

**THE EFFECTS OF CHILD NEGLECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG
PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN OGUR SUB-COUNTY, LIRA DISTRICT,
NORTHERN UGANDA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that; to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted to this University (UCU) or any other institution of higher learning for an academic award. I hereby submit it for the award of the degree of social works.

Signature.....

Date...14th May 2026.....

AKECH BRENDA AYENA

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for approval by my supervisor:

Signature



Date

14th / May / 2020

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(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

With special regard, I wish to dedicate this piece of work to my parents who have always been there to support me in my education. May the Almighty God richly bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the Almighty God for the gift of life and guiding me throughout my education; it has not being easy but it was possible.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

CDF: Children's Development Funds

CI: Confidence Interval

CPS: Child Protection Services

HHS: Health and Human Sciences

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

MoES: Ministry of Education and Sports

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural organization

UPE: Universal Primary Education

WHO: World Health Organization

Academic performance: Is the degree to which learners achieve their educational goals, as reflected in attendance, concentration, test results, motivation, and progression.

Child: Any person, boy or girl aged below 18 years of age or within infancy and adolescence.

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to analyze the influence of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school students in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district, Northern Uganda. In this case, the main objectives of the study include; establishing the different types and frequency of child neglect that primary school learners face, determining the impacts of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school learners, and establishing the relationship between child neglect and academic performance among primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District.

This study was conducted using the cross-sectional research method. This is because this type of study design allowed the study to analyze the influence of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school learners by conducting interviews at a particular time. In addition, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches was employed in analyzing the issue under consideration. In collecting the necessary data for the study, questionnaires were utilized alongside interviewing techniques.

The study findings established that child neglect is highly prevalent among primary school learners in Ogur Sub-county, Lira District, manifesting physically, emotionally, and educationally, and is primarily driven by poverty, parental irresponsibility, substance misuse, family breakdown, large family sizes, and low parental awareness of education; this neglect negatively affects school attendance, academic performance, motivation, concentration, social behavior, and future opportunities, and addressing it requires coordinated efforts from parents, teachers, schools, communities, and government.

Lastly, the study recommended that addressing child neglect and improving academic performance in Ogur Sub- County requires parents to meet children's basic needs and act responsibly, schools to provide counseling and academic support, communities and NGOs to offer targeted assistance and awareness, and the government to strengthen social protection and education programs.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and the scope of the study. The significance and rationale behind the study that seeks to explore the impact of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school children in Lira District.

According to the International Child Abuse Network (2012), child neglect is defined as the maltreatment of children where a parent or caregiver, living in the same house or anyone working with children fails to provide the basic needs for their survival up to the age of 18 years.

The study focused on upper primary school children i.e. primary four to primary seven, whose age brackets are 10 to 15 years. This was because children in upper primary can read, write and express themselves better, making it easier to collect valid data through interviews and questionnaires however, Children in the age range also are developing advanced thinking, reasoning and concentration skills necessary for academic success so neglect can impair their abilities reducing academic performance which are transition to secondary educations.

1.1 Background to the Study

The right to an education is a universally acknowledged basic right and a key component in developing human capital that is essential for escaping poverty and promoting economic sustainability. Primary education, in particular, is the foundation on which future reading, writing, thinking, and success in academics are built. The only drawback is that simply securing school enrollment through initiatives such as “Education for All” alone does not suffice if the learning process is jeopardized due to outside factors. Neglecting the needs of the child is one such factor, which is considered an act of child abuse that has long-term negative effects on the child's developmental potential.

Globally, it has been reported that around 1 billion children aged between 2-17 years have experienced various kinds of neglect such as physical, educational, nutritional, or emotional neglect in the last year by the WHO (2020). However, academic performances have faced a great effect because of various neglects in childhood. Globally, it has always been observed that neglected children have a higher tendency of being academically poor performers in contrast to their non-neglected children; according to one meta-analysis, neglected children are nearly 40% more likely to achieve in the lowest quartile on standardized tests, along with a 60% greater risk

of grade repetition than their non-neglected counterparts (Gilbert et al., 2009). The processes are multidimensional; neglect generates stress which affects brain development, which is needed for learning and self-control.

However, the issue of vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa remains a serious one, made worse by poverty, health challenges, and lack of child protection services. According to estimates, at least 50 million children in the area experience orphanhood, displacement, and neglect, thereby forming a major impediment to the realization of educational goals under the African Unions Agenda, 2063 and the UN SDGs (UNESCO, 2021). However, within this broader context, the case of Uganda becomes quite illustrative. While the government has successfully implemented UPE, leading to massive increases in enrollments, the poor quality of education is alarming. According to national statistics, almost 70 percent of children in Primary 3 level have no ability to read a story of Primary 2 (MoES, 2022).

The problem in focus is mainly situated in Northern Uganda because, there, the problem had to contend with the consequences of a struggle that went on for more than two decades and was initiated by the Lord's Resistance Army. Under such circumstances, the problem is described through damaged social structures, experience of trauma, and poverty passed on from one generation to another. As a district of the region, the problem affecting the Lira District is the same. In this specific district, the problem of child neglect does not arise due to personal reasons on the part of the parents but due to structural factors. According to preliminary estimates, about 30-40% of students are affected by the problems associated with neglect in Lira District schools (Lira District Education Office, 2023). It results in a perfect storm in which the basic right of education becomes jeopardized. A boy or girl of all ages, starting from infants until they reach adolescence, is known as a child. It conforms to the Indian legislation wherein a child is defined as any individual under the age of eighteen. Child abuse can be described as the practice of older people harassing, beating, or withholding necessities from young individuals at home, in the streets, in religious places, or schools. Moreover, they felt that the occurrence of child abuse could lead to physical, emotional, sexual, or even deathly injury to the children.

The victims of child abuse regardless of gender do face problems. The cause of child abuse is not just limited to negative acts by children's educators, caregivers, parents, siblings, so called mentors, peers, and society at large. Therefore, child abuse in Uganda is common practice. There are no longer any safe places for kids since it is found anywhere. Also, Chalk, Gibbons & Scarupa indicated that child abuse is harmful to a child physically, psychologically, and behaviorally. However, it is difficult to treat them separately in reality. Physical issues, like the damaging of brain during its critical developmental period, lead to psychological issues such as cognitive delay among others. Psychological problems mostly take shape as risky behavior,

leading to poor academic performances, and economic repercussions in the long run. According to Shonk and Cicchetti, children who were abused at home often exhibit poor results in academic environment and difficulties in life that hinder economic development. Hence, the aim of the research paper was to analyze the consequences of child neglecting on academic performance of primary school learners in Ogur Sub County in Lira District, Northern Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Child neglect remains one of the most pervasive yet under-addressed forms of child maltreatment affecting learners in Uganda today. It manifests through inadequate parental care, emotional deprivation, poor supervision, and failure to meet children's basic educational and developmental needs. In Lira District, Northern Uganda an area still recovering from years of civil conflict and socioeconomic instability many children face conditions of neglect resulting from poverty, broken families, alcoholism, and inadequate parental involvement in education. These factors have significantly compromised learners' academic performance and general well-being.

In spite of the efforts made by the Ugandan Government in terms of passing policies such as the Children Act (Amended 2016) and Universal Primary Education (UPE), which were designed to ensure that child well-being and education of children become priorities for the entire nation, most of the learners who attend primary schools fail to learn effectively because of neglect at home.

The study explored the types of neglect faced by the learners, assessed its impact on their academic performance, and made recommendations for appropriate actions by the various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and policy-makers, based on contextual evidence. Thus, the objective of this study was to examine the impact of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school learners in Lira District, Northern Uganda.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Broad Objectives

To study the effects of child neglect on academic performance among primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district, Northern Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To determine the types and incidence of child neglect faced by primary school pupils in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District.

- b) To evaluate the impact of child neglect on the educational outcomes of primary school pupils in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District.
- c) To establish the correlation between child neglect and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) In what forms does the problem of child neglect manifest itself for primary school students in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District?
- b) What impact does child neglect have on the learning outcomes of primary school children in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District?
- c) What link exists between child neglect and learning outcomes for primary school children in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study will cover the geographic setting of Lira District and the sub-country (Ogur), the number of primary schools in the sub-county, the period covered by the study, and the specific subject matter concerning the impact of child neglect on primary school children's academic achievement.

1.5.1 Time Scope

The time frame used for this study is for two months that is from November to December 2025, since at this time both the pupils and teachers of primary school in Lira District would be available for data collection purposes.

