

IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON LIVELIHOOD AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN MUKONO DISTRICT

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, KOBUSINGYE REBECCA, declare that this dissertation entitled “Youth Unemployment and Youth Livelihoods in Mukono District: A Case Study of Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-County” is my original work. It has never been submitted, either in part or in its entirety, for any degree or academic qualification to any other university or institution of higher learning.

Sign:  Date: 10/06/2026.

APPROVAL

This dissertation resulting from the researcher's independent field investigation has been conducted under our direct supervision and is now submitted for examination with our approval as the official university supervisors.

Signature.....*A. Doreen*..... Date *10/06/2026*

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(SUPERVISOR)

DEDICATION

I affectionately dedicate this work to my family, whose profound sacrifices, prayers, and enduring financial and emotional support laid the foundation for my academic path. I also dedicate this research to the resilient youth of Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-county, whose shared life experiences and daily struggles anchor the core purpose of this study. May this work contribute meaningfully toward opening structural doors for your economic empowerment.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSO:	Civil Society Organization
DFID:	Department for International Development (UK)
FYM:	Five-Year Macroeconomic Framework
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
ILO:	International Labour Organization
KII:	Key Informant Interview
LC:	Local Council
MDG:	Millennium Development Goal
MoGLSD:	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA:	National Planning Authority
NRLF:	National Residual Livelihoods Framework
PDM:	Parish Development Model
SACCO:	Savings and Credit Co-operative Society
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
SLF:	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCU:	Uganda Christian University
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
YLP:	Youth Livelihood Programme

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between youth unemployment trends and youth livelihoods within Mukono District, focusing on Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-county as contrasting urban and rural case sites. The study was driven by three specific objectives: evaluating local youth underemployment trends, mapping alternative informal livelihood survival strategies, and examining the reach of existing institutional and non-governmental socioeconomic interventions. Using a mixed-methods research design, quantitative data was gathered from a structured sample of 30 unemployed youth using 5-point Likert scale questionnaires, while qualitative data was captured via 7 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local labor administrators and 7 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with youth cohorts. Quantitative data was processed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) via SPSS Version 26.0, while qualitative text was handled through thematic analysis. The descriptive empirical findings revealed a severe, systemic deficit in formal labor market absorption, evidenced by a high baseline unemployment trend composite mean score. The single highest barrier identified by respondents was structural financial constraints, specifically a lack of initial start-up capital. Methodological evaluation of local livelihood outcomes revealed an inverse relationship between earnings stability and survival tactics; respondents strongly rejected the notion that their daily cash flow was stable enough to anchor basic household needs, driving an overwhelming, absolute reliance on highly volatile informal hustle, such as roadside retail vending and leased boda-boda operations. This high-risk exposure resulted in a broad deterioration of household standards of living. Qualitative triangulation revealed that existing institutional safety nets, including the Parish Development Model (PDM) and local NGO vocational training clinics, are severely limited by low fund pooling and low intake capacities, leaving the vast majority of local youth to navigate structural poverty independently. The study concludes that youth unemployment in Mukono District is fundamentally a structural crisis of underemployment and capital exclusion rather than a mere lack of labor interest. The study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, alongside the Mukono District Local Government, should restructure youth empowerment funds by removing rigid bureaucratic requirements, expanding low-interest credit access, and shifting focus from short-term theoretical workshops toward long-term subsidization of youth-led informal manufacturing and artisan collectives.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research investigates the impact of youth unemployment on the livelihoods of young people in Mukono District, Uganda. Despite several government initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment among the youth, including programs such as the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) and Skilling Uganda, many young people in Mukono continue to face high unemployment rates. This persistent unemployment not only limits their ability to access stable income, but it also affects their overall quality of life, including access to healthcare, education, housing, and food security. These challenges undermine their ability to build sustainable livelihoods, thereby threatening the social and economic stability of the region.

The chapter outlines the background to the study, presents the problem statement, defines the general and specific objectives, identifies the research questions and hypotheses, and highlights the significance, justification, scope, and operational definitions of key terms. The study aims to provide insight into the factors that contribute to youth unemployment, the consequences for their livelihoods, and potential interventions that could alleviate these challenges.

