

**THE EFFECT OF HOMELESSNESS ON THE OVERALL WELFARE OF
CHILDREN: A CASE OF MUKONO STATE, UGANDA**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I, Anirwoth Pretty, hereby declare that this research report titled “The Effect of Homelessness on the overall welfare of children: A Case of Mukono State, Uganda” is my original work and has never been submitted to any other university or institution of higher learning for any award.

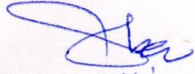
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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report entitled "The Effect of Homelessness on the overall welfare of children: A Case of Mukono State, Uganda" was carried out by Pretty Anirwoth under my supervision. It is now ready for submission with my approval.



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Signature

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Date

Rev. Wareeba Stanley

Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Dr. Joseph Rwothumio and Mrs. Harriet Rwothumio for their support and encouragement throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I most sincerely express my profound gratitude to Almighty God for His enabling grace and all that have contributed in one way or the other towards the successful completion of my course of study.

In a particular way I appreciate my Supervisor Rev. Wareeba Stanley for his absolute commitment in reading every bit of this work carefully and in a timely manner. May God Almighty reward you abundantly as you mentor other students as well. In deed you have been of great value to me.

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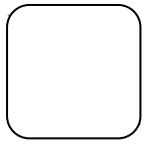
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ABSTRACT

Children need the nurturing of their parents, especially mothers in order to become responsible adults. However, in Mukono state, a number of children are becoming homeless and joining the street. This study investigated the effect of homelessness on the overall welfare of children: A case of Mukono state, Uganda. The study was guided by the following three objectives to: examine how homeless children in Mukono state survive, describe the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children and explore the effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children. The qualitative research approach was used in the study, the research design was case study. Data was collected from 15 participants, using a structured interview guide. Data was analyzed using content analysis. The findings of the study have revealed that homeless children experience hardship on the streets where they take shelter, they lack food, shelter, clothing and the need love to live a happy and developmental life. Again, homeless children are raped, impregnated, join bad groups like prostitution, gangs and get frustrated with life. Some of the recommendations suggested were: Government implement effective children protection laws, regulations and services, friendly behavior to street children be promoted as a way for encouragement these children to come back home. Community and school counsellors should be employed by the government to provide life skills

education. Efforts should be made by the government to provide adequate facilities and support for professionals such as probation officers, police officers to enable them perform their duties effectively of preventing and managing child.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The major focus of this study was to examine the effects of homelessness on the welfare of children aged 10-18 years. The key question explored was; what factors pre-dispose children in Mukono municipality to being homeless and how does this situation affect their welfare? This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and scope of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Children being homeless is not a problem of only our times. Homelessness has existed since civilization in Greek empire when children were abandoned by their relatives (Popescu,2020). During this time, children became homeless after being intentionally abandoned on hillsides, in the wilderness, near churches, hospitals, road sides and other public places (Hacsi, 2017). This type of homelessness was mostly well intentioned, since parents abandoned their children in hope that the child could be taken up by others and have an opportunity of joining another family and lead a normal life (Carpenter, 2016.) In the Early Middle Ages, a new kind of child homelessness appeared in Europe. This type mainly resulted from selfishness with parents abandoning their children because they did not want the responsibility of raising children, due to social – economic reasons (Nelson, 2015).

Homelessness of children became a world-wide problem since the beginning of the 19th century (Phillimore, 2015). According to the United Nations Children’s Fund Emergency (UNICEF) [2016],

about 28 million children, globally are homeless and Darragh (2019) argues that practically every country and city in the world today has some homeless children. Information about the problem from the different regions of the world shows that the United States of America (USA) has the largest number, 106,364 homeless children, contributing 18% of the homeless people (US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). Despite Asia steadily becoming an economic giant, the continent has an estimated number of 8 million homeless children, with India topping the list with 3.6 million followed by Pakistan with 1.5 million (Meribole, 2020). According to EUROSTAT (2021), the number of homeless children is increasing in countries of Europe with the exception of Finland.

The homelessness rate of children in Africa is worrying because the continent has been known for its good extended family structure that has acted as a buffer to social economic challenges that result into child homelessness. The rates at which children on this continent are being made homeless is alarming (Abrahams, et:al, 2016) . In South Africa, out the 18.5 million children, 4.5 million are homeless and about 3,500 become homeless each year (Gobbini et:al, 2018). In Uganda, child homelessness has existed since the 1920s. The oldest orphanage for homeless children in Uganda called Sanyu Babies Home, was started in Kampala in 1929 with the intention of providing a home to children who had been abandoned by their mothers due to death (Sanyu-babies home, 2008). At around the same time, another home called Nsambya Babies Home was started by a catholic priest near Nsambya hospital (<http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200810040029.html>) again with the objective of taking care of orphaned children. While all this time the problem has been managed

effectively, recent escalations in the number of street children in various urban centres of Uganda has led to calls for structured interventions to manage the problem.

Interest in the homelessness of children, especially factors that contribute to and its effect on their lives has grown in the 20th century after it was recognized that this problem was mostly connected to the social-economic challenges of modern life that started affecting life roles, such as parenting and family stability (Swift, 2018). Parents and guardians who mostly feel that their current life priorities are mutually incompatible with taking care of a child due to increased conflict of the child rearing roles with other life roles abandon their responsibility, predisposing children to homelessness (Cook, 2017).

Homeless children are boys and girls, aged under 18 years, who have no proper dwelling and use unoccupied places such as verandahs, streets, abandoned places and wasteland as their home and/or source of livelihood, often inadequately protected or supervised. (Jani, et:al , 2018). Homelessness can be categorized into Part-time and Full-time homelessness. Part-time homelessness is when a person spends most of their active hours on the streets and retire later in the evening to sleep in the slum communities (Phillips, 2019). On the other hand, Full-time homelessness is when a person spends most of his/her time working and living on the streets with no contact with their families (Abhishek et al, 2017).

The family has been perceived as a divine gift to mankind that results into happiness, life success and wellbeing for children (Asif & Saim, 2018). Children need a home to provide a stable environment in order to grow into responsible adults. Children reared in a home are able to receive appropriate nurturing that enables them to develop into well-adjusted adults who value the

responsibility of child rearing. However, homelessness can reduce life development opportunities for a child leading to maladjusted lives (Ayub, 2010). Inability to grow in a stable home can reduce the prospect of a child becoming a responsible adult.

In Uganda, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and ICF (2018) estimates that close to 15,000 homeless children are living in the Ugandan cities, with the majority living in Kampala, Mukono, Mbale, Iganga and Jinja. However, unofficial estimates show that the number of homeless children in Uganda could be much higher than 15,000, and may be close to 26,000 (Balla, 2020). The increasing number of children's homes, taking care of destitute and street children in Uganda and most especially in the urban areas is a sign of the threat that child-homelessness has put on the social-fabric of the country (Borelli et al, 2015). Mukono town is one of the areas of Kampala metropolitan that has undergone changes in the last two decades, which could have negatively influenced the economic, social, and cultural lives of people (UBOS, 2016). The number of homeless and street children has considerably increased in this area. Uganda has a policy that gives protection and assistance to homeless children (Walakira et al., 2017). The Ugandan community is also quite vigilant through their local leaders on controlling child homelessness. However, it is estimated that out of the 25,000 homeless children registered in Kampala metropolitan, close to 40% are picked from streets and abandoned dwellings of Mukono municipality (Mulder et al, 2018). This scenario has motivated the researcher to examine the factors that predispose children in Mukono municipality to homelessness, and the its effect on their wellbeing.

