which correlate with poorer academic performance. The lack of parental support and guidance further diminishes their educational success, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these disparities.

Support mechanisms, such as community programs and school initiatives, can play a vital role in improving the academic performance of children from child-headed families. Ainsworth and Filmer (2006) argue that tailored educational resources and support systems can lead to better outcomes for these vulnerable children. By providing additional academic assistance and emotional support, schools can help bridge the gap in performance, ensuring that these children have the opportunity to succeed academically.

However, the academic performance of children from child-headed families is influenced by socio-economic challenges, emotional well-being, and the effectiveness of support mechanisms. Addressing these factors is crucial for improving educational outcomes and promoting equity in academic achievement among these vulnerable populations

2.3 The relationship of child headed families and academic performance.

Globally, children in CHFs often experience poor academic performance due to poverty, lack of parental guidance, and psychosocial stress. Studies show that orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in CHFs have lower school attendance and completion rates compared to peers in stable households (UNICEF, 2013). Without targeted interventions, CHFs perpetuate cycles of poverty and educational exclusion.

In Africa, CHFs are strongly linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, conflict, and poverty. These factors reduce children's ability to concentrate on studies. Foster (2006) found that children caring for siblings often sacrifice schooling for survival tasks. Academic underperformance among CHFs undermines Africa's progress toward SDG 4 (Quality Education).

In East Africa, kinship networks sometimes mitigate CHF challenges, but stigma and resource scarcity persist. Nabunya, Ssewamala, & Mukasa (2017) highlight that psychosocial support programs improve educational outcomes for vulnerable children in Uganda and Kenya. Regional collaboration is needed to strengthen school-based support for CHFs.

CHFs in Uganda face barriers despite Universal Primary Education (UPE). Many drop out due to hidden costs (uniforms, books). Kyomya (2019) notes that CHF children in Uganda show lower academic performance compared to peers, with high dropout rates. National education policies must integrate CHF-specific interventions.

Conflict and displacement have created many CHFs, especially during the LRA insurgency. Trauma and poverty hinder learning. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2016) reports higher dropout rates in Northern Uganda compared to other regions. Post-conflict recovery must prioritize educational support for CHFs.

Refugee influxes in West Nile exacerbate CHF vulnerabilities. Children often balance schooling with caregiving and survival. Save the Children (2018) found that CHF children in refugee-hosting districts like Adjumani struggle academically due to resource competition. Localized interventions are critical in refugee-hosting regions.

CHFs in Adjumani face compounded challenges—poverty, refugee presence, and cultural practices. Your research report shows most CHF pupils score in Division 3 and 4, with high

dropout rates and gender-specific vulnerabilities (teenage pregnancy, early marriage). District education policies must prioritize CHF learners with targeted support. At the micro-level, CHFs in Adjumani Town Council struggle with school attendance, emotional strain, and lack of scholastic materials. The report highlights that 70% of respondents agreed CHF children suffer significant psychological burdens that hinder learning. Town council education committees should implement mentorship, feeding programs, and counseling services.

The relationship between child-headed families and academic performance is a critical area of study, as it highlights the challenges faced by these vulnerable households and their impact on educational outcomes. Research indicates a significant negative correlation between the characteristics of child-headed families and the academic success of the children involved. Makiwane et al. (2006) emphasize that children in these households often experience economic hardship, which limits their access to educational resources and creates barriers to consistent school attendance. This financial instability is often linked to lower academic achievement, as children struggle to focus on their studies amid pressing survival needs.

Emotional and psychological factors also play a vital role in this relationship. Bharath et al. (2010) found that children in child-headed households frequently grapple with stress and grief, which can hinder their academic performance. The burden of adult responsibilities can lead to difficulties in concentration and motivation, impacting their ability to engage fully in their education. These emotional challenges can exacerbate academic struggles, resulting in lower grades and higher dropout rates.

Moreover, the educational experiences of children from child-headed families often differ markedly from their peers. According to UNICEF (2013), these children typically face increased absenteeism and lower engagement levels in school, which directly correlate with poorer academic performance. The lack of parental support and guidance further complicates their educational journey, making it essential to address these gaps through targeted interventions.

Support mechanisms have been shown to positively influence academic outcomes for children in child-headed families. Ainsworth and Filmer (2006) argue that community resources and school-based initiatives can provide the necessary support to enhance educational performance. Programs that offer tutoring, mentorship, and emotional counseling can help mitigate some of the challenges faced by these children, fostering a more conducive learning environment.

To some extent, the relationship between child-headed families and academic performance is complex and multifaceted. Factors such as socio-economic challenges, emotional well-being, and the availability of support mechanisms significantly influence educational outcomes. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing effective strategies to improve the academic performance of children from child-headed households, ensuring they have equitable opportunities for success.