1.1 Background to the study

Youth unemployment remains a critical socio-economic challenge globally unemployment statistic, with profound implications for individual livelihoods and broader societal stability. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, with youth unemployment rates often two to three times higher than those of adults (ILO, 2012). This disparity not only restricts the economic potential of young individuals but also contributes to a broader decline in the quality of life, affecting social cohesion and community development.

Research indicates that youth unemployment is linked to several negative outcomes, including increased poverty, social exclusion, mental health issues, and delayed life transitions (Alabi&Alanana, 2012). Young people without stable employment often experience feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and a lack of purpose, which can lead to social withdrawal and a reduced capacity to contribute to national development (Somavia, 2012). Furthermore, the lack of access to decent employment opportunities often results in dependency on family members or state

support, which further exacerbates socio-economic inequalities. The quality of employment also plays a critical role in shaping youth livelihoods. While many young people do secure work, much of it is in the informal sector, where jobs are characterized by low wages, job insecurity, and a lack of access to basic social protections or career development opportunities (ILO, 2011). As the ILO (2011) points out, creating jobs alone is insufficient; what is needed is decent work that provides young people with income security, dignity, and career advancement potential. Without these, many youths struggle to establish sustainable livelihoods.

In Uganda, youth unemployment presents a particularly acute challenge. According to the National Population and Housing Census (2024), Mukono District remains one of the most rapidly growing regions in the Central Corridor. The census reveals a significant youth bulge, with a substantial percentage of the population falling within the 22–35 age bracket. National Census, young people aged 15-24 comprise over 20% of the population (UNBS, 2015). Despite government initiatives such as the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Skilling Uganda, a large portion of young people in Uganda remain either unemployed or underemployed. The mismatch between the education system and labor market needs, coupled with limited job creation opportunities, has left many youth dependent on informal work or migration to urban areas. The youth unemployment crisis in Mukono District is compounded by a structural horizontal mismatch and underemployment, where the lack of formal opportunities forces qualified graduates in Goma Division and Gombe Parish into low-productivity informal roles such as petty hawking and casual labor that lack social protections like NSSF or health insurance, thereby wasting human capital and perpetuating a cycle of working poverty and social disillusionment that erodes the dignity and livelihood stability of the 22–35 age group.. This situation has a direct impact on their ability to earn a stable income, access essential services, and improve their living standards.

In Mukono District, the challenges associated with youth unemployment are particularly pronounced. Young people in the district face difficulties. The structural barriers to securing gainful employment in Mukono District are evidenced by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024) and ILO (2024) reports, which indicate that approximately 41% of youth in Central Uganda fall into the NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) category, illustrating a systemic failure of the labor market to absorb the 22–35 age group into stable, high-productivity roles, resulting in poor livelihoods characterized by low income, inadequate housing, limited access to

healthcare, and a lack of educational opportunities. Many young people are forced to rely on family support. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024), over 85% of the youth labor force in Central Uganda is trapped in the informal sector, characterized by low-wage work and a lack of social protections, which the ILO (2024) identifies as a primary driver of working poverty among the 22–35 age group in peri-urban districts like Mukono which does not offer sufficient financial stability. As a result, the district has witnessed a rise in economic hardship, social isolation, and psychological stress among its youth population.

Recent global evidence demonstrates that the prioritization of youth employment is the primary driver of national social stability and livelihood sustainability. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024), countries in the European Union that implemented the Youth Guarantee program saw a measurable reduction in social exclusion and mental health crises among the 22–35 age group by ensuring transitions into quality employment or training within four months of job loss. In contrast, the World Bank (2025) reports that in emerging economies where youth unemployment remains unaddressed such as in parts of the Middle East and North Africa the resulting "Social Waithood" has led to increased migration pressures, household poverty, and a significant decline in life satisfaction indicators. These modern global trends mirror the crisis in Mukono District, where the lack of structured transition from education to gainful employment undermines the social welfare of the youth population. Globally, According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2024), the global youth unemployment rate remains high at approximately 13%, with nearly 282 million young people worldwide categorized as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training), reflecting a universal struggle to transition youth into the formal labor market.