1.5.2 Content Scope

This research was narrowed down to the consequences of child neglect on academic performance among children in primary schools of, where there is identification of the different types and forms of child neglect, the impact of such neglect on academic performance, and methods for reducing child neglect and enhancing academic performance of primary school children in Lira District.

1.6 Justification

1.6.1 Academic Justification

Contribution of the Study to Child Development Literature

In terms of contribution to the current literature, the study has made substantial contributions to the body of knowledge regarding the effect of child neglect on academic performance of the children involved in the research process. Most of the studies conducted previously on child neglect and academic performance were carried out in developed nations; thus, this study helped bridge the knowledge gap by giving an insight into how neglect affects academics in a developing nation such as Uganda. Moreover, the results of the study can be used to aid policymakers, teachers, and researchers in developing strategies that enhance both welfare and educational status of children in Uganda.

1.6.2 Community Justification

It became easier for parents, guardians, and members of the community to realize the effects that neglect had on the educational progress of children and, as such, improve their parenting behaviors, as well as take responsibility at the community level in protecting children. With knowledge of how neglect influenced the educational outcomes of children, the findings would be helpful in helping schools develop measures aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of the neglected children and improving their educational performance. In addition, the data collected could prove helpful for social workers, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the formulation of measures aimed at minimizing cases of child neglect. Finally, the data collected would also be useful in helping to promote SDG4 and SDG16 in the area.

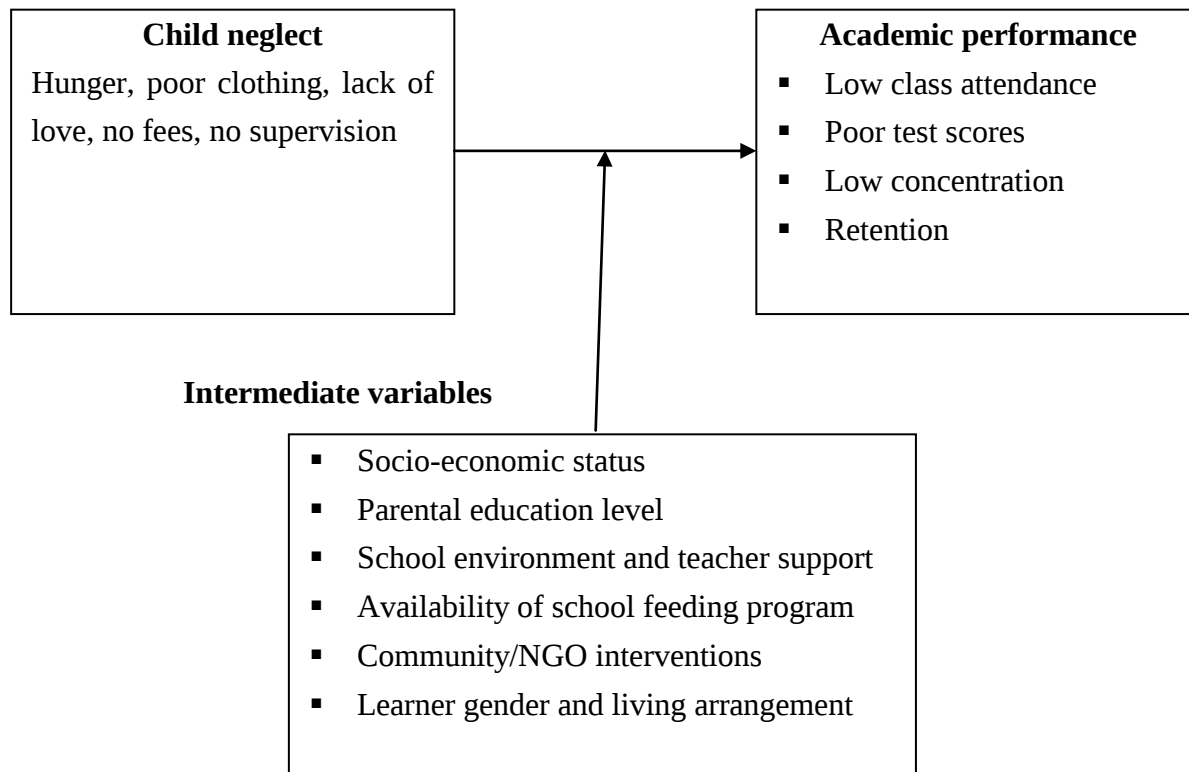
1.7 Significance

The importance of this study emanates from the fact that it seeks to investigate the impact of child neglect on the academic performance of learners in primary schools in Lira District. The results obtained from this study will add to the pool of existing literature regarding the impact of child neglect among learners in primary schools by offering evidence-based recommendations for implementing policies and interventions. The research will also provide vital information needed for developing particular programs aimed at tackling child neglect. Finally, it will identify gaps in existing literature and give directions for further research.

1.8 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Independent variable

Dependent variable



Source: Researcher 2026

Fig 1: Showing the effects of child neglect among primary school learners in Ogur-sub-county, Lira District

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Child neglect is consistently identified in the literature as a major form of child maltreatment that adversely affects children's cognitive, emotional and educational outcomes. Neglect differs from active abuse in that it is an omission (failure to provide necessary care), but its effects on schooling attendance, concentration, achievement and retention are well documented across settings.

2.1 Effects of child neglect on primary school learners

Issues related to child maltreatment have been extensively discussed in literature over the past twenty years. According to the Children's Defense Fund (CDF; 2014) and the Indian department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 2012, 2017), millions of children around the world from various socioeconomic strata, all ages, religions, and cultural groups experience child maltreatment daily, and millions more are vulnerable. In general terms, child abuse is an act committed by a parent, a primary caregiver, or any individual having custody of the child through which an injury, death, emotional damage, or the possibility of severe injury results in the child. Abuse may come in many shapes, such as physical, sexual, exploitation, and psychological abuses. However, the current body of knowledge suggests that psychological abuse is the prevalent type of abuse, followed by physical and sexual abuses respectively. On the contrary, child neglect is the failure of a parent, guardian, or caregiver to satisfy a child's fundamental requirements such as physiological, health, education, and psychological needs.

Based on the work done by Foster et al. (2017), child neglect is an underreported act that results in severe consequences for children. The term child maltreatment includes both child abuse and child neglect. In another research, it was established that child maltreatment occurs "across socio-economic, religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. Approximately 80% of child maltreatment occurs from parents and primary caregivers, except in cases where the child is sexually abused. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (2017), during 2015, the national, state, and local CPS agencies handled four million referrals concerning children aged 0-18 years subjected to child abuse and neglect, totaling 7.2 million children. It was also reported that out of the above-mentioned number of children, approximately 683,000 children died. It should also be pointed out that some scholars argue that the CPS estimates provide underestimated figures regarding the number of child maltreatment victims. Therefore, the total number of victims of child maltreatment could be greater than previously expected.

From the current literature review, it can be concluded that young children are prone to abuse and neglect since they are very dependent on their caregivers.

As indicated by data from the HHS (2017), more than one quarter of children subjected to maltreatment had not reached three years of age. Further research has shown that girls tend to be more prone to certain forms of maltreatment (i.e., sexual abuse) compared to boys, while boys are more likely to suffer from physical abuse. Finally, there is research indicating that children with disabilities (specifically, those suffering from severe forms of disability) are more likely to become victims of maltreatment than non-disabled children. Some disabled children may be restricted in terms of their ability to communicate and thus would not know how to talk about their experience of abuse. Prevalence studies on child maltreatment present specific challenges in the case where school staff lacks appropriate training to deal with suspected or reported incidents of child maltreatment. Teachers tend to be the first members of the school staff who suspect an incidence of child maltreatment, and school counselors typically tend to report them.