2.4 Summary of identified research gaps.

The research on child-headed families and their academic performance revealed several critical gaps. Firstly, there was lack of comprehensive data specific to Adjumani District, limiting the understanding of local contexts and challenges faced by these families. Existing studies often focus on broader regions or national levels, neglecting the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics in specific communities. Secondly, the emotional and psychological aspects affecting academic performance are under-researched, with few studies exploring the long-term impacts of care giving burdens on children's educational outcomes. Additionally, the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms, such as community programs and school initiatives, remains inadequately assessed, highlighting the need for empirical evidence regarding their impact on academic success.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, study population, sample size determination and sampling techniques, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, tools for collecting data, piloting the study, and data quality control. It also presents data analysis and presentation and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design. This design involved gathering data from a population sample at a particular time. It included descriptions of what is happening. This design was adopted because it was comparatively quick to conduct given the limited time of the study, there was also limited control effect as subjects only participate once and the large and representative sampling enables different groups to be compared. This design employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2 Geographical Stratification

Geographical stratification was used in the research to ensure different segments of the target population are represented. This helped to capture the perspectives of children from headed families, teachers and school administration, community organizations and Local Councils 1 regarding child headed families and the academic performance in Adjumani Town Council. Adjumani Town Council is divided into various administrative units such as cells. This research was specifically carried out in Biyaya cell. The sample size needed for the study was determined and respondents were allocated proportionally basing on the population size to ensure equal representation.

3.3 Sampling Technique

3.3.1 Random sampling

Random sampling was conducted to select respondents for the study population. This helped to reduce bias by giving every individual an equal chance of being selected within the strata and for specific groups such as children from child headed families, teachers and administrators, community organizations and Local Councils 1 members.

3.3.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to ensure that knowledgeable individuals, to provide complete insights into child headed families and their academic performance in the study.

3.3.3 Cluster sampling

The researcher defined the population of interest that comprised the children from child headed families, teachers and administration, community organizations, and Local Councils 1 members. Nevertheless, clusters within the population were identified such as neighborhoods, police station that serves the community, Local Council 1 office in Biyaya cell. The targeted respondents would randomly be selected within each cluster to participate in the study.

3.3.4 Sample Size

According to UBOS, the population of Adjumani Town Council in 2018 was 10,579. This figure was used to determine the sample size for the study using Israel (1992) equation as indicated below.

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

Where n = sample size of interest

N = target population size

e = level of significance

1 = constant

Using a 5% (0.05) level of significance,

$$\frac{n = 83}{1+83\,(0.05)^2} \qquad \mathbf{n = 68}$$

3.3.5 Sample section matrix

Table 1: Showing the Sample Size

S/N	Nature of respondents	Population	Sample size
1	Children from child headed families	50	45
2	Teachers and administration	25	10
3	Local Council 1	05	06
4	Community organizations	03	04
	Total	**83**	**65**

Source: Primary Data (2025)

3.4 Data collection methods.

The researcher uses Focus group discussion, surveys and interviews to obtain with qualitative and quantitative data to achieve the study's objectives as explained below;

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Surveys was being employed to quantitatively assess the child headed families and academic performance. A structured survey questionnaire was administered to collect quantitative data. This method involves developing a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers. Questionnaires was being administered by the researcher to respondents such as children from child headed families, teachers and administration, community organizations and, Local Councils 1.

3.4.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to ascertain qualitative data with a subset of participants to explore their subjective experiences, perceptions, and narratives related to child headed families and academic performance in Adjumani Town council, Adjumani district.

3.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and patterns in the study topic. Qualitative data from interviews was thematically investigated to extract key themes and insights.

3.6 Ethical consideration

Participants were provided with detailed information about the study objectives, procedures, and their rights as research subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. The confidentiality of the participant's personal information and responses were maintained throughout the research process. Data was stored securely to protect the privacy of participants. The research was conducted with sensitivity to the cultural norms, beliefs, and respect for the rights and dignity of participants to be upheld at all times.

To introduce the study and its objectives, an introduction letter was obtained from the department of Social Sciences and permission was sought from the office of the town council before going to the field to collect data.

3.7 Data Quality Control

This relates to how data collected are to be free from error and stressed in two dimensions, reliability and validity of the data. Reliability refers to the stability, accuracy and precision of measurement. These were achieved through two approaches. That was testing and retesting the tools used in the process of data collection like the 'Likert scale'. Reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha Scores. Any questionnaire with a score of less than 0.50 was considered unreliable.

3.8 Validity

To ensure validity, data collection instruments was pre-tested in an identified service centers using a sample other than the one intended for research to ensure a clear and understandable questionnaire. Any question that was not clear for the respondents was rephrased to get clear understanding of what the study is investigated.

Validity was also enhanced by seeking the approval and opinion of the supervisor before proceeding to collect the data there after. Inconveniences that arise due to language barrier was dealt with by translation of the words to Madi language to ease understanding.