1.3 Problem Statement

Many children in Mukono state are living on the streets without a stable and safe place to call home. These children often lack access to basic needs and necessities such as shelter, food and health care. Factors' contributing to children homelessness includes poverty, family breakdown and displacement. Every child in Mukono state should have access to a safe and stable home environment. Local authorities and organisations should be actively working to prevent child homelessness and provide support for at risk families. The education system should ensure that homeless children have access to quality education and support services.

Homelessness has severe consequences on the physical, social and mental well-being of children, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and lack of health services. Lack of proper education can perpetuate the cycle of poverty, hindering the future prospects.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To investigate the status of child homelessness in Mukono state and its effect on the welfare of children in Mukono state.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine how homeless children in Mukono state survive.

2. To describe the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children.
3. To explore the effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children.

1.3.3 Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What survival strategies do homeless children in Mukono state employ to navigate daily life and ensure their basic needs are met?
2. How does homelessness impact the physical welfare of these children specifically in relation to their clothing adequacy, educational attainment and nutritional status?
3. How does homelessness impact the mental and social welfare of the homeless children particularly in relation to their needs for stable and secure shelter environment?

1.4 Scope of the Study

1.4.1 Content scope

This study established how homeless children in Mukono municipality survive and the effect this problem has had on their well-being. In connection to how children survive, the study focused on where they live, what they eat and how they socialize. As far as wellbeing is concerned, the study examined the physical and mental health status of the children.

1.4.2 Time Scope

The information collected applied to the study period of January 2021 to December 2022. The period of 2 years was appropriate since it covered the COVID-19 pandemic period where reports on work, life and family strain increased and negatively affected the stability of many people in Uganda, more especially urban areas. So, it was appropriate to capture the status of child homelessness and its effects on the children.

1.4.3 Geographical Scope

Mukono Municipality provided a befitting area of study on the cause of child abandonment among single mothers, because according to the Mukono district Annual Report (2021), Mukono municipality is among urban areas in Uganda grappling with high child homelessness.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The study generated information which can be used by policy makers including the Ministry of gender and children's affairs to make informed decisions on policies and initiatives for controlling and eliminating child homelessness. This study findings will provide information to police officers and local leaders who are usually the first line of contact with homeless children. Additionally, they have information on how to best manage the situation.

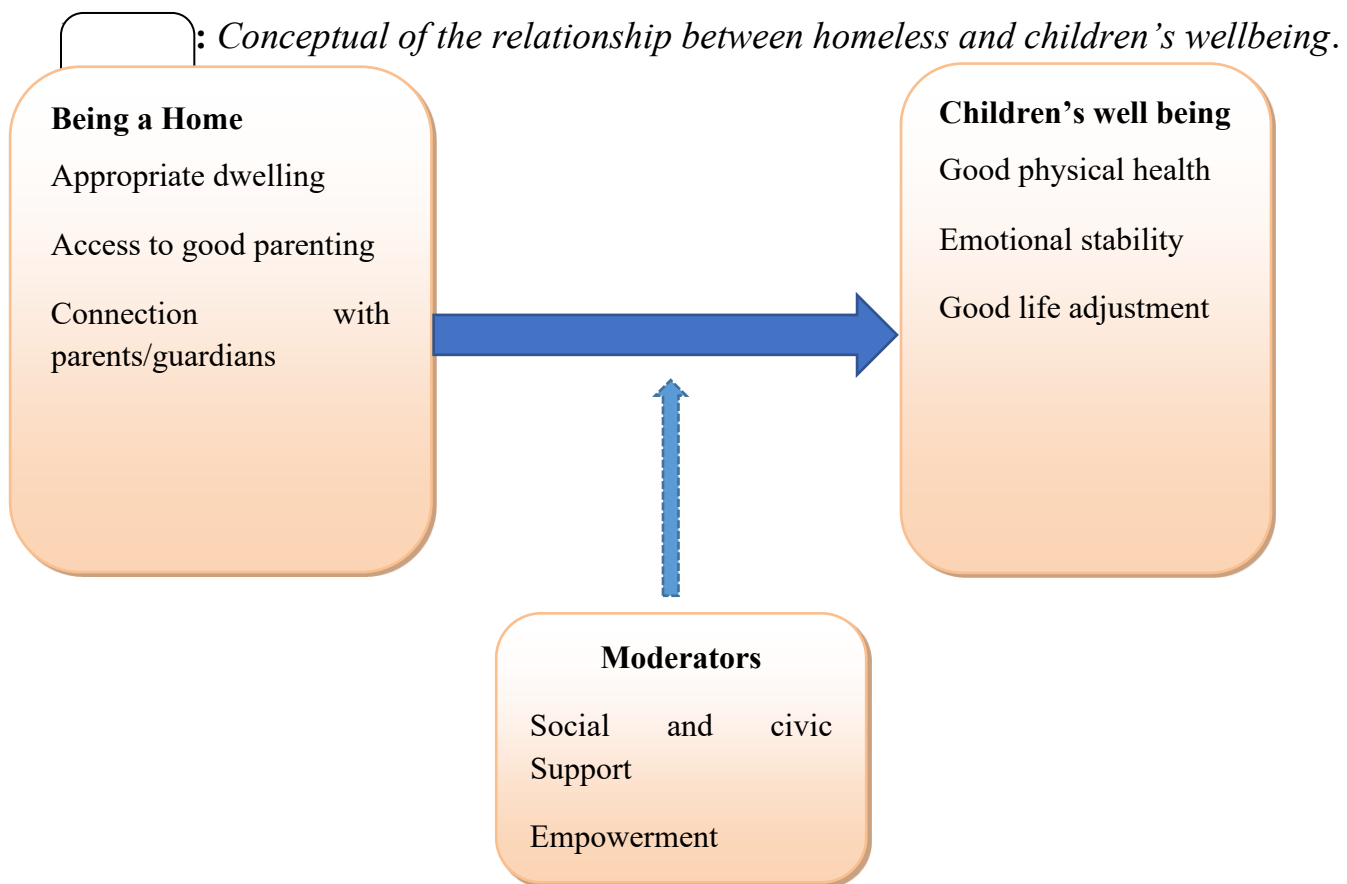
The central government and its line ministries will use the findings to strengthen the enforcement of existing policies on preventing child homelessness. The findings will also be used in initiatives for creating awareness on the dangers of child homelessness.

All the concerned stakeholders may use the findings to be empowered with relevant information on how to implement the available initiatives on managing child homelessness. The study findings will add to the pool of knowledge on studies that have investigated ways on controlling child

homelessness. The study may offer relevant literature to future scholars on subject of child homelessness among vulnerable mothers.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below provides a graphical conceptual representation of the key aspects of the study and how they relate to one another.



Source: Adapted from Walakira et al (2017), and modified by the researcher

According to the conceptual framework in figure 1, a child can be said to have a home when she/he has appropriate dwelling, access to good parenting and a good connection with parents/guardians. This can contribute to a child growing with good physical health, emotional stability and life

adjustment. However, the availability and access to social support and empowerment can enable the contribution of a home to a child's well-being.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the existing body of knowledge, identifies gaps in the existing body of knowledge and provides relevant theoretical and empirical review on survival strategies of homeless children and how this state of life affects their wellbeing.