According to Usakli's study in 2012, a survey was conducted involving teachers and school counselors who felt unprepared to deal with child maltreatment problems in schools. In addition, it is noted that the teachers were aware of the impact of maltreatment but lacked knowledge on how to handle the problem. Furthermore, it was noted that school counselors did not have adequate training on how to assist children suffering from abuse. The school counselors expressed their needs for information on the basic facts about the topic, criteria for identification, how they should react during interventions, how to talk to the students, how to protect them, and information on the legal issues concerning the program. Several issues that lead to child maltreatment have been widely examined in the literature, with some studies demonstrating the association between parental stress and the health of the parent as significant predictors of child maltreatment. Several researchers have also noted the connection between beliefs concerning parenting such as those associated with corporal punishment and child maltreatment. In their study, Altafim and Linhares (2016) discovered that parents who undergo stressful conditions or who exhibit a drastic change in attitudes regarding disciplinary practices were also considered important predictors for child maltreatment. It has also been observed that most instances of child maltreatment involve parents and caregivers who use substances such as drugs. According to the National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, 85 percent of states within India identified substance and drug abuse as common issues among families suspected of child maltreatment. All forms of child abuse have several adverse consequences for the development, academic performance, and psychological well-being of children. Furthermore, instances of childhood abuse may have some negative consequences for adults (for example, distress and engaging in sexual acts, thus becoming more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases). As

mentioned earlier, child abuse is a global issue, and it has the capacity to leave long-lasting negative consequences for the psychological well-being of children.

In most cases, child abuse occurs at the hands of parents or primary caretakers, and as a result of that, the children are not able to seek help from anyone else and get traumatized as there would be nothing socially or emotionally supportive about the situation. Maltreatment can lead to problems like eating disorders and self-injurious actions. In particular, self-injurious actions like bone-breaking, anorexia, head-banging, and bulimia can be life-threatening. However, it must be noted that while the psychological effects of the maltreatment may vary among children, depending upon the kind of maltreatment they have experienced. Studies have shown that depression and various stress-related conditions are more common when the child experiences neglect or physical abuse. On the contrary, eating disorders and self-abusive actions are associated with sexual abuse.

Another study found out that neglected children often show lower academic achievement, including poor reading and math scores, compared to their non-neglected peers. This is attributed to lack of parental support, irregular school attendance, and inadequate learning materials (Liu et al., 2019). Another study conducted by Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris (1993) reported that child neglect predicts chronic absenteeism and grade repetition, mainly because neglected children lack supervision and motivation to attend school regularly. Slade & Wissow (2007) also revealed that neglected learners frequently experience poor concentration and reduced classroom participation, as they often attend school hungry, tired, or emotionally distressed. It was also found out that, child neglect leads to reduced school engagement, which increases the risk of early school dropout (Pickerel, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research design

This study utilized cross-sectional analytical design and data was collected using mixed-methods, both quantitative and qualitative.

3.1 Area of study

The study was conducted in selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub-County, Lira district.

3.2 Sources of Information

The study drew information from pupils as primary respondents, parents or primary caregivers, teachers, Head teachers and school administrators, school records and registers, health facility and nutrition clinic records, Child Protection and Social Welfare offices, local NGOs and CBOs operating in Lira, academic journal articles, government reports and policy documents, relevant databases and electronic repositories, as well as local institutions responsible for granting permissions and providing data.

3.3 Population and sampling techniques

3.3.1 Population

The study population consisted of primary school learners in government and private primary schools in Lira District. Other respondents for triangulation are Class teachers, head teachers, and parents/guardians. The target population consisted of primary school learners of P4–P7. The targeted population for this study was 1400 individuals

3.3.2 Sample size determination

The sample size was determined using Krejcie & Morgan table (1970), according to the table, a population of 1400 requires a sample size of 300 respondents.

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384
Note: "N" is Population Size "S" is Sample Size.									

3.3.3 Sampling procedures

The study utilized the multistage sampling method as follows:

Stage 1 Selection of Sub- County i.e. Ogur Sub- County was done purposively due to the fact that it was among the sub-counties grossly affected by the LRA insurgency.

Stage 2 Selection of schools (clusters): From each stratum, schools were randomly selected using probability proportional to size (PPS) based on total enrolment, or simple random sampling

Stage 2 Within each selected schools, classes were purposively selected, and mostly the target classes will be primary 47.

Stage 3 From the class register, study participants were selected using systematic random sampling to select individual pupils.

3.4 Variables and indicators

3.4.1 Dependent variables

The dependent variable was academic performance, measured by recent term marks/average test scores from school records, teacher-rated performance, attendance records, repetition/ dropout status, and the self-reported items.

3.4.2 Independent variables

The independent variables were child neglect; a multi-dimensional situation measured by physical, emotional, and educational states in a child's learning experience.

3.5 Procedure/protocols for data collection

3.5.1 Data collection

The collection of data was carried out in light of the objectives of the study. The procedure for data collection was conducted among selected schools. Data collected was recorded using the structured questionnaires, coded using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using STATA version 17.

3.6 Data collection instruments and equipment

Data collection tools included structured questionnaires for pupils and parents/caregivers, teacher checklists, Headteacher interview guides, school records review forms, standardized academic achievement tests, key informant interview guides.

3.7 Quality/Error control

To ensure quality of data collection and validity of results, pretesting of the tools was done in some schools before the data collection process was executed. Ten percent (10%) of the respondents was sampled and data collected from them analyzed. This made it possible for any necessary improvements and adjustments to be made before real data collection begins, making it possible for any problems with the research tools identified.

3.8 Strategy for data processing and analysis

3.8.1 Data management

The data was entered, cleaned and saved using Microsoft Excel. Data sets were then exported to STATA software version 17. Binary regression technique was used to establish the relationship between child neglect and academic achievement.

3.8.2 Data Analysis

The collected data was fed into an MS Excel sheet and then exported to Stata 17 for further analysis. Chi-square tests were carried out for bivariate analysis to determine any association between the dependent and independent variables. Logistic regression analysis was also performed to measure the strength of any association. All findings were reported in odds ratios calculated at a confidence level of 95%.

3.9 Ethical considerations

3.9.1 Ethical considerations and approval

In order to ensure and maintain ethical standards, the following ethical steps were undertaken:

3.9.2 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University Research and Ethics Committee. Permission was also sought from the office and lastly from the parents of the selected participants through a written consent and assent.

3.9.3 Voluntary participation

It was explained to the participants that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary and not under any form of coercion, and that they had the freedom to withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. It was further indicated to them that there were no repercussions whatsoever if they did not join in the study.

3.9.4 Informed consent

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the process, the potential dangers and advantages associated with the study, and that participation was totally voluntary. Moreover, they were given sufficient time to reflect on their choice and clarify any issues related to the study before agreeing to become participants.

3.10 Methodological constraints

The limitations that existed included the age of the respondents, which influenced their ability to give informed consent. In overcoming this limitation to acquire informed consent from the respondents, it was done by ensuring the parents or guardians of the respondents were aware of the aims of the research. This was ensured by counseling the parents or guardians and providing them with information. Another limitation was the social desirability, which is common among young people since they tend to give answers based on the values of society and not their true feelings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings obtained from the analysis carried out on the study objectives and in connection with the review literature will be presented and discussed. Questionnaires were used in the study where pupils in Ogur Sub- County selected from government and private primary schools in Lira district were interviewed. Parents/ Caregivers, teachers and Head Teachers too participated in the study. Findings will be presented in tabulated form for easy understanding.

4.1 Response rate

Table 1: Response rate

Response Rate	Sample Size	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires responded to	250	83.3%
Questionnaires not responded to	50	16.7%
Total number of questionnaires issued	300	100.0%

Source: Primary data 2026

According to Table 1 above, a total of 300 respondents who are pupils selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district were expected to participate in the study. Out of these, 250 respondents (83.3%) successfully filled and returned the questionnaires, while 50 respondents (16.7%) did not respond. According to Ahuja (2009), a response rate of 70% is considered excellent, 60% is good, and 50% is adequate for analysis. Therefore, the response rate of 83.3% was deemed reliable and appropriate for the study. The reason for not getting 100% response was due to the fact that some of the respondents were unwilling to respond to the questionnaire yet time for completing the research was running out. Some other respondents were busy doing some other work which stopped them from responding to the questionnaires.

4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

In this section we will present the general background information on the respondents based on their gender, age, class, school attended, living arrangements of the children, occupation of the parents/guardians of the respondents, and the educational qualifications of the parents/guardians as given below in Table 2.

Table 2: Background Information about the respondents

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	102	40.6
	Female	148	59.4
	Total	250	100.0
Age	Below 10 years	59	23.6
	10-12 years	75	30.0
	13-15 years	68	27.2
	Above 15 years	48	19.2
	Total	250	100.0
Class	P.4	38	15.2
	P.5	46	18.4
	P.6	77	30.8
	P.7	89	35.6
	Total	250	100.0
Types of school	Government	166	66.4
	Private	84	33.6
	Total	250	100.0
Whom do you live with?	Both parents	115	46.0
	Single parent	80	32.0
	Guardian	55	22.0
	Total	250	100.0
Parent/guardians main occupation	Business person	82	32.8
	Farmer	63	25.2
	Employed in private sector	57	22.8
	Employed in government sector	48	19.2
	Total	250	100.0
Parent/guardians education level	None	60	24.0
	Primary	98	39.2
	Secondary	55	22.0
	Tertiary	37	14.8
	Total	250	100.0

Source: Primary data 2026

According to table 2 above, the findings indicated that 59.4% of the respondents were female, while 40.6% were male. This shows that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were female compared to male respondents.