3.9 Strategies for Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation

Data processing was generally, "the collection and manipulation of items of data to produce meaningful information. In this sense it was considered a subset of information processing, "the change (processing) of information in any manner detectable by an observer." The researcher analyzed the data collected using the research questions and objectives.

3.10 Reliability Test.

This was to know whether the instruments are consistent to ensure that individuals do not vary their responses if the instruments are administered once again. This involved piloting instruments by selecting an appropriate and then administering the same group after one or more works to see the correlation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the objectives of; to ascertain the welfare of child-headed families in Adjumani Town Council, to find out the academic performance of children from child-headed families, and to assess the relationship between child-headed families and academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.

4.1 Background information

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and school records. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are presented, supported by tables and thematic discussions. The tool used for data collection were semi-structured interviews and analysis of school records. The researcher was able to interact with sixty-five pupils of which 29 were boys and 36 girls. Out of the 65 pupils the researcher used to obtain data some of them turned down the invitation to be interviewed elaborating different reasons for their inability to participate in the interview, from the educators side the researcher was able to interact with two administrators from different schools. The profile consists of the age, gender, marital status, education grade. According to the learners' concept that were found were the psychological and socioeconomic factor which include dissatisfactory academic performance, behavioral problem, lack of essential educational materials to support their studies, sex abuse, health problems

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: showing the Gender of Respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	29	45%
Female	36	55%
Total	**65**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The majority of respondents were female (55%), indicating that girls are more represented in child-headed households. This aligns with literature showing that girls often bear caregiving responsibilities (Kyomya, 2019).

4.3 The Age Brackets of Respondents

Table 3: Showing the Age Brackets of Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
8–10 years	20	30.7%
11–13 years	8	12%
14–16 years	30	46%
17+ years	7	10.8%
Total	**65**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The finding of the research study showed that the larger population proportion who actively participated in the answering of the questionnaire and interview concentrated with the age bracket of 14-16. Most respondents were between 14–16 years (46%), showing that adolescence is the critical stage where children assume household leadership roles. This age group is particularly vulnerable to dropping out due to caregiving burdens.

4.4 Academic Performance of Children in Child-Headed Families

Table 4: Showing the Performance Grades

Grade Division	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Division 1	1	0	1	1.5%
Division 2	2	0	2	3%
Division 3	8	16	24	37%
Division 4	13	25	38	58%
Ungraded	0	0	0	0%
Total	**24**	**41**	**65**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The majority of CHF pupils scored Division 3 and 4, with only one pupil achieving Division 1. This demonstrates poor academic performance compared to peers in non-child-headed households. Annual dropout rates were reported at 6%, consistent with UBOS (2016) findings on vulnerable children. Research has indicated that out of the sixty-five population that were interviewed the respondent (school administrator) said annually about 6% of the pupils in child headed family's dropout of school and most of the obtained grades ranging from division three (Div.3), Div 4 meanwhile for the past five years the best pupil from child headed families got a first grade from Cesia primary school in 2023, It is evident from these students comments that life is extremely challenging for them they are a pertinent sample since despite their youth they are all raising families and it is evident that these kids have no one to help them since their guardians passed away these youngsters were forced to live on their own as even the relatives were not willing to take on the burden of taking care of the homeless kids based on the extract above one could see that the older children were not ready to lose their siblings they held together as a unit one can conclude that these youngsters are certainly suffering socio-economic and psychological issues both at school and home.

Research has shown that most of the children from child headed families in Adjumani town council remain unemployed living many to resort to peasant farming and some begging on streets since they are experiencing the darkest part of the world even though non-governmental organizations are extending support to the vulnerable children but still many families that are headed by children are encountering dark days in their lives**.**

4.5 Welfare of Child-Headed Families

Table 5: Showing Child Headed families and the academic performance in selected primary schools.

5-Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3-Not sure 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

S/N	**Statement**	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1	CHFs are vulnerable	60%	20%	5%	5%	10%

2	CHFs have resources to care for themselves	6%	4%	0%	10%	80%
3	CHFs face psychological impacts	70%	10%	0%	20%	0%
4	Government supports CHFs	30%	20%	0%	50%	0%
5	Welfare of CHFs is good	15%	20%	0%	30%	35%

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The study finding shows that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that children in child headed families are unprotected and the portion of 20% agree that the children are susceptible meanwhile 5% of the respondent's population where not sure of the idea of whether children that live in child headed families are either vulnerable or not and 5% of the population portion disagreed that children from child headed families were unsusceptible as well as the 10% strongly disagree that children from child headed families have equal opportunity of succeeding in life.