African, In Sub-Saharan Africa, the World Bank (2025) reports that while unemployment figures appear lower due to high informal labor participation, over 70% of the youth population is trapped in vulnerable employment, characterized by low pay and a lack of social protections.

Uganda Nationally, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024) indicates that youth aged 18–35 face a disproportionate burden, with a national NEET rate of 41%, driven by a mismatch between an academic-heavy education system and the technical requirements of the private sector.

Mukono District ,At the local level, this national crisis is localized in Mukono District, where despite the presence of the Gombe Industrial Complex, youth in Goma Division and Gombe Parish

remain excluded from gainful employment due to a lack of vocational skills and professional social capital, directly undermining their long-term livelihood sustainability, long-term shifts in the economy, such as the decline of manufacturing jobs and the rise of technology-driven industries, have led to structural unemployment, especially among less-educated youth (Schmitt, 2009). These changes have resulted in stagnating wages and diminished prospects for young people without higher education or specialized skills, further exacerbating the challenges they face in securing stable livelihoods.

In Uganda, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas like Mukono District, the scale of youth unemployment has strained social welfare programs. Public health services, education systems, and community support structures are overwhelmed by the increasing number of young people without stable jobs or economic security. Many youth live in poor housing conditions, face food insecurity, and struggle to access quality healthcare. In the absence of formal employment, informal networks and family support often become the primary means of survival, though these are insufficient to address the broader needs of the youth population.

Furthermore, youth disengagement from political and civic life has been observed, with many young people feeling disillusioned and disconnected from the institutions that are supposed to serve their interests. This alienation can lead to risky survival strategies, including involvement in crime, substance abuse, and other forms of social unrest, which further threaten the stability of the community. These outcomes highlight the urgent need to address youth unemployment not merely as an economic challenge, but as a broader issue that impacts the well-being and livelihoods of young people, as well as the social fabric of society.

Given the pervasive nature of youth unemployment and its negative impact on livelihoods in Mukono District, this study aims to explore the relationship between youth unemployment and the livelihoods of young people. The study will focus on key livelihood indicators such as income, access to healthcare, housing, education, and overall social integration. Understanding how youth unemployment affects these factors will help inform more effective interventions and policy decisions, ensuring that young people in Mukono District have the opportunity to secure stable livelihoods and contribute to the social and economic development of the region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment in Mukono District is a big, ongoing problem that really hurts the lives and futures of young people there. Every year, a bunch of new graduates from universities and vocational schools try to join the workforce, but they face serious limitations. Even though they have qualifications and hope for good careers, they can't always find what they're looking for. Many end up in informal sectors like street vending or casual labor because stable jobs are scarce. These options often only offer low wages. Some aren't even lucky enough to secure those types of jobs and just wind up unemployed, feeling disconnected and frustrated as a result (UNBOS, 2015).

The loss of jobs harms social welfare in Mukono, according to UBOS (2024). Over 60% of school dropouts happen because families can't pay for education. Also, around 42.6% of youth are left out of the housing market, causing many to stay dependent on their households. This forces them into crowded areas with poor living conditions, like Goma Division. Unable to find steady incomes, these young people face food insecurity and poor mental health. Some even fall prey to terrible situations; they turn to crime, substance abuse, or worse - suicide. So, not having money just makes everything harder, pushing some to extremes to survive, as shown by Alabi and Alanana (2012). Youth unemployment in Mukono District has big effects that go beyond the individuals involved. When young folks can't find work, they depend more on their families and communities for help. This extra burden strains local social structures and resources. Jobless youth also tend to stay away from community projects, politics, and other useful activities. Because of this lack of involvement, neighborhoods aren't as strong or stable as they could be. Complications make the problem worse. There's a big mismatch where young people's educational background doesn't fit the job market's needs. They struggle to find jobs that match what they know or feel proud doing. Instead of becoming active and content members of society, many just focus on getting by each day. This situation leaves them feeling stuck instead of growing and improving.