The results also showed that 30.0% of the respondents were between 10-12 years, while 27.2% were between 13-15 years. Moreover, 23.6% of the respondents were less than 10 years old, while 19.2% were more than 15 years. It means that most of the respondents were between 10-12 years, while those above 15 years had the smallest percentage.

In addition, it was found out that 35.6% of the respondents were in P.7, while 30.8% were in P.6. Furthermore, 18.4% were in P.5, while 15.2% were in P.4. Therefore, it means that the majority of the respondents were in P.7, while the fewest were in P.4.

Moreover, it was evident that 66.4% of the respondents were from the government schools, while 33.6% were from the private schools. Thus, it means that the majority of the respondents were from the government schools.

These results have also shown that 46.0% of the participants were living with both parents, 32.0% were living with one parent, and 22.0% were living with guardians. It means that most students were living with both parents, while fewest were living with guardians.

In addition, the results showed that 32.8% of the parents/guardians were business persons, followed by 25.2% who were farmers. Additionally, 22.8% were employed in the private sector, while 19.2% were employed in the government sector. This indicates that the largest proportions of parents/guardians are engaged in business activities, whereas the smallest proportions are employed in the government sector.

Lastly, the findings revealed that 39.2% of the parents/guardians had primary education, followed by 24.0% who had no formal education. Furthermore, 22.0% had secondary education, while 14.8% had tertiary education. This implies that the majority of parents/guardians had attained primary education, whereas the least proportion had tertiary education.

4.3 The forms and prevalence of child neglect experienced by primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District

Table 3 summarizes respondents' responses on the forms and prevalence of child neglect experienced by primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District by using a Likert scale where 5 (Always), 4 (Often), 3 (Sometimes), 2 (Rarely) and 1 (Never).

Table 3: Forms & prevalence of child neglect experienced by primary school learners

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Physical neglect					
I sometimes go to school without eating breakfast	55 22.0%	150 60.0%	39 15.6%	6 2.4%	00
I wear torn or dirty clothes to school	122 48.8%	72 28.8%	33 13.2%	23 9.2%	00
I lack basic materials such as pens, books, or uniforms	62 24.8%	95 38.0%	58 23.2%	35 14.0%	00
My parents/guardians fail to provide me with medical care when I am sick	84 33.6%	109 43.6%	33 13.2%	24 9.6%	00
Emotional neglect					
My parents rarely praise me when I do well in school	98 39.2%	102 40.8%	45 18.0%	5 2.0%	00
I feel unloved or unwanted at home	68 27.2%	118 47.2%	58 23.2%	6 2.4%	00
I have no one at home to share my problems with	62 24.8%	100 40.0%	82 32.8%	6 2.4%	00
My parents or guardians rarely encourage me to study	51 20.4%	125 50.0%	63 25.2%	11 4.4%	00
Educational neglect					
My parents do not ensure that I attend school regularly	98 39.2%	73 29.2%	69 27.6%	10 4.0%	00
I am often sent to do domestic work during school hours	61 24.4%	139 55.6%	28 11.2%	12 4.8%	10 4.0%
My parents rarely check my homework or school progress	66 26.4%	145 58.0%	28 11.2%	6 2.4%	5 2.0%
I am sometimes kept at home because of school fees or other needs	73 29.2%	121 48.4%	34 13.6%	22 8.8%	00

Source: Primary data 2026

Table 3 represents the descriptive statistics on the forms and prevalence of child neglect experienced by primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District. The findings revealed that 60.0% of the respondents noted that they often go to school without eating breakfast, 22.0% indicated that they always go without breakfast, 15.6% sometimes do so, whereas 2.4% rarely do so. This shows that the majority of the learners frequently attend school without breakfast implying that inadequate nutrition is highly prevalent and may negatively affect learners' concentration, alertness, and overall academic performance.

The findings also revealed that 48.8% of the respondents claimed that they always wear tattered or dirty clothes to school, 28.8% often wear them, 13.2% sometimes wear them, while 9.2% rarely wear them. It means that most learners constantly suffer from a lack of clothing, meaning that physical deprivation might lead to low self-confidence in learners and subjecting them to stigmatization, thus preventing them from actively engaging in classroom activities.

In addition, the findings revealed that 38.0% of the respondents often lack basic supplies like pens, books, or uniforms, 24.8% always lack them, 23.2% sometimes lack them, while 14.0% rarely lack them. It implies that a significant number of learners constantly lack basic supplies for learning, meaning that insufficient educational supplies might affect their classroom engagement and academic performance.

The research also indicated that 43.6% of the respondents tend to lack access to medical attention when sick, while 33.6% of them always do, 13.2% sometimes do, but 9.6% rarely face such situations. This reveals that denial of medical treatment is prevalent among learners, suggesting that lack of treatment might cause high absenteeism and reduce the level of academic output among them.

Moreover, it was established that 40.8% of the learners often lack recognition for their good academic performance, with 39.2% of them always lacking, 18.0% sometimes experiencing it, but only 2.0% rarely experiencing it. This reveals that most learners are subjected to low emotional support at home, meaning that lack of such might impact negatively on their academic performance.

Further, the findings revealed that 47.2% of the learners regularly feel unloved or unwanted in the family, 27.2% always feel this way, 23.2% sometimes feel this way, while 2.4% feel unloved or unwanted in the family very seldom. This suggests that emotional insecurity is quite common among learners and that this can be detrimental to the psychological well-being and study concentration of the learners.

Moreover, the findings of the research revealed that 40.0% of the learners regularly do not have anyone in their families to talk about their problems with, 32.8% sometimes face this problem, 24.8% always face this problem, while 2.4% of the learners hardly ever face this problem. This suggests that most of the learners lack emotional security in the family and cannot cope with academic and other challenges.

Furthermore, the findings showed that 50.0% of the learners receive little encouragement or no encouragement from their parents or guardians to study, 25.2% sometimes receive this

encouragement, 20.4% always receive this encouragement, while 4.4% seldom experience this. This reveals that there is a lack of encouragement for academic performance among learners.

Additionally, the findings revealed that 39.2% of the respondents reported that their parents always failed to ensure regular school attendance, 29.2% reported that this happened often, 27.6% reported that it was occasional, while only 4.0% reported that it happened rarely. The significance of this irregularity in school attendance owing to neglect on the part of the parents suggests that this irregularity may significantly influence academic performance.

The findings further revealed that 55.6% of the respondents reported that they were often sent to carry out domestic duties in schools, 24.4% reported that this often happened, 11.2% reported that this occasionally happened, while 4.8% reported that it rarely happened. Moreover, 4.0% reported that this never happened.

Additionally, the study established that 58.0% of the respondents often experience a lack of parental follow-up on homework or school progress, 26.4% always experience this, 11.2% sometimes experience it, 2.4% rarely experience it, whereas 2.0% never experience it. This suggests that parental monitoring of academic progress is largely inadequate. The implication is that limited supervision may result in poor academic discipline and lower achievement.

Lastly, the findings showed that 48.4% of the respondents are often kept at home because of school fees or other needs, 29.2% are always kept at home for such reasons, 13.6% are sometimes kept at home, whereas 8.8% are rarely kept at home. This indicates that financial-related absenteeism is common implying that economic neglect disrupts continuous learning and adversely affects academic performance.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that high percentages of learners reported experiencing physical, emotional, and educational neglect either often or always across most statements. This indicates that child neglect is prevalent among primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, and suggests that such neglect is likely to significantly undermine their academic performance and overall educational development.

4.4 The causes of child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District

Table 4 summarizes respondents' responses on the causes of child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District by using a Likert scale where 5 (Always), 4 (Often), 3 (Sometimes), 2 (Rarely) and 1 (Never).