The research finding on Child headed families are having resources to take care of themselves indicates that 80% of the research respondents strongly disagreed elaborating that most of the children from child headed families susceptible and they cannot meet their daily needs this was because they are not privileged to parental care and love and 10% of the respondent portion disagree citing those children are to be provided for by their parents or guardians meanwhile 6% of the respondents agreed that children from child headed families have resources to take care of themselves this was true because some of these children engaged in productive works like manual labor and other shifted to riding motorcycles as boda boda riders to be able to meet their basic needs besides schooling as well as the 6% of the population proportion strongly agreed that the children from child headed families are having resources to take care of themselves this was based on the truth about diversity, innovation and creativity since many of these children from child headed families resorted to small scale business which helped them to earn their daily demands from the small profits realized.

The finding of the study revealed that many of the child headed families are undergoing a lot of psychological impact in Adjumani Town Council this was evidenced by the 70% of the research respondents who strongly agreed due to responsibility overload children playing adult role causing emotional distress and anxiety resulting into impacted cognitive and social development this have led to increased vulnerability to exploitation, 10% of the respondents population agreed citing that

the psychological impact results into loss and grief, financial insecurity and social isolation causing limited social support and interaction meanwhile the 20% of the population proportion strongly disagree with the statement citing that self- resilience making children to cope up with skills and strong bonding with the siblings that can develop compassion and understanding as well as making children learn to find creative solutions to navigate challenges.

The government supports the child headed families in Adjumani Town Council the findings of the study indicates that 30% of the respondent population strongly agreed to the above statement basing it on facts like the universal primary education for pupils and universal secondary education for students in high schools which have equally favored all the school going citizens of Adjumani town council and also promoting girl child education and also protecting children's right across the nation and 20% of the respondent population equally agree with the statement citing that the government provide health services including treatment and counselling to children living with HIV/AIDS and providing shelter to the vulnerable meanwhile 50% of the research respondent's disagree to the above statement stating that the government provides inadequate funding for supporting social services, stigma and discrimination against the vulnerable children as well as inconsistent implementation of policies that often results into un equal access to social support services.

The welfare of Child headed families is good in Adjumani Town Council, the finding of the study indicates that 35% agrees to the above statement basing on the facts that they receive free health services from government health units and economic empowerment through vocational training and providing them with income generating activities as well as emotional and counselling support that assist them to cope with stress and trauma meanwhile 65% of the respondent's population disagree with the above statement despite all the efforts child headed families finds it difficult to get access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and children from child headed families are vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation putting girls at risk of early marriage, rape and defilement though organizations like United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Palliative Care Association of Uganda are in supporting child headed families in Adjumani town council.

4.6 Relationship Between Child-Headed Families and Academic Performance

Table 6: Showing the Relationship Between CHF and Academic Performance

S/N	The Academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1	Children from child headed families always attend classes in Adjumani Town Council.	30%	20%	10%	25%	15%
2	The Academic results of child headed families is always good.	20%	15%	20%	30%	15%
3	Most children from child headed families always continue with their education.	10%	25%	20%	10%	35%
4	There is always high enrollment of children from child headed families in schools.	15%	20%	10%	35%	20%
5	Generally, children from child headed families do excel in Academics in schools in Adjumani Town Council.	10%	25%	15%	30%	20%

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The finding of the study indicates that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that Children from child headed families always attend classes in Adjumani Town Council it is worth noting that most of the children from child headed families attend classes and there are organizations and initiatives that works to support them this effort includes financial provision, resources that help children access education as well mentorship meanwhile 20% of the respondents sample agree to the above statement of the finding citing that children from child headed families most time experience difficult life situations thus making them to attend classes hoping to change the current difficulties in the near future meanwhile 10% of the sample proportion neither accept nor decline the above statement whereas 20% of the population sample of the respondents disagree to the statement and 15% of the remaining sample proportion strongly disagree they cited that children who were left with the responsibility of heading families rarely attend classes because they allocate much of their time in a bid trying to provide the basic needs for the family such as food, clothes and other constraints like financial, care giving responsibilities thus they struggle to attend classes unlike children's who have their parents and guardians.

The Academic results of child headed families is always good, the finding of the study revealed that 20% of the population sample proportion strongly agree to the above statement due to the self-motivation after identifying education as a key to a better life and support system through community programs and mentors and 15% have also agree to the finding they cited that resilience through evolving mechanisms and determination which are essential to realize that every child's situation is unique and the results from academics can vary meanwhile 20% of the study's respondents were neither accept nor disregard the statement and 30% of the sample population disagree with the statement since they always encounter significant challenges such as limited support, trauma and stress which results into emotional distress as well as the 15% of the sample proportion strongly disagree basing on the fact that the children from child headed families experience financial constraint and responsibility overload these negatively impact on their results.