2.2 How Homeless children Survive

Despite the troubling problems faced by homeless children, most of these children exhibit resilience through creative coping capabilities in their harsh street environment. This section presents the copying and survival strategies of homeless children. According to Abebe (2019), homeless children engage in begging either full-time or part-time as a way of livelihood or supplementing their income from begging with that from other activities. The main justification for many boys and girls to be involved in begging is horrible poverty. In such contexts, begging ensures their basic needs are met. Similarly, Lippman et al. (2021) during a conference on the emerging horizon for social work researchers present the survival strategies of homeless children as: begging for money, clothes, food items among others as one of the survival strategies adopted by homeless children.

Again, Girmachew (2016) shows that homeless children especially the brave ones adopt begging as a survival strategy. Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) identify use of drugs as a coping mechanism by homeless children thought to offer relief from the harsh realities of their everyday lives. In the same regard, Lippman et al. (2021) found homeless children dealing in drugs as a survival skill. This

can be attributed to peer influence and the environment around the homeless children characterized using drugs, the homeless children also start to use drugs to cope with the challenges. Unfortunately, this is a negative survival skill as it puts the homeless children to addiction as well as mental illness. Lippman et al., (2021) found more than half of the homeless children reporting to be engaging in part-time work as a survival strategy. Similarly, Girmachew (2016) found shoe shining as the most popular job for homeless children in Ethiopia although they are not trusted.

To add, Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor, (2015) also show that homeless children engage in dangerous economic activities such as hawking and carrying head luggage to survive. It can be scrutinized those homeless children have skills to do part-time work but there are immediate responses for this such as most of the homeless children run away from rehabilitation centers where they acquire skills and come back to the streets because of the free life experienced while being homeless. Chinyai (2017) shows that homeless children in Zimbabwe get help from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that provide solutions such as giving the children food, clothing, and blankets periodically. Similarly, Gerison (2021) shows that because homeless children are not always able to speak for themselves or to assess their own needs, NGOs have taken up the responsibility to ensure that the short-term and long-term interests of children are effectively addressed in any relief and development programme. This shows that non-governmental organizations are playing a very important role in promoting the welfare of disadvantaged children by planning, financing, managing, and providing advice and counseling services for various projects set up to help poor children in general and street children in particular. Lippman et al., (2021) found a significant proportion of homeless children getting money from their friends and relatives.

This is the same case with Chinyai (2017) who found that homeless children relied on help from peers. This can help us understand there are social networks for homeless children that contribute to their survival. Previous scholars have not paid particular attention to scavenging as a survival strategy for homeless children, Chinyai (2017) discusses it as another coping strategy that homeless children use for survival in Zimbabwe. Due to hunger, homeless children do not mind the quality of what they eat and, in this context, end up looking for food in dustbins near hotels or food places and markets for what to eat. Despite Lippman et al., (2020) not giving detailed results on the survival strategies of homeless children, they point out gambling, carrying a weapon, and sleeping during the day/staying awake at night as survival strategies adopted by homeless children. Whilst Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) point to self-medication or the use of herbs and treatment by friends as some of the survival strategies used by homeless children.

2.3 The effects of homelessness on the well-being of children

The United Nations Children's Fund (2021) has labelled homeless children as children in difficult circumstances who have attracted very limited attention of the world. This is a concern because homeless children are at risk of a number of physical and emotional problems.

2.3.1 Homelessness and physical wellbeing of children

Studies (Lonnie,2016; Lippman et al, 2021) show that homeless children are more likely to be unhealthy because they carry a greater disease burden. According to Choi and Alison (2020), the homeless lifestyle of a child makes him more vulnerable to health risks and problems than children who live at home. As they roam the streets begging for food and money to obtain basic needs and are found sleeping in half-destroyed houses, abandoned basements, under bridges and in the open

air, these children quickly attract contagious and viral diseases. Baldari (2015) also says that these children are vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour, substance abuse and violence. The key health problems faced by homeless children in Africa are growth and nutritional disorders, physical injuries, violence, sexual abuse, communicable diseases including diarrheal diseases, malaria, respiratory diseases, neglected tropical diseases, mental health issues, substance abuse, reproductive health disorders, mortality, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS (Abhishek et al, 2017). These children have no safe shelter, proper nutrition, access to health care, health education, and sexual reproductive health,

2.3.2 Homelessness and mental wellbeing of children

The lack of protection from any form of abuse, violence and substance abuse, these children are usually prone to mental health disorders such as alcoholism, and substance use disorders (SUDs). A study by Crisis (2018) showed that Misuse of drugs and alcohol was highly prevalent among the homeless adolescents in Africa; Lippman, et al (2021), discovered that two thirds of homeless children in Europe cited drug or alcohol use as a reason for their first becoming homeless, and those who use drugs are seven times more likely to be homeless. Drug and alcohol misuse are particularly common causes of death amongst the homeless population, accounting for over a third of all deaths (Abebe, 2018.). Among adults, homeless people are between seven and nine times more likely to die from alcohol-related diseases than the general population, and twenty times more likely to die from a drug-related cause (Thomas, 2020). Crime and homelessness are also closely interrelated. In the

United Kingdom, an estimated 20-33% of homeless people had previously spent time in prison (Greater London Authority, 2016).

2.4 Strategies to Reduce Child homelessness

To improve the survival of homeless children, there is a need to address their challenges. In this regard, Thapa et al. (2019) contend that there is an indispensable need to develop a comprehensive strategy by involving all the concerned stakeholders, and this should essentially comprise of elements like measures to sensitize the respective authorities to the needs of street children. Secondly, Balla and Chandini (2020) indemnified powerful familial bonds by maintaining a nurturing environment this can be achieved through orienting policemen to strengthen the relationship between them and homeless children for security (Chinyai, 2017), health workers to develop a positive attitude towards helping homeless children once they seek help (Legrand & Pichon 2012). Leickness et al (2016) show that ensuring strict action against the offenders of homeless children as a measure to improve their survival. This can help to protect the children from bullies as well as those who rape the girls. Whilst, Kerfoot et al., (2017) contend that fostering linkages with Non-governmental agencies to expand the range of the services is a measure to improve the survival of homeless children. In responding to the needs of homeless children, the role of NGOs cannot be ignored as these provide support and materials to the children. Ensuring linkage will provide that these come on board to provide for the homeless children.

There are a number of actions that can be taken by countries in the world to help prevent child homelessness. These include: social assistance and foster homes (Save the Children ,2017). Other countries have offered financial support programmes that focus on high-risk families, parent training

centres and helplines to support families in need (Popescu, 2020). In some countries of Europe, guidance on preventing child homelessness exists and social workers move through communities to recognize and manage high risk situations (Pantea, 2012). However, recently, in a number of countries punitive measure have been tried through the child rights law to prevent parents from abandoning their parenting rights (Zeija, 2017). But, in some countries of Africa, this law has been difficult to implement. Walakira et al (2017) say that a lot of decision making on the enforcement of measures to prevent child homelessness depend on politicians. If they consider this problem as their first priority a reduction of child homelessness would occur. But on the other hand, it was pointed out that one of the major reasons this problem is not prioritized and it is concealed in the shadows of infectious diseases.

A study by Mezzina et al (2019) showed that more governmental preventive work and other knowledge rising projects such as campaigns, mass media and education reduced child homelessness in Mexico. Hence increasing knowledge about the role of family in the well-being of children and how families can empower themselves can reduce child homelessness. Enforcing state policies and laws in some African countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia has increased protection of children from neglect, abuse and increased their access to education reducing the likely hood to go to the street.

When it comes to political and economic issues, the poor countries of Africa, this is the major cause of child homelessness (Mezzina et al, 2019). For example, Walakira et al (2017) say that in Uganda, the government has a major role of eliminating child homelessness and protecting their rights, which has long been neglected by the government.