Table 4: The causes of child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement				
	Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
My parents/guardians are too poor to meet my needs	51 20.4%	125 50.0%	63 25.2%	11 4.4%	00
My parents drink alcohol or misuse money	85 34.0%	143 57.2%	22 8.8%	00	00
My parents are separated or live far away from home	114 45.6%	85 34.0%	51 20.4%	00	00
My family has too many children to care for	98 39.2%	73 29.2%	69 27.6%	10 4.0%	00
My parents lack awareness of the importance of education	61 24.4%	139 55.6%	28 11.2%	12 4.8%	10 4.0%
My parents are often sick or disabled	66 26.4%	145 58.0%	28 11.2%	6 2.4%	5 2.0%
Cultural beliefs make boys/girls more valued in education	73 29.2%	121 48.4%	34 13.6%	22 8.8%	00

Source: Primary data 2026

Table 4 represents the descriptive statistics on the causes of child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District. The findings revealed that the respondents noted that 50.0% often and 20.4% always experience neglect because their parents or guardians are too poor to meet their needs, 25.2% sometimes experience this, whereas 4.4% rarely. This implies that poverty plays an important role in contributing to neglecting children, which means that due to lack of money, parents cannot take good care of their children and end up neglecting their needs. This may also lead to children not being able to attend schools.

The results further suggested that the participants indicated that 57.2% often and 34.0% always neglect the children because the parents abuse alcohol or manage the finances poorly, but only 8.8% sometimes. This implies that the abuse of alcohol and mismanagement of financial resources by the parent leads to neglect because the funds intended to help the children are abused.

In addition, the results indicated that the participants observed that 45.6% always and 34.0% often neglect the children because the parents are divorced or have moved away, while 20.4% sometimes neglect the children for this reason. This indicates that the absence of the parents leads to neglect because the children miss out on parental care, guidance, and monitoring.

Also, the results indicated that the participants observed that 39.2% always and 29.2% often neglect the children because the families have too many children to look after, 27.6% sometimes, and 4.0% rarely. This indicates that the large family size contributes to neglect because there are insufficient funds to cater to all the children.

Moreover, it was evident from the results that 55.6% of the respondents often and 24.4% of the respondents always experienced neglect because of their parents' ignorance on education, 11.2% of the respondents sometimes, 4.8% of the respondents rarely, and 4.0% of the respondents never experienced such neglect. It suggests that inadequate parental knowledge on education causes neglect and, hence, children from uneducated parents receive poor guidance in schooling and studies.

Furthermore, it was clear from the findings that 58.0% of the respondents often and 26.4% of the respondents always experienced neglect due to their parents' sickness or disability, 11.2% of the respondents sometimes, 2.4% of the respondents rarely, and 2.0% of the respondents never experienced such neglect. It means that parental sickness or disability is a common cause of neglect, and hence, parents physical inability makes them incapable of providing support to learners.

Finally, it was established that the participants responded that they frequently (48.4%) and always (29.2%) felt neglected due to the belief in culture that either a boy or a girl is highly valued in education; however, they sometimes (13.6%) or rarely (8.8%) felt neglected. In this case, one can conclude that there are certain cultural biases regarding how children are treated in relation to their value that influence the neglect of selected children.

Thus, based on the findings presented above, it can be concluded that child neglect in Ogur Sub-County is mainly caused by poverty, parental drug abuse, parents' absence from home, big families, lack of knowledge of the importance of education, parents' illness, and cultural bias. The high frequency of Always and Often answers proves that these factors are prevalent and that their collective influence poses a significant threat to children in primary schools in the sub-county.

4.4.1 The main causes of child neglect in the community

As part of the interview with selected parents/guardians of the students, teachers, and headteachers from selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district, they were asked to provide their views on the factors that contribute to child neglect in their environment. Below are some of their answers;

It was revealed by the key informants such as parents/caregivers, teachers, and head teachers at selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District that poverty is one of the main causes of child neglect in the area. They noted that many people struggle to meet their basic needs such as feeding, schooling, uniforms, and study materials for their children. Many parents have highlighted that due to the inconsistent source of income, it is difficult for them to give equal attention to all their children. It has also been observed by teachers and head teachers that economic constraints lead to prioritizing of basic needs over education and hence absence from school.

Furthermore, the key informants noted that parental irresponsibility, drinking habits, household violence, and parent separation all have a major impact on child neglect. They noted that, in cases of marriage breakdown or migration in pursuit of employment, some caregivers leave children under the care of elderly family or guardians, while others spend limited resources on alcohol instead of meeting the needs of children. Teachers further said the problem is made worse by ignorance of the value of education and little parental involvement in the academic life of their kids. Head teachers underlined that inadequate access to counseling services and poor community support networks aggravate the issue of neglect in the neighborhood. Some of the selected key informants reported that;

“Most cases of neglect we see here are linked to poverty and parents who do not have stable income to support their children properly” **Key informant 1**

“Some parents spend money on alcohol and leave children without food or school materials, which greatly affects their education” **Key informant 2**

4.5 The effects of child neglect on academic performance of primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District

Table 5 summarizes respondents responses on the effects of child neglect on academic performance of primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District by using a Likert scale where 5 (Always), 4 (Often), 3 (Sometimes), 2 (Rarely) and 1 (Never).

Table 5: Effects of child neglect on academic performance of primary school learners

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement				
	Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
I often miss school because of lack of fees or materials	103 41.2%	92 36.8%	00	45 18.0%	10 4.0%
I fail to concentrate in class because of hunger or stress	107 42.8%	50 20.0%	00	71 28.4%	22 8.8%
I perform poorly in class tests and examinations	80 32.0%	109 43.6%	28 11.2%	17 6.8%	16 6.4%
I feel less motivated to study due to lack of support at home	91 36.4%	114 45.6%	00	40 16.0%	5 2.0%
I am often absent or late to school	99 39.6%	70 28.0%	11 4.4 %	47 18.8%	23 9.2%
I repeat classes because of poor performance	87 34.8%	108 43.2%	00	39 15.8%	16 6.4%
I sometimes think of dropping out of school	88 35.2%	80 32.0%	00	58 23.2%	24 9.6%

Source: Primary data 2026

Table 5 represents the descriptive statistics on the causes of child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District. The findings revealed that 41.2% of the respondents always miss school because of lack of fees or materials, 36.8% often miss school, none sometimes miss school, 18.0% rarely miss school, while 4.0% never miss school for this reason. This indicates that most of the students suffer from absenteeism because of the lack of fees or educational resources. This further means that such continuous absenteeism leads to interruptions in education and poor academic results.

In addition, the study revealed that 42.8% of the respondents always lack concentration in class due to hunger and stress, 20.0% often lack concentration in class, none of them sometimes lack concentration in class, 28.4% rarely lack concentration in class, while 8.8% of the respondents never lack concentration in class. This shows that many of the learners always face problems of lacking concentration due to conditions related to neglect which means that poor concentration negatively affects learning in class.

Moreover, the data revealed that 43.6% of the respondents often exhibit poor academic performance in class tests and examinations, 32.0% always exhibit poor academic performance, 11.2% sometimes exhibit poor academic performance, 6.8% rarely exhibit poor academic performance, while 6.4% never exhibit poor academic performance. This reveals that poor academic performance among learners is widespread in cases where learners suffer from neglect.

The research found that 45.6% of the respondents often lack motivation to learn because there is little or no support from home, 36.4% always lack motivation, 16.0% rarely lack motivation, and 2.0% of the participants indicated that they never lacked motivation. The findings therefore show that lack of home support plays a huge role in influencing the academic motivation of the learners, thus impacting negatively on their learning.

More so, the results pointed out that 39.6% of the respondents always are absent or late to school, 28.0% often are absent or late, 4.4% sometimes are absent or late, 18.8% rarely are absent or late, and 9.2% never are absent or late. This shows that absenteeism and lateness are prevalent among many learners implying that irregular attendance interferes with effective participation in class and contributes to poor academic outcomes.

In addition, the findings found out that 43.2% of the respondents often repeat classes because of poor performance, 34.8% always repeat classes, none sometimes repeat classes, 15.8% rarely repeat classes, and 6.4% never repeat classes. This indicates that grade repetition is a frequent consequence of poor academic performance linked to neglect implying that repeating classes may discourage learners and increase the risk of dropping out of school.

Lastly, the study revealed that 35.2% of the respondents always think of dropping out of school, 32.0% often think of dropping out, none sometimes think of dropping out, 23.2% rarely think of dropping out, and 9.6% never think of dropping out. This suggests that thoughts of school dropout are common among learners experiencing neglect implying that continued neglect may lead to actual school dropout, limiting learners' educational attainment and future opportunities.