Most children from child headed families always continue with their education, the study's finding shows 10%of the respondents from children from child headed families continues with their education this were stimulated by the self-resilience, motivation and determination to live a better life in the near future and 25% of the sample population agree to the statement they mentioned that there are various scholarship being offered by non-governmental organizations such as Windle Trust International Uganda, mentorship programs and access to educational resources whereas 20% of sample size were not contented with the above statement meanwhile 10% of the population sample disagree with the statement they cited that emotional challenges and work obligation where need to work hard to meet the family's basic needs as well as the 35% have strongly disagreed to the above statement they mentioned that caregiving responsibility and financial constraints such affording school fees, scholastic materials and uniforms can be challenging

There is always high enrollment of children from child headed families in schools, the finding of the study shows that 15% of the sample population strongly agree with above statement this was mainly because of the targeted support programs and initiatives for the vulnerable and 20% also agree to the statement they cited that the free education system of the government such as universal primary education for lower institutions, good health services and stable political atmosphere where 10% of the respondents were not contented with the statement while 35% of the population sample have disagree with the statement since children from child headed families experience significant educational barrier like their inability to afford school fees due to financial constraint as well as the 20% strongly disapprove the statement basing on facts like caregiving responsibilities for their young siblings this most time affect their enrollment in schools.

The relationship is negative and significant: the more severe the socio-economic and psychological burdens, the poorer the academic outcomes. This confirms Foster (2006) and Nabunya et al. (2017), who found that CHFs struggle academically due to caregiving roles and lack of support.

Table 4.7: The relationship of child headed families and Academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.

S/N	The relationship of child headed families and Academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1	The distance from home to school covered by the children from child headed families greatly affect their academic performance in Adjumani Town Council.	25%	20%	10%	15%	10%
2	The characteristics of teachers towards the children from child headed families contribute to their academic performance in schools in Adjumani Town Council.	35%	15%	20%	30%	10%
3	Any administrative strategy and program for the children from child headed families can improve their academic performance in Adjumani Town council.	15%	25%	20%	15%	35%
4	There are government policies that support the performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.	20%	15%	10%	30%	20%

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The table above presents survey results regarding the relationship of child headed families and their academic performance in Adjumani Town Council. The first statement about the distance from home to school shows that 45%of respondents agree that it significantly impacts performance, suggesting that long distances lead to fatigue and absenteeism and possibly transportation can be provided and establishing schools nearby. In regards to teacher's characteristics, 50% believe that that teachers attitudes influence academic outcomes, indicating a need for teacher training on cultural sensitivity and mentorship programs. And in terms of administrative strategies, skeptism is evident with 50% disagreeing on their effectiveness

suggesting the necessity for tailored strategies based on specific needs of these families alongside stakeholder engagement in program design. Conclusively, just 35% agreed that the government policies support these children's performance highlighting a perceived inadequacy that calls for advocacy for better policy alignment and awareness campaigns to inform families about existing support and the overall data reveals the critical socio-economic factors influencing these children's education, emphasizing the importance of accessibility, teachers training, targeted strategies and improved government support.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter handled the summary, conclusion and recommendations from the research findings. It flows in the order of the study objectives.

5.1 Conclusion

From the study findings, it is concluded that the profound challenges faced by child headed families in Adjumani Town Council revealing their vulnerability, lack of resources and the significant psychological impacts that hinder their academic performance. the dissatisfaction of government support further underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that includes financial and psychological counselling and targeted educational programs by prioritizing the welfare and academic success of these children, society can help break the cycle of poverty hence fostering more resilient and empowered generation and immediate action is essential to transform these insights into meaningful support and opportunities for these families.

5.2 Discussion per each objective

5.1.1: Objective one: To Ascertain the Welfare of child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

The assessment of welfare of the child headed families in Adjumani Town Council revealed that many of the child headed families are undergoing a lot of psychological impact in Adjumani Town Council as echoed by most respondents and despite all the efforts child headed families finds it difficult to get access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and children from child headed families are vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation putting girls at risk of early marriage, rape and defilement hence Organizations like United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Palliative Care Association of Uganda are in supporting child headed families in Adjumani town council The findings from the various tables underscore significant challenges faced by child headed families in Adjumani Town Council especially concerning their welfare and academic performance. The predominant concern is the vulnerability of these families as highlighted by 60% respondents who strongly agreed on their susceptibility. The lack of resources is evident with 80%

disagreeing that they have the means of care for themselves which compounds their educational challenges and the psychological impacts indicated by 70% of respondents suggesting emotional distress from overwhelming responsibilities further hinders their ability to succeed academically.

5.2.2 Objective Two: To find out the academic performance of children from child headed families I Adjumani Town Council.

The respondents also reechoed that the performance of the child headed families are due to the self-motivation after identifying education as a key to a better life and support system through community programs and mentors but also it can further be improved and maintained through various scholarship been offered by non-governmental organizations such as Windle Trust International Uganda, mentorship programs and access to educational resources. Regarding academic performance, the results indicate that while some children attend classes and engage in work like manual labor to support their families and many faces significant obstacles such as caregiving responsibilities and financial constraints which affect their educational continuity with only 30% agreeing that these children regularly attend school and an overwhelming 35% expressed doubt about their continuation in education hence the findings call for targeted intervention.