The effectiveness of legislation on the protection of children rights is crucial in preventing child homelessness. But for any legislation work, there is need for public awareness campaigns and seriousness in enforcement (Popescu, 2020). In order to improve the capacity to implement the child rights and protection provisions efforts should be intensified to enforce the laws and ensure that those who breach them are quickly brought to justice (Borelli et al,2015). The effectiveness of punitive actions will act as a big deterrent to to reduce the rate of child homelessness.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the approaches that was used to collect data on causes of child homelessness by single mothers in Mukono municipality. It consists of the research design, the population, sampling strategies, data collection methods, quality control of instruments, research procedure, data management and analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study

3.2 Research Approach

The study used a qualitative research approach for an in-depth study of the causes of child homelessness by single mothers (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research is the research used to discover complex phenomena which may be difficult with quantitative studies. In this research

approach, the researcher was able to freely in a none structured manner to collect in-depth views about the research questions from participants with the view of finding out unknown information and meaning participants credit to it.

This research approach was appropriate in enabling the researcher to explore and understand the meaning respondents ascribe to the causes of child homelessness by single mothers and their views on what can be done to control this problem.

3.3 Research Design

The study applied a case study research design. Creswell (2014), defines case study research as an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evidently clear. Given that child homelessness is a current concern affected by many factors; it requires intensive investigation within the actual setting of the division. So, a case study design will be more suitable.

The design was relevant to the study because it allowed an in-depth study of a smaller population using multiple sources of evidence. **Hence following Akaninwor (2016) he** researcher carried out a full contextual analysis of the problem through interviews from the affected children and current guardians, officers from children's homes.

A full contextual analysis of the life experience of homeless children, through interviews was done. This enabled the researcher to do an in-depth study of the problem in a smaller population of single mothers who stay in Mukono municipality and have real life experience of the research problem.

3.4 Area of study

The study was carried out in Mukono municipality. This area is a peri-urban area located, in Mukono 17 kilometers from Kampala, along the Kampala Jinja highway. Being on the highway, the area has various categories of homeless children who are experiencing difficult life circumstance that predispose poor quality of life. Mukono municipality is one area in Uganda with the highest rate of child homelessness, so it was befitting case study. Statistics show that close to 40% (Walakira et al, 2017) of the cases of homeless children reported in Uganda came from this area.

3.5 Population of the study

According to Kumar (2011), a population is the whole group of people occurrences or things of interest that a researcher wishes to study. On the other hand, a target population is the total collection of elements about which the researcher wishes to make some inferences (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). The target population of the study included all homeless children in Mukono municipality, social workers supporting homeless children, and community development offers of local government responsible for protecting the rights of children. All together and 26 participants were targeted.

3.6 Sample size

Zikmund (2010) defines sampling as the process by which a researcher selects a sample of participants for a study from the population of interest. On the other hand, a sample, is the portion of the population of interest that is selected for a study from which data is collected to address the research objectives (Gaiser & Schreiner, 2009). Samples are used to get representative respondents in cases where population sizes are too large to include all possible members or observations. The sample size for was established using saturation. Saturation is the point when no new information is

being collected from the participants (Majid ,2018). The researcher ends the process of gathering data at that point and the sample size is made up of respondents who have provided information the target sample consisted of the whole population 25 participants who could effectively express themselves either in Luganda or English and had the required information. However as indicted in table 1, the actual sample comprised of 15 participants, which brought the response rate to about 60%, which according to Akaninwor (2016) is good enough of quittable studies.

Table 1

Population and Sample

Population	Target sample	Actual sample
Homeless children	17	12
Social workers	5	2
CDOs	3	1

3.6.1 Sample techniques

Non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed as guided by well-informed persons. In order to get appropriate respondents, local leaders, probation officers and workers of children’s homes in the area were contacted to get willing and informed participants. The purposive sampling technique was used because it enabled the researcher to get self-motivated participants for reliable data (Creswell, 2014). Also, participants who have good knowledge of the research problem were needed. The sample was thus selected from people of interest, homeless children who live on the

street or unoccupied dwellings in Mukono municipality and excluded those who did not suit the study purpose.

3.7 Data collection method

A data collection method represents how data is collected. It is the techniques used to collect data (Flick, 2014). Lavrakas (2008) states that data collection techniques allow researchers to systematically collect research data. The researcher used the survey method to collect data. This involved the use of structured self-administered questionnaires (SAQs), interviews and documentary review guides to collect a large amount of data. This technique helped the researcher to cover more respondents and collected more representative information on the research problem. The researcher gathered data from primary sources. Primary data gathered by the researcher herself. The study used interviews to enable the researcher to get in-depth data. Interviews give respondents freedom to answer the questions in their own way as well as letting them reveal their deepest emotions about the subject, thereby giving insight into their personal feelings. This enabled the researcher to collect real experiences of participants on the research questions.

The interviews were verbally administered and involved face to face encounters. The interviews were preferred from the questionnaires, because they are the best way to explore feelings, thoughts and attitudes to sensitive issues. They are also good for getting information from the people who work with the problems on a daily basis. Furthermore, interviews yielded first-hand information, which were more valid than only reported information. They offered some data from nonverbal cues, even when the respondents are unable to answer, unwilling to cooperate, or when they give biased information. A change in voice or body language indicated that one has a specific problem in

answering the question, which gave firsthand information about the research problem in a ‘naturally occurring’ context.

3.7.1 Interview guide

An interview is a conversation with a purpose (Flick, 2014). A Semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions was used to collect data. Using a semi-structured interview, allowed the researcher to work out questions in advance, change the wording of questions, or leave out questions which seem inappropriate to a particular interviewee or add new ones (Levey, 2018). Since the questions were realistically formulated, the respondents were able to give straight forward answers without any misunderstandings.

The Interview created opportunity for interviewees to ask for clarification when they do not understand a question just as the interviewer can ask for elaborations on answers given by interviewees. Furthermore, there is the guarantee that all questions was answered or, at least, attempted by the interviewee which ensured a high response rate. Moreover, it became possible to check on the reliability of a response by asking the same question differently and at different stages of the interview (Yin, 1994).

3.8 Procedure of data collection

Following approval of the proposal, the researcher received a letter from the university authorizing her to go to the field and gather data. The letter was given to the heads of the various local, and central government departments in Mukono municipality, they gave the researcher permission to gather data. Individual respondents were questioned in-depth during the data gathering process.

The researcher recorded the audio of the interviews and as well took down significant viewpoints about the study concepts and variables. The respondents were invited to freely express their own understanding of the interview questions.

3.9 Quality control

The researcher ensured that the instruments and the procedure of data collection are based on the study's purpose and objectives (Majid, 2018). The researcher ascertained that the instruments were valid and reliable. The participants responded to the items by instructions set. Validity indicates the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Cohen 2007). The instruments were evaluated by the supervisor to ensure their face and content validity. The researcher ensured that the data collection was dependable and trustworthy (Levey, 2018).

Reliability is the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings; it is often treated as the issue of whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers provided the variable does not change (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As suggested by Sekaran and Bougie, (2013), the researcher ensured that the research questions match the method of data collection and analysis procedures.

3.10 Data Analysis

Creswell (2004), defines data analysis as transforming, cleaning and modelling data in order to discern useful information, propose conclusions and support decision-making. Data analysis also involves reducing the volume of raw information, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative data should be analysed using three concurrent flows of action, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. Qualitative will be analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data by organising data sets into distinct themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.7). Thematic analysis accentuates the probing, identifying and recording of patterns or themes within data (Curtis, 2008, p.56). Zikmund (2010, p.67) defines themes as patterns across data sets that are imperative to the description of phenomena and supplementary to a specific research question.