Overall, the findings indicate that high percentages of learners reported experiencing the effects of neglect either always or often across most statements, including absenteeism, poor concentration, low performance, reduced motivation, repetition of classes, and thoughts of dropping out. This demonstrates that child neglect has significant negative effects on the academic performance of primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, and may seriously undermine their educational development if not addressed.

4.5.1 How neglect affects pupils learning and school performance

From the interviews conducted with the selected parents/caregivers of the pupils, teachers and head teachers from the selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district, they were asked to give their opinions on how neglect affects pupils learning and school performance and their responses were as follows;

As for the impact of neglect on children's learning, all the selected participants who were parents or caregivers, teachers, and head teachers of some of the chosen public and private primary

schools of Ogur Sub-county, Lira District confirmed that neglect is a factor that has a huge effect on the academic performance of children because it leads to poor attendance in school. From what they mentioned, the lack of the basic needs such as food, school fees, uniforms, and other learning resources makes them unable to attend classes or they attend classes irregularly. The teachers also stated that students who miss school sessions fail to get essential learning concepts and tend to lag behind their peers.

Another issue stressed by the participants is that negligence amongst the students results in decreased academic motivation and poor concentration levels. Students who experience hunger, emotional stress, and lack of attention from parents find it difficult to concentrate on their studies, they commented. Teachers noticed that the students are usually passive in their classroom discussions, are withdrawn in nature, and do not like participating in homework assignments. Head teachers mentioned that the students who do not receive any kind of guidance or motivation at home end up hating education.

Moreover, the key informants noted that negligence might lead to class repetition and increased chances of students dropping out of school. The key informants explained that when students keep performing badly due to being neglected, it is very likely that they will become disinterested in going to school and even decide to leave the school in the future. Some parents agreed that children from impoverished homes have psychological problems that prevent their academic success. Headmasters further noted that the effects of neglect on students' education and personal growth are inevitable.

Finally, the important sources said that students' social behavior and relationships in the school setting are impacted by neglect. They said that some neglected students show bad behavior, isolation, or low self-esteem, which makes it even harder for them to learn. Teachers made clear that children who lack love or support at home could find it difficult to interact favorably with peers and teachers in school. Head teachers underlined that these behavioral problems might provide further obstacles to academic achievement since students could experience disciplinary action or decreased participation in school events, therefore influencing their general performance. Some of the selected key informants reported that;

“When a child comes to school hungry or without materials, it becomes very hard for them to concentrate and perform well” **Key informant 3**

“Neglect makes learners lose interest in school, and some of them end up repeating classes or even dropping out” **Key informant 4**

4.6 Possible interventions and coping mechanisms

Table 6 summarizes respondents' responses on the possible interventions and coping mechanisms for primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District by using a Likert scale where 5 (Always), 4 (Often), 3 (Sometimes), 2 (Rarely) and 1 (Never).

Table 6: Possible interventions and coping mechanisms

Statements	Extent of agreement & disagreement				
	Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Teachers support me when I face problems at home	72 28.8%	133 53.2%	34 13.6%	11 4.4%	00
My school provides meals or assistance to needy learners	106 42.4%	67 26.8%	50 20.0%	22 8.8%	5 2.0%
Community leaders or NGOs support children from poor families	80 32.0%	104 41.6%	38 15.2%	22 8.8%	6 2.4%
Guidance and counseling services exist in my school	58 23.2%	105 42.0%	29 11.6%	58 23.2%	00
Government programs (e.g. UPE) help to keep children in school	70 28.0%	99 39.6%	29 11.6%	52 20.8%	00

Source: Primary data 2026

Table 6 represents the descriptive statistics on the possible interventions and coping mechanisms for primary school learners in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District. The findings revealed that 53.2% of the respondents often receive support from teachers when they face problems at home, 28.8% always receive such support, 13.6% sometimes receive it, whereas 4.4% rarely receive it. It is evident that teacher assistance can be accessed by learners experiencing difficulties at home, indicating that teachers are instrumental in protecting learners from the adverse impacts of neglect.

In addition, the research revealed that 42.4% of the participants stated that their school often provides meals or help for needy learners, 26.8% stated that they often get such assistance, 20.0% stated that they sometimes receive such assistance, 8.8% stated that they receive such assistance occasionally, and 2.0% stated that they never receive any assistance at all. This shows that there are many school-based assistance programs available which imply that meals and other basic needs could improve attendance and concentration.

Additionally, the findings indicated that 41.6% of the participants said that children who come from poor backgrounds are often supported by community leaders or NGO organizations, 32.0% said that such children are always assisted, 15.2% of the participants reported that they

sometimes get assistance from external sources, 8.8% stated that they rarely get such assistance, and 2.4% stated that they never get any assistance from external sources.

Furthermore, the research showed that 42.0% of the participants reported that guidance and counseling services are common in their schools, while 23.2% of them claimed that they are present all the time. In addition, 11.6% reported that they sometimes get guidance and counseling services, while 23.2% reported that they are rarely received. This shows that guidance and counseling services are common in schools, but their implementation is inconsistent, which means that the enhancement of counseling services can lead to the improvement of the psychological state of students and their concentration on studies.

Finally, the research proved that 39.6% of the participants reported that governmental interventions support children in attending schools frequently, while 28.0% of them stated that these interventions work well. Moreover, 11.6% of them sometimes get the benefits of these interventions, while 20.8% of them do not get these benefits regularly. This means that governmental interventions such as UPE significantly contribute to school retention; however, their effectiveness varies.

Overall, the findings indicate that high percentages of learners reported experiencing teacher support, school assistance, community or NGO support, guidance and counselling services, and government program interventions either often or always. This demonstrates that although child neglect affects academic performance, several coping mechanisms and interventions exist in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, which can help mitigate its negative effects if strengthened and consistently implemented.

4.6.1 How neglect affects pupils learning and school performance

From the interviews conducted with the selected parents/caregivers of the pupils, teachers and head teachers from the selected government and private primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira district, they were asked to give their opinions on what can be done by parents, teachers, or government to reduce child neglect and their responses were as follows;

The key informants, including head teachers from chosen public and private elementary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, suggested that parents have a main responsibility in lowering child neglect by giving their children's fundamental needs and well-being top priority. They underlined that parents have to make sure their kids get enough food, school supplies, and clothes, and also make time to keep an eye on how they are doing in school. Many survey participants observed that improving parent-child interaction by showing love and

encouragement helps pupils' motivation and sense of security, therefore improving academic performance.

The parents, according to the respondents, should exhibit responsible behavior by avoiding excessive consumption of alcohol and handling money prudently. The respondents highlighted the significance of assessing the family size concerning the available resources to ensure adequate provision for the kids. Some of the parents believed that their participation in school activities and attending meetings at schools would boost interaction between the families and the school institutions, thus minimizing truancy and neglect cases.

The teachers and the principal tutors revealed that schools play a major role in nurturing the neglected children. The interviewees suggested upgrading counseling and guidance facilities to assist the learners who are suffering emotionally and socially. The respondents indicated that the teachers should be keen on following up the vulnerable children, offer educational assistance when necessary, and engage the parents frequently regarding the performance and welfare of their children. They stressed that creating a friendly atmosphere at the institution would motivate the neglected children to regain their self-esteem and concentrate on their studies.

In addition, the informants indicated that the leaders within communities as well as municipal governments should collaborate in sensitizing parents about the dangers of neglecting children and the importance of educating them. It was proposed that community leaders organize meetings in order to give the care givers information on how to parent their children properly. The informants also recommended that community support systems should be strengthened in order to assist those experiencing problems within the family or extreme poverty.

Finally, the informants stressed that government involvement is absolutely vital to lowering child neglect. For underprivileged families, they suggested increasing social security measures, bettering school funding, and strengthening and properly using education support programs. Some said that regular monitoring of children's welfare and enforcement of child protection regulations would help to prevent neglectful behavior. They found that in order to sustainably lower child neglect and raise pupils' academic performance, parent, school, community, and government agency cooperation is required. Some of the selected key informants reported that;

“Parents must take responsibility by providing basic needs and following up on their children’s education if we are to reduce neglect” **Key informant 5**

“The government should strengthen support programs and ensure that vulnerable families receive assistance so that children can stay in school” **Key informant 6**

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we summarize and discuss all the findings provided in chapter four based on the research questions. We also draw conclusions, make recommendations, and highlight future research areas.