5.2.3 Objective Three: To access the relationship between CHF and academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.

Most respondents asserted that long distances lead to fatigue and absenteeism and possibly transportation can be provided and establishing schools nearby. And it reveals the critical socio-economic factors influencing these children's education, emphasizing the importance of accessibility, teachers training, targeted strategies and improved government support. All in all, there is an urgent need for improved policies and community support tailored to the unique challenges faced by child headed families and this includes addressing psychological impacts, providing adequate resources and enhancing educational opportunities through targeted programs on mentorship, ensuring that these vulnerable children can break the cycle of poverty and improve their academic outcome.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations to various stakeholders.

1. The government should conduct regular needs assessments to establish the real challenges of child headed families and their academic performance.
2. More studies such as this can be conducted in the other Town Councils and Districts so that the outcomes can be compared with this one.
3. Government can design targeted educational programs that may include financial and psychological counselling by prioritizing the welfare and academic success of these children.

5.3.2 Recommendations for the future Research Areas

1. More studies such as this can be conducted in the other Town Councils and Districts so that the outcomes can be compared with this one.

2. Should be able to adapt to change in various environments and observe cultural sensitivity when conducting research work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Guide

My name is Mureo Robina, REG NO M23/ASC/BSW/030.a student of Uganda Christian University collecting data on an assessment of child headed families and the academic performance as part of the requirements in degree social work of Uganda Christian University so kindly buy me your time and the information collected would be kept highly confidential unless otherwise.

SECTION A: BIO DATA

1. Age 8-10, 11-13, 14-16, and 17- above
2. Gender Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Marital status Single ☐

   Married ☐
4. Educational grade ☐

5. Occupation……

SECTION B: Child Headed families and the academic performance in selected primary schools.

Kindly Tick an appropriate answer that suits your interest.

5-Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3-Not sure 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree.

Kindly Tick on appropriate answer that suits your interest

S.N	An assessment of welfare of the child headed families in Adjumani Town Council	SA	A	NS	D	SD
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Most of the child headed families are vulnerable in Adjumani Town Council					
2	Child headed families are having resources to take care of themselves.					

3	Many of the child headed families are undergoing a lot of psychological impact in Adjumani Town Council.					
4	The government supports the child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.					
5	The welfare of Child headed families is good in Adjumani Town Council.					

6. In your own view, comment in the level of the welfare of child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

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7. Suggest ways to improve the welfare of child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

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SECTION C: To find out the Academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

Kindly Tick on appropriate answer that suits your interest.

S/N	The Academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1	Children from child headed families always attend classes in Adjumani Town Council.					
2	The Academic results of child headed families is always good.					

3	Most children from child headed families always continue with their education.	
4	There is always high enrollment of children from child headed families in schools.	
5	Generally, children from child headed families do excel in Academics in schools in Adjumani Town Council.	

6. In your own view, comment on the general Academic performance of children that come from the child headed families in Adjumani Town council

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7. Suggest ways to best handle Academic performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.

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SECTION D: To assess the relationship of child headed families and Academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.

Kindly Tick on the appropriate answer that suits your interest.

S/N	The relationship of child headed families and Academic performance of children in Adjumani Town Council.	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1	The distance from home to school covered by the children from child headed families greatly affect their academic performance in Adjumani Town Council.					

2	The characteristics of teachers towards the children from child headed families contribute to their academic performance in schools in Adjumani Town Council.	
3	Any administrative strategy and program for the children from child headed families can improve their academic performance in Adjumani Town council.	
4	There are government policies that support the performance of children from child headed families in Adjumani Town Council.	

5. In your own view, how can the academic performance of children from child headed families be improved in Adjumani Town Council.

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6. Generally, what can the government do to the children from child headed families to improve on their academic performance in Adjumani Town Council?

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Appendix 2: Interview guide

Introduction

My name is Mureo Robina REG NO, M23/ASC/ BSW/030. a student of Uganda Christian University collecting data on an assessment of child headed families and the academic performance as part of the requirements in degree social work of Uganda Christian University so kindly give me some time and I assure you that the information collected would be kept highly confidential unless otherwise.

1. Bio data of the respondent.
2. Child Welfare of Child headed families
3. Academic performance of children from child headed families
4. The relationship between Child headed families and academic performance.
5. Other vital information in relation to the Research topic.