Data processing begun as soon as data collection was started. Data was examined and sorted. As advised by Maxwell (2013), the researcher checked for uniformity, consistency, legibility, and comprehensibility. Descriptive statements were obtained to provide answers to the research questions (Levey, 2018). Finally, the editing and classification of data was done. The qualitative data analysis methods suggested by Creswell (2014) was applied. A content analysis approach involved data reduction, data display and verification (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). Words was organized into incidents or stories, to create concrete, rich meaningful flavour. Similarities and differences between the concepts within the data was identified, through the use of data familiarization and revision.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Researchers are required to identify and follow proper ways to collect, process and report research data (Creswell (2014). Research ethics is appropriate behavior of a researcher relative to the norms

of society (Zikmund, 2010). Ethical Considerations refer to a researcher ensure that the study is conducted with integrity, honesty, and transparency by complying with the recommended considerations of various research institutions (Kumar, 2011). In connection to this research, participants were made fully aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information was being required, what purpose it would be used for, how they were expected to participate in the study and how it directly or indirectly affected them.

Research participants were informed of the right to withdraw at any time of their choice (*informed consent form in appendix A*). The researcher assured participants that secrecy and confidentiality will be maintained and guaranteed. The identity of individuals from whom information was obtained in the course of the study was kept strictly confidential.

3.12 Limitations and Delimitations of the study

Due to limited time and resources, the study was limited to only one urban area Mukono municipality in Uganda. In connection with delimitations, the focus of this research was one area. This facilitated quicker and more reliable data collection. The researcher used a well-selected sample and appropriate data collection methods to collect rich enough and sufficient data to provide conclusive findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF STUDY FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and their interpretation. This study investigated the status of child homelessness in Mukono state and its effect on the welfare of children. The study specifically examined how homeless children in Mukono state survive, described the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children and assessed the effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children.

The findings are from interviews that were conducted with 15 participants and are presented in three sections basing on the research objectives. The demographic information of participants is discussed first in the section below.

4.1 Demographic Information of Participants

Information about relevant personal information of the participants was collected to ensure that respondents were able to provide the right information to enable the researcher make credible conclusions. This information is summarised in table 4.1.

Table 4.1:

Demographic information of Participants

Aspect	Homeless children (13)	Social workers (2)	Community development officers (1)
Gender			1
Male	8	1	
female	5	1	
Number of Years on street/supporting street children	7	6	8

Source: Primary data from the field (2024)

As indicated in table 4.1, among the 13 homeless children who participated in the study, 8 were boys, 5 were girls and on average they had been on the street for 7 years. In connection to social workers, 1 was male and another female and had on average worked to support homeless children for 6 years.

In connection community development officers, he was male and had worked in his position for 8 years. Generally, all participants had considerable experience in the life of homeless children so, were able to clearly relate their experiences and provide revealing opinions and attitudes on the issues that were being investigated in the way they saw it. This was needed to increase the likelihood of having more credible information.

4.2 Objective One: How homeless children survive

In this objective the researcher explored how the homeless children lived, in connection to the survival strategies they employed to navigate daily life and ensure their basic needs are met.

This disgraceful life and growing up predisposed many to lack of education, upbringing and poverty.

For example, one of them, aged 16, from Kauga explained that;

Most of the homeless children you will meet, find it almost impossible to have a decent life. They fail to have good life and develop. They survive in lowly ways **(Female child, Kauga)**.

Another child, 17 years from Seta defined most homeless children as poor, marginalized, vulnerable, excluded and deprived. he added that;

I was deserted by my parents and in turn ended up being homeless without any source of income. I had nowhere to stay so I kept on attending discos at night. I entered into prostitution and became pregnant. With no stable source of income,

decided to abandon my child at a children's home after life became hard for me
(Girl, 17, Seeta).

Another girl who was 16, became pregnant on the street explained how her bad situation caused her to abandon her home. She intimated;

I was impregnated by a man who was a stranger to me. I never met him again. This made my life very complicated, thought of committing suicide but had to forget about dying early. I decided to take the baby to an Aunt in Kalagi. I simply abandoned the baby at home in the night.

Hence, from the experiences the homeless children live a difficult life as evidenced in lack of basic things like food shelter, clothing, love and decent clothes. This is still worsened by the coldness and harsh treatment they experience in the night.

4.3 Objective Two: Effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children

In the second objective, the researcher sought to assess the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children. It was found that majority of them lack shelter, food, clothing and education and had no ways of even acquiring these needs through self-employment and donations. For example, a child aged 14 from Kauga intimated;

When I realized that I would die of hunger for lack of food, I started going to market places and restaurants to get left overs., But I was always chased away. They thought I would eventually steal their things. When I asked for work to

wash utensil in exchange for food still, they wouldn't let me (**boy, 11 years, Kauga**).

A girl from Mukono central added;

I took the initiative to look for work and shelter as a house keeper. I went to the LC office and explained why I had run out of home and wanted help to get a job and get some simple shelter. I got a home but they mistreated me so much. They would not give me food; I was sleeping in the kitchen and I was always verbally abused. so, I ran way and went back to the street (**girl, 17 years, Seeta**).

Another girl also explained how she wanted to get shelter;

I became a sex worker and got a boy who wanted to take me to his home. I accepted for I thought that could now settle me down. But the response I received was a rude choke. He wanted nothing to do with me, He even said that he would never impregnate a woman like me (**Girl, 16 Mukono central**).

Another boy aged 19 from Kauga explained how he ended up being a male prostitute. He narrated his suffering;

I was living with my step mom and she made my life difficult. I would miss meals and every night she abused and insulted me. I was annoyed that my father did not stop her. He usually just looked on. I ran away from home and joined a group of boys who were living on their own in Kauga. Later I realized that they survived through prostitution. I was introduced to this bad vice when I was only

14 years. Most of the women were sick with HIV yet they did not want to use protection so I ran away **(Boy 19, Kauga)**.

Social workers complained for lack of adequate social welfare schemes where well-being of disadvantaged and vulnerable human being exists in Mukono. Social worker from organization B explained,

When social problems are managed, human needs are met and when social opportunities are maximized, child homelessness would be non-existent in Uganda **(Social worker , Organisation B)**.

A CDO added that;

The Social welfare system does not provide for reliable care services such as education programs, housing, financial help and other social help to homeless children. The government could consider practicing a welfare system where by the homeless children are given allowances to take care of their physical needs as they are rehabilitated (CDO, Mukono central division)

In many of the interviews, the participants had expected to have better life on street. They had expected to get assistance and understanding from the community, but they did not get it.

4.4 Objective Three: Effect of Homelessness on The Mental and Social Welfare of Children

The third objective of the study was to establish effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children. This objective focused on the impact of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children particularly in relation to their needs and secure shelter environment. It was discovered that homeless children had no access to decent living, health care, education and spiritual services. They had higher rates of abortion, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), infection and accidents. They experienced stress and anxiety, resulting in depression and behavioural issues. The impact of homelessness on the health and development on homeless children would extend beyond the period of homelessness up to their future lives.

A very dangerous finding is that these children felt they were not living as humans and wanted support to start living again like normal persons and to achieve the necessary self-sustenance. For example, a child from Kauga intimated that;

Homelessness has, drained our humanity, dignity and image. We have lost our self-confidence. We feel like we are animals. We have no feeling; sympathy and we hate ourselves and everyone. So, we need counselling to help accept the reality and focus on being the best can be. We need guidance on how to bury the past and fill the void left by being abandoned when we were young. We want to be free and be looked as normal and good persons (**Male aged 17**).