5.1 Summary of findings

The findings revealed that child neglect among elementary school students in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District is very common in physical, emotional, and academic spheres. Most of the people who answered the questions said they often or always experience many kinds of neglect. Reflecting general physical neglect, many students often go to school without breakfast, wear dirty or ripped clothes, lack simple academic supplies, and fail to get medical attention when ill. Emotional neglect is also clear as many students said they hardly or never get much praise, feel undesired or unloved, lack a person to whom to discuss their difficulties, and seldom get encouragement to study. Furthermore, educational neglect is severe; many students report that their parents fail to make sure they come to school regularly, send them to do chores around the house during school hours, seldom check homework or progress in school, and occasionally keep them home because of school fees or other requirements. The consistently high proportions of "often" and "always" responses to most of the questions indicate the prevalence of child neglect in the area, and it is therefore expected that this will negatively affect the academic and psychological growth of the students.

Furthermore, the findings from both the survey and key informant interviews indicated that in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, child neglect is mostly caused by poverty, irresponsible parents, drug use, family breakup, big family sizes, and parents' lack of knowledge about the value of education. Families' capacity to supply fundamental needs like food, school fees, clothes, and learning resources is limited by poverty; meanwhile, parental drinking and bad handling of resources further impair children's care and well-being. Low involvement in children's academic life along with parental absence brought on by migration or divorce lowers supervision, emotional support, and mentoring. Lack of counseling services, inadequate community support, and culturally biased methods aggravate neglect, according to teachers and head coaches as well. These elements generally aggravate frequent and widespread neglect, which lowers pupils' well-being, attendance at school, and academic performance.

More so, the results showed that child neglect in Lira District's Ogur Sub- County clearly influences students' school performance in several aspects. Neglect results in frequent absenteeism and erratic school attendance since youngsters from households without fundamental needs like food, school fees, uniforms, and learning resources typically miss lessons or arrive late, which slows their capacity to keep up with classwork and tests. Neglected children also show withdrawal, poor involvement in class activities, and reluctance to do homework; this lowers academic motivation and concentration. While emotional difficulties brought on by insufficient parental support further impair academic achievement, continuous neglect raises the risk of poor performance, class repetition, and sentiments of quitting. Neglect also impairs social conduct and peer interactions; some kids show low self-esteem, isolation, or misbehavior that results in disciplinary difficulties and further degrades academic performance. Neglect usually limits students' future prospects and academic performance as well as their psychological growth.

Lastly, the findings established that reducing child neglect in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District requires a collaborative approach involving parents, teachers, schools, communities, and government. While modeling responsible behavior, controlling family size, and participating actively in their children's education, parents are regarded as mostly responsible for meeting fundamental demands including food, clothes, school supplies, and emotional support. Teachers and schools support one another by providing direction, therapy, academic assistance, and encouragement of an inclusive and encouraging learning environment for vulnerable students. Local officials and community leaders are essential for raising awareness among parents, arranging awareness campaigns, and enhancing family support networks tackling socioeconomic difficulties. Also important are social security benefits, more funding for schools, and good execution of education assistance programs as part of government actions. Generally speaking, consistent cooperation across all parties is absolutely necessary to reduce child neglect and raise student achievement.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The study results showed that among primary school students in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, child neglect is rather common across physical, emotional, and academic aspects. The results support Bosede and Comfort (2014), who found that physical neglect including a lack of food, clothes, and medical care adversely influences children's general academic performance and classroom behavior. Along the same line, Chinyoka (2014) underlined that insufficient nutrition greatly hinders children's ability to focus and academic performance, therefore confirming the conclusions of this study that children often attending school without breakfast or proper clothes encounter learning issues. On the other hand, some studies like Dinh et al. (2020) mostly

concentrated on adult health literacy, which does not directly address child neglect in elementary school environments, hence pointing up a knowledge vacuum in context-specific literature.

The research showed that among students, emotional neglect including lack of appreciation, rejection of being loved, and absence of encouragement is common. The results connect to those of Mugabe, Chingombe, and Chinyoka (2016), who contended that emotional abuse and neglect reduce pupils' self-esteem, drive, and dedication to school activities. Supporting the results of the present research, Samritha and Kumaravel (2023a) discovered that parental maltreatment, including lack of emotional support, clearly influences children's academic performance. Conversely, some earlier studies including Laing et al. (2020) examined health literacy programs in rural regions, which, in contrast to emotional neglect in primary school children, exhibit contextual variations.

The study results showed that educational neglect is high; many students miss school, do housework during school hours, and get little parental supervision. The results support Dlamini and Makondo (2017), who found that low participation in class, poor academic performance, and absenteeism result from a lack of parental involvement in education. Neglect and lack of supervision, according to Tsegba et al. (2021), also help to explain why kids often miss school and repeat classes. But results from Lyons (2018) on male survivors of sexual abuse concentrated on mental functioning rather than everyday educational neglect, so demonstrating that not all kinds of child abuse have the same effects on academic performance.

The findings in this study revealed that poverty acts as the leading cause of child neglect by denying children food, tuition fee, and educational materials. The findings correlate with Samritha and Kumaravel (2023b) since they established that parents' neglect of their children, which ends up affecting their performance academically, is greatly connected to economic challenges. In a similar vein, Niazi (2022) argued that limited resources lead to educational inequalities for poor children. On the other hand, Cashmore and Shackel (2013) focused on the effects of child sexual abuse throughout one's life. The two do not relate to neglect caused by poverty. In this light, environmental factors and culture determine the nature of poverty as the cause of neglect.

Based on the findings from the study, parental irresponsibility, drug abuse, family break-ups, and large family size can be used to explain the occurrence of child neglect. As such, the findings are consistent with those by Zainudin & Ashari (2018) who showed that family dysfunction and parental behavior contribute towards a neglected environment where child performance is affected. Similarly, Bosede & Comfort (2014) also observed that child performance is poor in families whose parents exhibit unstable behavior or indulge in drug abuse since the children

receive minimal attention and guidance. Conversely, Dinh et al. (2020) investigated the extent of knowledge on chronic illnesses among adults without taking into consideration the functioning of the families.

Research results showed that learning suffers from child neglect including diminished concentration, lack of motivation, bad grades, and even ideas of leaving school. The results go with Tsegba et al. (2021) and Dlamini and Makondo (2017), who showed that neglect is linked to absenteeism, bad test scores, low engagement, and grade repetition. According to Mugabe et al. (2016) neglect and emotional deprivation lower students' confidence and motivation to actively engage in schoolwork. On the other hand, Laing et al. (2020) emphasized interventions in distant healthcare environments, which do not directly address the effects of neglect on academic performance, hence highlighting the need of context-specific studies.

The results of the research showed that neglect impairs the self-esteem, social behavior, and peer interactions of students, hence reducing their academic involvement. The results support Brown, Bowyer, and Walsh (2024), who underlined that neglectful youngsters are more prone to show social isolation and behavioral issues that affect their academic performance. Similarly, Samritha and Kumaravel (2023c) observed that neglected kids struggle with classroom relationships, which causes disciplinary problems and lowers learning chances. Some studies on sexual abuse (Cashmore & Shackel, 2013) instead concentrate on long-term psychological consequences rather than on direct links to everyday social interactions in school.

The results of the research show that government actions, community programs, counseling, school help, and teacher support all help to reduce the consequences of neglect. The results support Brown et al. (2024), who found that encouraging teachers and school counselors boost children's ability to cope and academic resilience. Likewise, Laing et al. (2020) underlined the need of organized initiatives to satisfy the demands of sensitive communities, hence bolstering the study's recommendation for a coordinated support system. Some research, like Lyons (2018), however, looked at individual psychological results instead of institutional or community interventions, which shows where more research is needed.

The results of the research showed that parents, teachers, communities, and the government have to work together to lower child neglect. The results support Samritha and Kumaravel (2023a) and Niazi (2022), who claimed that multi-stakeholder participation, parental education, and community awareness are very important to reduce child neglect and raise academic success. Dlamini and Makondo (2017) similarly argued that government assistance and community awareness would help to improve child welfare. On the other hand, Cashmore and Shackel (2013) concentrated on post-trauma treatments for abuse survivors instead of preventative or

multi-stakeholder strategies to neglect, therefore some literature does not quite match the proactive orientation of this study.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that child neglect is quite common among main school students in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District, and it has a negative impact on their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. While also receiving little emotional support and encouragement, many children suffer from poor nutrition, insufficient clothing, lack of school materials, and restricted medical treatment, pointing to general community neglect.