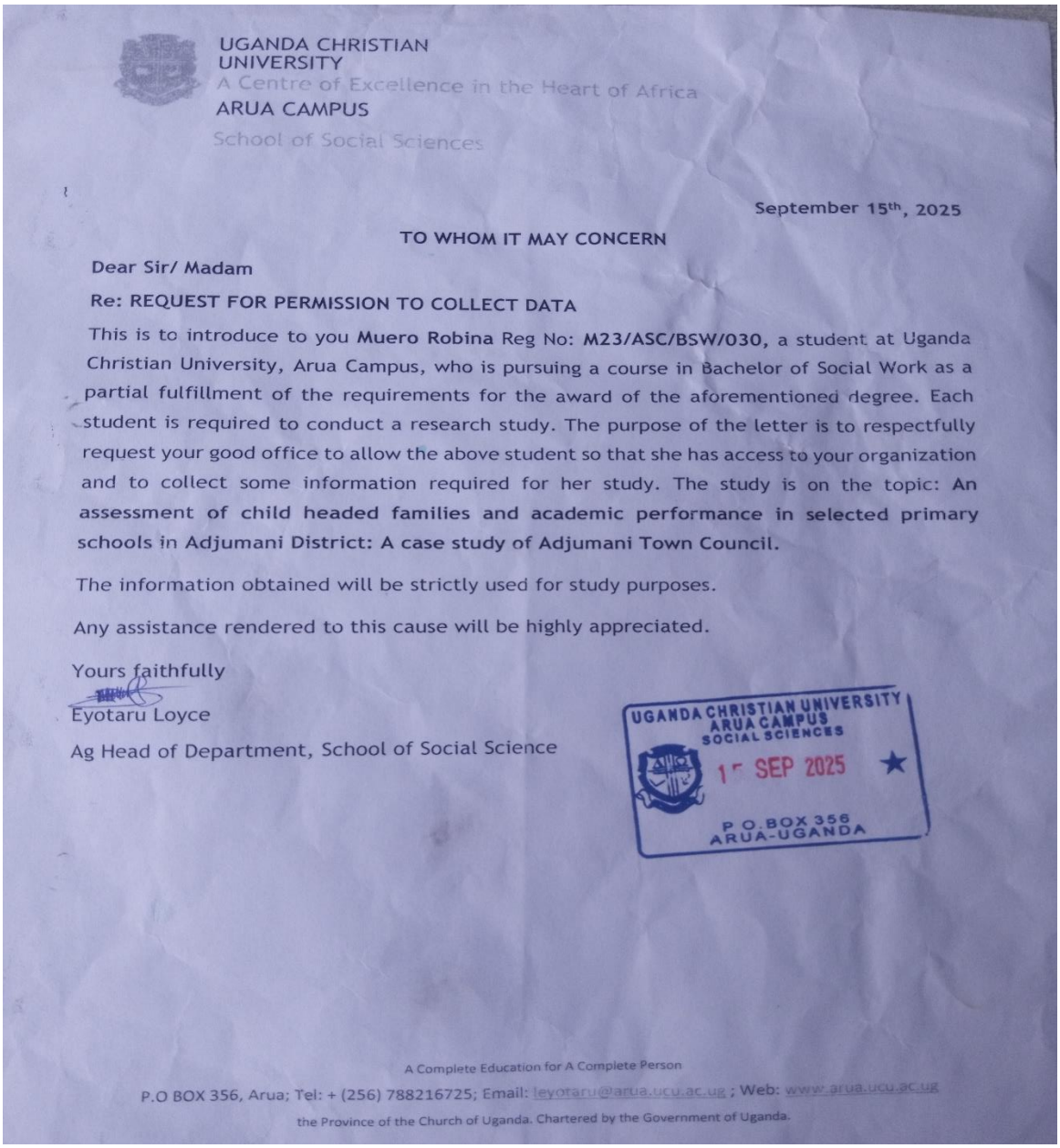
Appendix 3: Budget for carrying out Research

Category	Description	Estimated cost
Travel expenses	Field research travel	100,000
	Travel to meet supervisor	70,000
	Meals	50,000
Total		220,000
Data collection	Pens and note book	20,000
	Printing of Interview and questionier guide	65,000
Total		85,000
Miscellaneous costs	Costs or publishing research findings	35,000
	Unexpected expenses (5% of total budget)	17,000
Total		52,000
Grant -Total		357,000

Appendix4: Time Schedule

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOMBER	NOVEMBER
Research topic approval	✓				
First draft of proposal	✓				
First correction of Report proposal	✓				
Second correction of Report proposal		✓			
Approval of Research proposal		✓			
Data collection			✓		
Analysis of data			✓		
Writing Draft Research Report				✓	
Correction of Research Report				✓	
Approval of Research Report					✓
Submission of Research Report					✓

Appendix5: Introduction letter from the University



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa
ARUA CAMPUS
School of Social Sciences

September 15th, 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

This is to introduce to you **Muero Robina** Reg No: **M23/ASC/BSW/030,** a student at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus, who is pursuing a course in Bachelor of Social Work as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the aforementioned degree. Each student is required to conduct a research study. The purpose of the letter is to respectfully request your good office to allow the above student so that she has access to your organization and to collect some information required for her study. The study is on the topic: **An assessment of child headed families and academic performance in selected primary schools in Adjumani District: A case study of Adjumani Town Council.**

The information obtained will be strictly used for study purposes.