A social worker from organization A added that.;

Most of the homeless children we have worked with were just forced into this bad situation because they did not know how to survive. They have had no education, connections and skills. Most of them still do lowly jobs that bring very little money. They live had to mouth a situation that has lowered their quality of life **(Social worker, org. A)**.

A community development officer from Mukono central division responsible for resettling and protecting these children on behalf of government explained;

These children live with stray dogs and cats. Animals they stay at night have become their friend. So, they have lost touch with humanity. They instead see a human as animals. So, they counselling, care and skills training to learn how to survive on our own and come back to humanity **(Local government CDO)**.

Two female homeless girls who were found together, elaborated their situation further and said;

We left our homes because we wrongly thought that we could only depend on the street and handout, since we had seen that we are no longer needed by our people. But we have learnt that the street is no place to be, even when you have faced many difficulties. For us girls we faced big problems, we are always sexually abused and raped. Even the men who use us do not want us as wives, they just abandon us **(Girl 14 years, Seeta)**.

The second girl explained the health problems they faced from sexual abuse and unprotected sex.

For me I have committed abortions many times. The healthcare workers are now tired of my face. I have tried to have small means of sustenance, by working in small restaurant where I also sleep at time, but bad guys get me out of there and force me into prostitution. If I had simple shelter it would give some inner peace and calmness, because if you fail to have that, it means you might end up failing as a person **(Girl, 17 years, Mukono central division)**.

A social worker from organization B explained what homeless children are predisposed to social and health problems. She elaborated;

Most of the homeless children have been abused in all ways because they do not know their rights and values as human beings, since majority of them left civility early and dropped out of school. Life difficulties have beaten them hard. Many believe they can never be good humans or succeed in life. So, they need reassurance, love and care **(Girl, 17 years, Mukono central division)**.

The CDO explained how the community has not been able to take its responsibility in helping homeless children. He reiterated;

The situation becomes worse when the children who actually need love and care are stigmatized in some communities. They are beaten, abused and demeaned

where ever they go to seek for some help. Even when they go look for some simple jobs to earn a living, they are taken to be vagrants and often humiliated, so majority have resorted to drugs as source of comfort (**CDO, Mukono central division**).

A female homeless child added that;

But if we can go back to school or receive some skills training, we will live a gain. Let the government and NGOs bring this skills training nearer to us, where we live. We will effectively utilize this opportunity and revive our chances of being humans again (**Girl aged 16, Kauga**).

Participants also mentioned about the need for advocacy against child abuse, to promote the rights and wellbeing of homeless children, in Uganda as a whole.

A social worker from organization A urged;

Most homeless children who are not aware that homelessness is child abuse. They often blame themselves for what happened yet it was the role of adults to protect these children. They need to learn that abandoning a child even when you have right reason is criminal. They need to learn that children have rights to basic needs, love and protection from the parents, whatever the life circumstance of the child (**social worker, Organisation A**).

Participants also blamed government for not seriously sensitizing the communities about the dangers of child abuse and abandonment and not effectively enforcing policies to prevent it.

A CDO complained;

The government has not done much about this problem. It is the Non-Governmental Organisations that have done the work of educating, raising awareness and counseling the community and families that have abandoned their children. He further said that the government does not even support law enforcing agencies such as Local Council 1 and the police that try to control this vice in the communities. He informed that at least the Local Councils try to look for the money to sustain the abandoned children till they are taken to foster homes. However, government does not even sensitize vulnerable girls about the use of family planning and practicing safe which could have preventing unwanted pregnancies (**CDO, Mukono central division**).

The participants further put government to task on not doing enough to minimize the problem of child homelessness. They blamed it for not have sufficient efforts and intervention to stop this problem, yet they know quite well about its dangers. Social worker from origination B had this to say;

Even when government identified the problem and made some policies to control it, still it is the Non-Governmental Organisations which have community-based programs to stop child abuse and abandonment that cause homelessness. I have not known a government program that handles Homelessness and its causes. She further advised that the Ministry of health and especially those who are working in Public Health to initiate sensitization to control this problem. She added that though the ministry of health has tried to advertise about family planning, and emphasize that the child is better off growing up with a guardian or a parent they have done little to use FM radios, newspapers, and billboards to sensitize vulnerable communities such as slums and the very poor, which have children risk of homelessness (**Social worker, Organisation B**).

A male child whom is receiving rehabilitation from organization A explained;

The issue of lack of information, misinformation, and lack of knowledge and awareness by vulnerable children is so wide spread in poor communities. It is not surprising that., impoverished young children take the action of going to streets (**Boy aged 18, Seeta**).

The participants also felt that the issue of child homelessness had not been given the attention it deserves by government. For example, A CDO complained that;

If our leaders think child homelessness is crucial to them, they will pick and prioritize it and eventually stop it. They have the capacity to stop it. If

government takes the initiative and they say to the country ‘look here people this is a big deal’ then the problem can stop. I think the problem could also stop if the social and economic situation of vulnerable families improved (**Male, CDO**).

It was also revealed that sometimes the Government of Uganda insists that Community Based Organisations are supplementing their efforts and they do little to prevent homelessness. A social worker from organization A complained that;

The government doesn’t do anything to reunify abandoned and street children with their families, or support vulnerable families; they have not fully supported homeless children and even Community Based Organisations and have weak monitoring systems. The Government has not funded any activities in care institutions apart from setting laws and policies for them to follow; such as, the Children’s Act (2000) and its amendments. Sometimes we only hear of tension and struggles between the Government and Community Based Organisations yet they are the key players in strengthening family and community care (**Social worker, Organisation A**).

Another boy receiving rehabilitation and support from organization B, said that;

Government has to recognition households and communities, as the source of basic services. All parties need to agree to the same child protection mechanisms

if children's rights are to be preserved. They need to strengthen the family and communities so that running away from home and street life is no longer seen as a viable option for children in difficult situations (**Boy, 15, Kauga**).

Therefore, participants blamed the increasing social and health problem of homeless children to the system, especially community and government for their negligence and not being accountable to the people they serve for the increased child homeless in Mukono. They thought that lack of empowerment for younger and vulnerable children through well-spread rights education and child welfare services regardless of socio-economic background and being poor and un- educated deprived of access to the needed information. The vulnerable families and homeless children were ignorant and this contributed to the growing numbers of child abandonment, abuse, neglect that result into child homelessness.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This last chapter focuses on the discussion, conclusions and recommendations based on the outcome and analysis of the data that was collected through the methods outlined in Chapter Three. This study investigated the status of child homelessness in Mukono state and its effect on the welfare of children. The study specifically examined how homeless children in Mukono state survive, described the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children and assessed the effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children. A discussion of the findings is presented first, followed by conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Discussion

This section gives a detailed discussion of results based on the study objectives.

5.2.1 Objective One: The how homeless children survive

In this objective the researcher explored how homeless children survive. The study revealed that homeless children were young, lived alone, had low education and were unemployed. So, they survived through scavenging, slept on verandahs and worked in markets and helpers, though got very little income. They slept with dogs and cats and most of them resorted to night life when they would look for necessities unnoticed.

These findings concur with Mulder et al (2018), homeless children who are vulnerable to poverty and difficult living conditions are usually unable to start and engage in income generating activities that may provide more financial freedom to them. Phillips (2019) adds that homeless children are more likely to live hand to mouth and survive on very small business done on road sides, verandas and community markets. Therefore, they up with negative perception of life.