Furthermore, the study concludes that the main causes of child neglect are poverty, parental irresponsibility, drug usage, family breakdown, big family sizes, and little knowledge of how important education is. These elements impede parents' capacity to offer adequate care, supervision, and direction, therefore causing regular and widespread neglect that affects the well-being and educational development of their children.

In addition, the study concludes that students' social growth and academic performance both suffer greatly from child neglect. Children who are neglected often miss school, have trouble paying attention, don't want to learn, repeat classes, and think about dropping out. Emotional and social problems like low self-esteem and isolation make it even harder for them to learn and get along with other kids.

Finally, the study concludes that handling child neglect calls for a multi-stakeholder strategy. Parents, teachers, institutions, community leaders, and government bodies have to work together to provide fundamental needs, emotional support, direction, and academic interventions. To reduce neglect and raise students' school attendance, academic performance, and general development, consistent and coordinated initiatives across all stakeholders are absolutely vital.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings from this study, it is recommended that one should consider the following approaches in analyzing the impact of neglect on the academic performance of pupils attending primary schools in Ogur Sub- County, Lira District in Northern Uganda. This study finds it important that parents or caregivers give their children's needs and welfare precedence. To prevent physical neglect, parents should make sure that their children have access to food, clothing, school materials, and medical attention. Fulfilling their basic needs creates high chances of regular attendance and better performance in class. Parental care and attention are critical in creating emotional stability, motivation, and positive attitude towards education.

The study also recommends the need for parents to behave responsibly, including controlling family size and abstaining from drugs. By controlling family size based on available resources, we guarantee that every child has enough care and attention; wise financial and behavioral policies keep resources from being used for other purposes than the welfare of children. Reducing the consumption or misappropriation of money would mean that the parents could fulfill the educational requirements of their children; therefore, leading to improved attendance in class, improved concentration, and improved academic performance.

In addition, the research highlights the importance of the improvement in counseling and guidance offered by the schools to their learners. For children who come from abusive homes, it is important for them to be continuously guided by the educators through mentoring programs and psychological support among others. This would not only cushion the adverse effects of neglect but also increase their motivation and attention in class and academic performance.

Additionally, the research proposes that non-state actors and community leaders be highly supportive of the poor children. Community efforts such as educating parents, nutritional assistance, and supplying school materials play an instrumental role in reducing the impact of poverty and abandonment. The sensitized parents on the importance of education and proper child rearing will have an incentive to take responsibility for nurturing their children.

Lastly, the study recommends the need for government intervention to enhance social protection policies and educational support initiatives. To help children from low-income homes, programs like Universal Primary Education (UPE), school feeding programs, and social security plans have to be improved and well carried out. Together with enough resources for schools, government monitoring and enforcement of child protection policies can help to guarantee that neglect is kept to a minimum and learners' academic performance is improved through ongoing access to welfare services and education.

5.5 Areas for further research

Further research could investigate the long-term emotional and social impacts of child neglect on Northern Ugandan primary school students, looking at how early neglect affects conduct, self-esteem, and peer relationships across time. Future studies could look at how well certain things like school-based counseling, parental training programmes, and community support projects work to reduce the bad effects of child neglect on how well kids do in school. Finally, further research can also look at how child neglect affects different parts of Uganda to find out what cultural customs or economic situations might make it more or less common and ba

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaires

Research Title: *The Effects of Child Neglect on Academic Performance among Primary School Learners in Lira District, Northern Uganda.*

Introduction:

Dear Participant

Please cooperate with us in carrying out the following study, the aim of which is to find out how child neglect impacts the academic performance of primary school children in Lira District.

All details provided in this letter will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes. Kindly avoid writing your names in the questionnaire attached herewith.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Please tick ✓ or fill in as appropriate)

No.	Item	Response Options
1	Sex	☐ Male ☐ Female
2	Age	☐ Below 10 ☐ 10–12 ☐ 13–15 ☐ Above 15
3	Class	☐ P4 ☐ P5 ☐ P6 ☐ P7
4	Type of school	☐ Government ☐ Private
5	Whom do you live with?	☐ Both parents ☐ Single parent ☐ Guardian ☐ Other (specify): _____
6	Parent/guardian's main occupation	_____

No. Item**Response Options**

- 7 Parent/guardian's education level ☐ None ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary

Section B: Forms and Extent of Child Neglect (Tick (✓) the response that best describes the situation) **Scale: 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always**

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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Physical Neglect

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | I sometimes go to school without eating breakfast. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 | I wear torn or dirty clothes to school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 | I lack basic materials such as pens, books, or uniforms. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 | My parents/guardians fail to provide me with medical care when I am sick. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Emotional Neglect

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5 | My parents rarely praise me when I do well in school. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 | I feel unloved or unwanted at home. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 | I have no one at home to share my problems with. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8 | My parents or guardians rarely encourage me to study. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Educational Neglect

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9 | My parents do not ensure that I attend school regularly. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am often sent to do domestic work during school hours.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	My parents rarely check my homework or school progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	I am sometimes kept at home because of school fees or other needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Causes of Child Neglect

(Objective 2: To identify causes of child neglect among learners in Lira District)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
13	My parents/guardians are too poor to meet my needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	My parents drink alcohol or misuse money.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	My parents are separated or live far away from home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	My family has too many children to care for.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	My parents lack awareness of the importance of education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	My parents are often sick or disabled.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	Cultural beliefs make boys/girls more valued in education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Effects of Child Neglect on Academic Performance

(Objective 3: To assess how child neglect affects academic performance)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
20	I often miss school because of lack of fees or materials.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
21	I fail to concentrate in class because of hunger or stress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	I perform poorly in class tests and examinations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	I feel less motivated to study due to lack of support at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24	I am often absent or late to school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25	I repeat classes because of poor performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26	I sometimes think of dropping out of school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Possible Interventions and Coping Mechanisms

(Objective 4: To explore possible interventions to reduce the effects of neglect)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
27	Teachers support me when I face problems at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28	My school provides meals or assistance to needy learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29	Community leaders or NGOs support children from poor families.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30	Guidance and counselling services exist in my school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31	Government programs (e.g. UPE) help to keep children in school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Open-Ended Questions

(For qualitative insights)

1. In your opinion, what are the main causes of child neglect in your community?

2.
.....
.....
.....

3. How does neglect affect pupils' learning and school performance?

4.
.....
.....

What can be done by parents, teachers, or government to reduce child neglect?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time and honest responses!

Appendix 2: Informed Consent
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: *The Effects of Child Neglect on Academic Performance Among Primary School Learners in Lira District, Northern Uganda*

Principal Investigator:

Name: AKECH BRENDA AYENA

Institution: UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (UCU)

Department: _____

Introduction

You are cordially invited to take part in a research project titled *The Effects of Child Neglect on Academic Performance Among Primary School Learners in Lira District*. Before making up your mind about participation in this research, it is imperative that you first understand its objectives and processes. Below is detailed information about the research, which you can freely inquire about if necessary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how different forms of child neglect such as emotional, physical, and educational neglect affect the academic performance of primary school learners in Lira District. The findings will help inform parents, teachers, and policymakers on how to improve child welfare and educational outcomes.

Procedures

If you agree to participate:

You will be asked to respond to a questionnaire or participate in an interview about your knowledge, experiences, and observations related to child neglect and academic performance.

The session will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

No names or personal identifiers will be recorded in the report.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or leave the experiment at any point in time without having to give a reason, and you will suffer no consequences for doing so.

Risks and Discomforts

The risks in this research are minimal. Yet, there may be questions that will make you uncomfortable due to their sensitivity in relation to child neglect. It is important to note that you have the right not to answer certain questions or even leave the research altogether.

Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you personally, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of how child neglect impacts learners' academic outcomes. This information may guide interventions to improve the welfare and performance of children in Lira District and beyond.

Confidentiality

All information collected will be treated with strict confidentiality. No personal identifiers will appear in the final report. Data will be used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

Compensation

No monetary reward will be offered to participants; however, your participation will be greatly appreciated and will contribute immensely to academia and policymaking.

Questions or Concerns

For any queries regarding this research, please reach out to the researcher through phone call at **07784196029**

Consent Statement

I have read and comprehended the above information. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and all my queries have been satisfactorily answered. I am voluntarily willing to take part in this study.

Name _____ Signature/Thumbprint: _____ Date: _____

(Participant)

Name: _____ Signature/Thumbprint: _____ Date: _____

(Researcher)

Appendix 3: Map of Lira District