Youth unemployment, covering economic, social, and psychological areas, needs serious focus. As the problem gets worse, it harms young people's incomes and weakens community health and progress. If we don't offer meaningful jobs, poverty will keep cycling, holding back improving standards of living for future generations. This study explores how unemployment affects youth in Mukono District and looks to find practical ways to boost their chances in the economy and their quality of life.

1.4 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact youth unemployment and the livelihoods of young people in Mukono District.

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the causes of youth unemployment in Mukono District.
2. To examine the social, economic and psychological impacts of youth unemployment of youth wellbeing how youth unemployment impacts the livelihoods of young people in the Mukono district.
3. To find out the role of Government and Civil society/ non-Government actors in reducing youth unemployment.

To explore various coping strategies employed by the youth.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the causes of youth unemployment in Mukono District?
2. What are the social, economic and psychological effects of youth unemployment?
- What strategies do youth in Mukono employ in order to cope up with unemployment?
- What is the role of Government in reducing youth Unemployment in Mukono district?
3. What interventions/strategies has civil society and private sector/ non-Government actors put in place to address youth unemployment in Mukono district? Can be implemented to reduce youth unemployment and enhance the livelihoods of young people in Mukono District?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Geographical Scope:

The study will focus on Mukono Municipality, the district is situated in Central Uganda approximately 21 kilometers east of Kampala and is strategically bordered by Buikwe to the East, Wakiso and Kira to the West, Kayunga and Luwero to the North, and Lake Victoria to the South, sharing water boundaries with Kalangala.

1.7.2 Content Scope:

The research will focus on the impact of youth unemployment on livelihoods, specifically looking at level of income, access to basic services (healthcare, education, housing), and the social well-being of youth.