Any assistance rendered to this cause will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Eyotaru Loyce

Ag Head of Department, School of Social Science

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
ARUA CAMPUS
SOCIAL SCIENCES
1 SEP 2025
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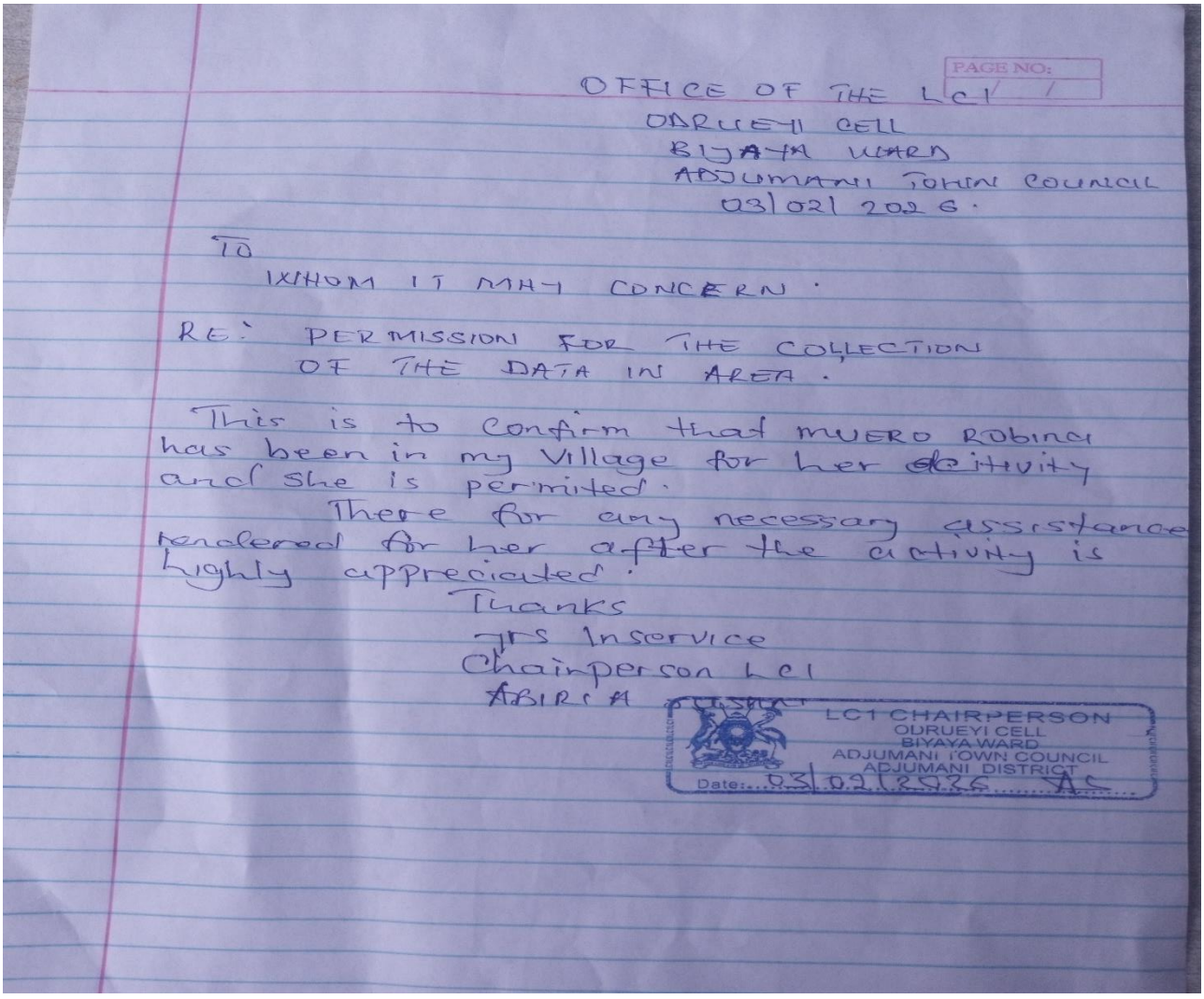
the Province of the Church of Uganda. Chartered by the Government of Uganda.

Appendix6: Acceptance letter from the Local Council 1.



PAGE NO: / /

OFFICE OF THE LC I
ODRUEYI CELL
BIYAYA WARD
ADJUMANI TOWN COUNCIL
03/02/2026.

TO
WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

RE: PERMISSION FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE DATA IN AREA.

This is to confirm that MUERO Robinah has been in my Village for her activity and she is permited.

There for any necessary assistance rendered for her after the activity is highly appreciated.

Thanks
yrs Inservice
Chairperson LC I
ABIRIA

LC1 CHAIRPERSON
ODRUEYI CELL
BIYAYA WARD
ADJUMANI TOWN COUNCIL
ADJUMANI DISTRICT
Date: 03/02/2026