The many runaway teenagers who probably had left without their parent's consent, due to difficult life condition such as poverty and mistreatment increased irresponsible sex, unwanted pregnancies.

This is supported by Walakira et al (2019), who found a higher rate of high-risk sexual behavior, early sexual debut, tendency of having multiple sex partners, and using less contraceptives methods in runaway children. They unable to survive on their own. They tended to have sex when they are intoxicated and many exchanged sex for money, drugs and shelter. They were less economically, physically and emotionally mature to care for an infant.

5.2.2 Objective Two: The Effect of Homelessness on The Physical Welfare of Children

In the second objective, the researcher assessed the effect of homelessness on the physical welfare of children. It was found that majority of them lack shelter, food, clothing and education and had no ways of even acquiring these needs though self-employment and donations. The children suffered tremendously from lack of shelter, mean of sustaining and care. They so poor and unable to earn a living even when they were strong and able to work. This finding agrees with Phillips (2019) who says that when a homeless child has no means of getting basic needs, the easy way it to resort to stealing and drugs.

In addition, many children were young and had run out of difficult family life. Hence, they had low self-esteem and resolve to face difficult life squarely. It was also noticed that the policies and laws that prevent promote children's rights and prevent child abandonment were so lax. For example, government had left all the work of rescuing, accommodating, feeding, clothing and educating

abandoned children to private organizations which did not have efficient resources to minimize the problem. As a result and in line with Swift (2018), most of the homeless children who faced difficulties decided to become rogues. The laws were also not punitive enough to prevent this homelessness.

The participants were bitter that the Uganda government had a major role to play in eliminating child abandonment and protecting their rights yet it had done so little. The majority of the participants were of the view that the government was negligent. While there was a fundamental need to conceptualize child homelessness, the government had not done enough to this endeavor. For instance, there was no basic social welfare for vulnerable children and their children.

But in Uganda, it was as if the communities had failed to provide opportunities by which people could realize their potential. As they sought for ways of improving their social position many children became delinquent.

Likewise, the issues of domestic violence and poverty which most children faced in Uganda, were behind child homelessness in Mukono. Therefore, the problem of child homelessness is surrounded mostly by ignorance and unemployment which in turn leads to a vicious cycle of poverty.

Social and cultural issues were also to blame for child homelessness. There was evidence that social support is beneficial to health and that isolation leads to ill health and negative emotional health.

Social support refers to resources provided by other persons which makes an individual to believe

that [s]he is cared of and loved, esteemed, valued and belongs to social network of communication and mutual obligation.

5.2.3 Objective three: Effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children.

In connection to the third objective to establish effect of homelessness on the mental and social welfare of children. It was discovered that Homeless children had no access to decent living, health care, education and spiritual services. They had higher rates of abortion, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), infection and accidents. They experienced stress and anxiety, resulting in depression and behavioural issues. The impact of homelessness on the health and development on homeless children would extends beyond the period of homelessness up to their future lives. They felt that the community and government had abandoned them and they were perceived as misfits. They felt that they need counselling and skills training to regain their humanity. They felt that the social problems they had faced had lowered their dignity so much and so needed empowerment through counselling, skills training and responsible living. They suggested that raising awareness of children's right and the bad effects on the child and child of child abandonment can be effective in changing negative attitudes and behavior of these children and the community.

This finding agreed with (2018) who said that education and training should be a prominent element of campaigning's and planning to address community problems such as child homelessness. Mulder

et al (2018) add that the awareness campaign should be multifaceted, easily accessible and in line with the community values in order to target most of the audiences and give them opportunity to learn. Hence it is crucial to raise awareness in the communities in Mukono state so that families could get access to information of how to prevent this problem from ascending.

The participants intimated that it was institutions like the Local Councils (LC) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that were dedicated and determined to work together in order to decrease the number of abused children and street children. While this was the role of government, the participants were disappointed about government's negligence towards this problem. They complained that the government had done little to solve the issues of poor flow of information, lack of facilities to accommodate the rescued children and lack of empowerment by street children. The government was seen as distanced from the public, yet its role was crucial in the implementation of successful prevention strategies. A lot of decision making depended on politicians, and that if they did consider this problem as their first priority a reduction of abandoned babies would occur. It was likely that one of the major reasons this problem was not prioritized was that it is concealed in the shadows of other social and health issues.

Therefore, new and innovative ways of reducing this escalating family instability and child abuse had to be tried. There was need for better collaboration between the community-based organizations

and the government on the issue. The current ineffectual ways of raising awareness among community on the rights of children and their need for a family had to be improved. The majority of participant called for more governmental preventive work and other knowledge rising projects such as campaigns, mass media and education. The government has had some health campaigns which produced positive results. The same techniques can be applied to ending child abandonment.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of the study have revealed that the non-empowering social- cultural and -economic conditions of our communities are the major causes of child abandonment, homeless and the wellbeing problems they face. The families in which homeless children grow, do not equip them with values and life skills of surviving in difficult life conditions and ability to prevent breakdown in family relationships, death of one or both parents are rampant Mukono state predispose homeless children to street life. Child homelessness can stop, if families and communities can fully be strengthened to perform their primary roles of child protection and care.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends the following courses of action to control child a homelessness in Mukono and Uganda as a whole;

1. The CBOs, local government and communities should be encouraging to implement effective children protection and persuade children who are on the street to receive rehabilitation.

2. Friendly behavior to street children by the community should be promoted as a way for encouragement these children to come back home
3. Initiatives to strengthen the family structure, to make them solid and more capable of nurturing good life skills and values in children, should be started at community level. Proper family integration will reduce child abuse and abandonment and the feelings among children that we run to the street for better life.
4. Community and school counsellors should be recruited by government to provide life skills education and counselling to especially vulnerable families and communities to discourage child rearing practices that foster family instability.
5. Stakeholders in the society should make extra efforts to identify children who have been abandoned and find means to give them needful support and care.
6. Efforts should be made by the government to provide adequate facilities and support for professionals such as probation officers, police officers to enable them perform their duties effectively of preventing and managing child. Abuse and abandonment that result into homelessness.

7. Central and local governments should prepare national action plans with regard to the prevention of child abandonment, promotion of child protection and take into consideration the rights of children in the society.

5.5 Areas for further research

The findings of this research point to the need for further research in the following areas;

Strategies to strengthen the family and community structure to child protection and care.

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Appendix A: Consent form for interviews

Research Title: The Effect of homelessness on the overall welfare of children in Mukono state

I fully understand that participants should first give in their consents before engaging in the research activity.

Name _____ of _____
participant.....Signature.....Date.....

Name _____ of _____
interviewer.....Signature.....Date.....

Appendix B: Personal Interview guide for children

Interview guide for children

I will begin with a warm and welcoming greeting, ensure the child feels comfortable.

Explain the purpose of the interview and assure them that their responses are confidential.

Clarify that they can stop the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

1. Basic Information:

Start with non-invasive questions like their name, age, and any other personal details they are comfortable sharing.

Ask about their current living situation (e.g., shelter, street, temporary housing).

2. Homelessness Experience:

Gently inquire about how they became homeless and if they are with their family.

Ask if they have experienced homelessness before and if so, how often.

Explore their daily life, including where they sleep, eat, and access basic necessities.

3. Safety and Well-being: inquire about their safety and if they have any concerns or fears while living on the streets or in shelters.

Ask about their access to healthcare, education, and emotional support.

4. Challenges and Coping Strategies:

Discuss any difficulties they face, such as hunger, exposure to violence, or discrimination.