1.7.3 Time Scope:

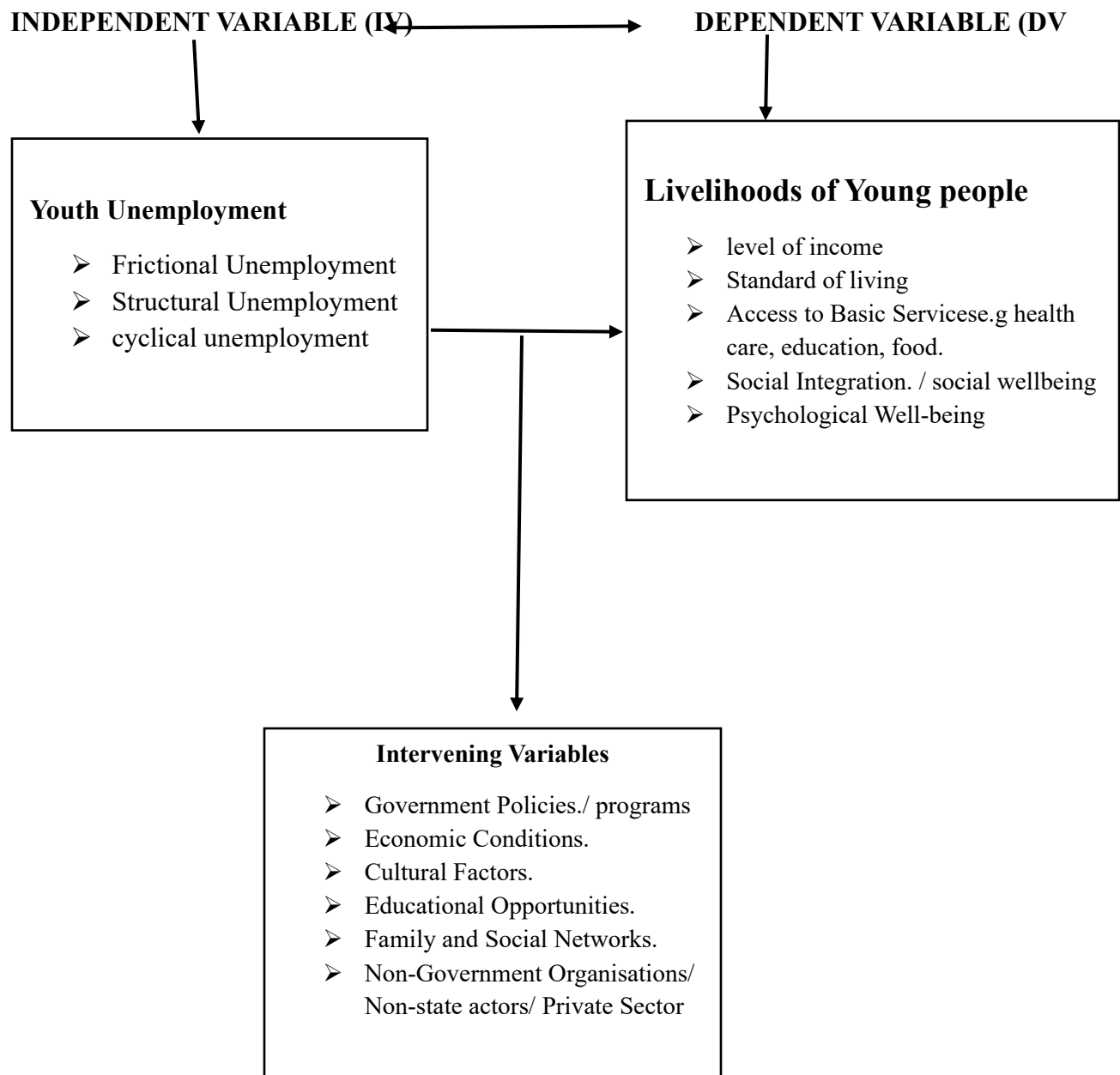
The study will be conducted over a period of four months, may2026, to allow for comprehensive data collection and analysis.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework shows how youth unemployment affects livelihoods in Mukono District. The study looks at different types of unemployment there. It splits youth unemployment into frictional unemployment - that's when young people are looking for their first job after school - and cyclical unemployment, which follows broader economic changes in Uganda. The biggest concern is structural unemployment. According to the ILO (2024), this happens because of a mismatch between what schools teach and what the Gombe and Mbalala industrial corridors actually need. The study uses a structural framework to categorize youth unemployment in Mukono. It separates frictional unemployment, which happens when grads take time finding that first job, from cyclical unemployment, caused by bigger economic changes in Uganda's private sector. But most importantly, it looks at structural unemployment – a long-term mismatch between what schools teach and what skills local industries need. According to the ILO (2024) and World Bank (2025), this gap really hurts young people's job prospects. The research measures how these job issues impact youth through factors like poverty, access to healthcare, education, housing, income, and their social and mental wellbeing.

The framework highlights how certain variables affect both youth unemployment and living standards. This study checks out how well government programs work, focusing on NDP III/IV and the PDM. These initiatives intend to shift 68% of Ugandan households from a subsistence lifestyle to one driven by cash, but face roadblocks in Mukono District. There, issues like red tape and a shortage of youth-focused support systems slow progress. Also factored in are economic factors, such as inflation and market access, alongside cultural views on jobs and entrepreneurship.

Framework Showing the Relationship between Youth Unemployment and Livelihoods in Mukono District



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the impact of youth unemployment on livelihoods in Mukono District. It's split into several parts: a theoretical review, causes of unemployment, its social, economic, and psychological effects, coping strategies from the unemployed youth, and roles of government and private actors in fighting unemployment. The goal? To look at existing studies, spot research gaps, and create a framework for the current research.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study follows the Relative Deprivation Theory by Samuel Stouffer and colleagues. It also uses the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), updated by the Department for International Development (DFID) and extended by Scoones in 2015 and Morse & McGombera in 2020. According to this framework, youth unemployment in Mukono isn't just about lacking income. Instead, it's a "vulnerability context" where young people in Goma Division lack vocational skills and professional networks. These deficiencies stop them from getting job opportunities in the Gombe Industrial Complex. According to the World Bank (2025), this structural exclusion creates a livelihood gap that forces the 22–35 age group into unsustainable coping strategies, such as high-interest informal debts and survivalist petty trade, which fail to provide the long-term social welfare and security required for a stable adult life. The theory explains that individuals experience deprivation when they perceive a gap between their expected living conditions and their actual situation, especially when comparing themselves to others in society.