Encourage them to share how they cope with these challenges, including seeking help from services or organizations.

5. Support Systems:

Ask about the people or organizations that have provided support or assistance.

Explore their relationships with family members, friends, or anyone who might help them.

Future Aspirations:

6. Inquire about their hopes and dreams for the future, such as education, career goals, or a stable home.

Closing and Resources:

7. Thank the child for their time and honesty.

Offer information about local resources, shelters, and support services they can access.

Reiterate the confidentiality of their responses.

Remember to adapt your approach based on the child's age, emotional state, and willingness to share.

Prioritize their comfort and well-being throughout the interview.

Interview guide for others

Welcome and thank the interviewee for their time.

Explain the purpose of the interview: To better understand the issue of children's homelessness in Mukono and gather insights to improve support and intervention.

Section 1: Background Information

Can you provide a brief overview of your role and responsibilities related to children's welfare and homelessness in Mukono?

What is the current situation regarding children's homelessness in Mukono, as you perceive it?

Section 2: Causes and Risk Factors

What do you believe are the main causes of children's homelessness in this region?

Can you identify any specific risk factors that make children more vulnerable to homelessness?

Section 3: Identifying Homeless Children

How do you or your organization identify homeless children in Mukono?

Are there any common signs or indicators that can help identify homeless children?

What challenges are encountered when trying to identify homeless children?

Section 4: Support Services and Interventions

What support services are currently available for homeless children in Mukono?

In your opinion, what gaps or limitations exist in these services?

What types of interventions or programs have shown promise in addressing children's homelessness?

Section 5: Collaboration and Community Involvement

How do different agencies, including probation officers and children's workers, collaborate to address this issue?

Can you provide examples of successful community initiatives or partnerships aimed at reducing children's homelessness?

Section 6: Challenges and Solutions

What are the biggest challenges you face in your efforts to address children's homelessness in Mukono?

What innovative solutions or strategies do you believe could be effective in reducing children's homelessness?

Section 7: Recommendations

What recommendations do you have for improving the support and services available to homeless children in Mukono?

Are there any specific policy changes or resources that you believe would be beneficial?

Closing:

Thank the interviewee for their valuable insights.

Appendix C: Research questions

Research qn.1. What survival strategies do homeless children in Mukono state employ to navigate daily life and ensure their basic needs are met?

Section A: Questions for Homeless Children

1. Can you describe a typical day in your life?

Where do you usually sleep at night?

What activities do you engage in during the day to pass time or stay safe?

2. How do you usually find food to eat each day?

Are there specific places or people you rely on for food?

How often do you go without eating for an entire day?

Where do you find shelter when it rains or during bad weather?

How do you ensure your safety while sleeping on the streets?

Do you have any strategies to protect your belongings?

What do you do when you get sick or injured?

Where do you go to clean yourself or wash your clothes?

Do you have access to any healthcare services or organizations that help you with medical needs?

Do you have any opportunities to attend school or receive education? If not, how do you spend your time learning new skills or knowledge?

Are there any organizations that provide educational resources or support?

Do you have friends or family who help you out?

Are there any community groups or organizations that you find helpful?

How do you build and maintain relationships with other children or adults?

What are the biggest challenges you face living on the streets?

How do you cope with difficult situations or emotions?

What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

Section B: Questions for Others (Community Members, NGOs, Government Officials, etc.)

How aware are you of the presence of homeless children in Mukono State?

What is your perception of the challenges they face

Are there community programs or initiatives aimed at helping homeless children?

How effective do you think these programs are? What more could be done to support homeless children in the community

What policies are in place to address homelessness among children in Mukono State?

How well do you think these policies are implemented? Are there any gaps in the policy framework that need to be addressed

What healthcare services are available for homeless children?

How accessible are these services to the children? Are there any educational programs specifically targeting homeless children?

Research qn.2 How does homelessness impact the physical welfare of these children specifically in relation to their clothing adequacy, educational attainment and nutritional status?

Section A: Questions for Homeless Children

How often do you receive new or clean clothes?

Do you have enough clothes to keep you warm during the winter months?

Do you have proper footwear for different seasons

Are your clothes in good condition, or do they have holes and tears?

How do you feel about the clothes you have?

Do they make you feel comfortable or embarrassed

How often do you attend school?

Do you have all the necessary school supplies (e.g., books, notebooks, pens)?

Are there times when you can't go to school because you don't have the right clothes or shoes?

How do you feel about your performance in school?

Are there subjects you find particularly difficult?

Do you have a quiet place to do your homework and study?

How often do you eat each day?

What kinds of foods do you usually eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Do you feel hungry often during the day?

Are there days when you don't get enough to eat?

Do you have access to fresh fruits and vegetables?

Section B: Questions for People

Who Can Provide Insights (Social Workers, Educators, Healthcare Professionals)

How do you assess the clothing needs of homeless children?

What resources are available to provide clothing for homeless children?

How frequently do homeless children receive new clothing?

Are there any specific challenges in ensuring homeless children have adequate clothing for different seasons?

How does inadequate clothing impact the self-esteem and social interactions of homeless children?

How does homelessness affect the school attendance of children?

What support systems are in place to help homeless children with their education?

Are there specific academic challenges that homeless children face compared to their peers?

How do schools accommodate the unique needs of homeless children?

Can you provide examples of successful interventions that have improved the educational outcomes of homeless children?

What are the common nutritional deficiencies observed in homeless children?

How do social services ensure homeless children receive adequate nutrition?

Are there specific programs aimed at providing meals to homeless children?

How does malnutrition affect the overall health and school performance of homeless children?

What are the barriers to providing consistent and healthy meals to homeless children, and how can they be overcome?

Research qn.3. How does homelessness impact the mental and social welfare of the homeless children particularly in relation to their needs for stable and secure shelter environment?

Section A: Questions for Homeless Children

How do you feel about your current living situation?

Can you describe a typical day for you?

What are some of the challenges you face on a daily basis?

Do you feel safe in your current living environment? Why or why not?

How often do you move from one place to another?

What kind of shelter do you wish you had?

How do you feel emotionally most of the time?

Have you ever felt stressed, anxious, or depressed because of your living situation?

Do you have access to any mental health support or counseling?

How do you feel about your relationships with your family and friends?

Do you have people you can trust and talk to about your problems?

How has homelessness affected your friendships and social interactions?

Are you currently attending school? If not, why?

What are your dreams or goals for the future?

How do you think having a stable home would help you achieve your goals?

Section B: Questions for Other People (e.g., Teachers, Social Workers, Community Members)

How do you think homelessness affects the mental health of children?

What changes in behavior have you noticed in homeless children compared to those with stable housing?

How does homelessness impact a child's ability to form social relationships?

What kinds of support services are available for homeless children in your community?

How effective do you think these services are in addressing the needs of homeless children?

Are there any gaps in the support system that you believe need to be addressed?

How does homelessness affect a child's ability to attend and perform in school?

What challenges do homeless children face in accessing education?

What measures can schools take to better support homeless children?

How does the community perceive and interact with homeless children?

What kind of social stigma or discrimination do homeless children face?

How can the community better support and integrate homeless children?

What do you believe are the long-term impacts of homelessness on children's futures?

What solutions do you think would most effectively address the issue of child homelessness?

How can society ensure that all children have access to stable and secure shelter environments?

Appendix D: Profile of CBOs

Code		Founder	Year	Roles
A	Mercyship initiative international	Mercyship international	2015	Advocacy and human rights, orphans, street children, youth and women
B	Perl of Africa children project	Jonathan k	2009	Supports orphans, street children. Hard hit families,

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