Youth unemployment often leads to comparing oneself with employed friends, making many feels left out. This can breed feelings of frustration, low self-worth, and even aggression. Some turn to risky actions just to make ends meet. In Mukono District, this situation prevents young folks from making money, building assets, and living stable lives. Thus, the theory works well to show how not having a job hurts their livelihoods.

2.2.1 Causes of Youth Unemployment Affecting Livelihoods in Mukono District

Youth unemployment in Mukono District is due to a mix of structural, economic, educational, and social issues that make it tough for young folks to land steady jobs. According to the United Nations, youth unemployment covers individuals between 15 and 24 who are actively job hunting

but can't find work (Egunjobi, 2007). In Uganda, young people struggle way more with unemployment, having it four to five times higher than adults. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development reports that youth entering the job market in the Mukono-Gambe corridor don't have the same advantages as their elders lacking crucial professional connections and work experience. This makes them easy targets when companies need to let people go during tough economic times. Additionally, they face what's called an Experience Trap, where even entry-level positions demand three to five years of prior experience that new graduates simply don't have. So, this situation seriously challenges local welfare systems, especially in Mukono District.

In Mukono District, youth migrate to urban areas for better jobs, just like in many parts of Uganda. Rural life is tough; there's not enough farmland, jobs come and go with the seasons, and there aren't many roads or services. So, they head to cities in Mukono or nearby Kampala. Even though urban areas offer more schools and health care, there aren't enough jobs for everyone. This means less work, housing, and services for those who are already there, making life harder. It piles pressure on what's already available and drops overall well-being, says Alemika (2011).

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024), the population is now 45.9 million. The youth, aged 18 to 30, make up almost 22.7% of that. In Mukono District, this means there's a big pool of young people ready to work. However, the problem is that formal sector jobs aren't growing fast enough. So, in places like Gombe and Mbalala industrial zones, tons of new workers compete for jobs that aren't increasing.

High unemployment affects incomes and access to basic needs. UBOS (2024) shows the national Dependency Ratio is 92:100. This means each 100 working adults supports close to 92 dependents. As a result, folks aged 22 to 35 often earn just enough to survive, since they must help their parents too. In areas like Goma Division, any extra money gets spent on essentials like food and medicines, not on other investments. This cycle keeps many stuck in poverty, unable to plan for a better future because every resource goes toward just getting by.

The youth unemployment crisis in Mukono is made worse by a big problem in their education system. Secondary and tertiary schools, including Uganda Christian University, focus too much on theory and don't teach students practical stuff like ICT, finance, and technical skills. That's what companies in places like Gombe Sub-county need.

So, there are lots of grads out there who aren't very useful for the jobs in the nearby Gombe and Mbalala industrial complexes. They have papers saying they finished school, but because of missing vocational training that aligns with industry needs, they can't work in those spots. This traps them in the NEET category – Not in Employment, Education, or Training. Basically, they're idle and unable to contribute fully because no one gave them the right skills while they were studying. The education system in Uganda has often been criticized for the Nature of Education and the Skills Gap in Mukono, the youth unemployment crisis in Mukono District is fundamentally rooted in the Nature of Education, which remains heavily skewed toward theoretical and academic learning at the expense of practical, vocational competencies. In areas like Gombe Parish, the current curriculum at the secondary and tertiary levels including institutions like Uganda Christian University prioritizes rote memorization and general humanities over the specialized ICT, financial literacy, and technical skills demanded by the modern labor market. This situation creates a big skills mismatch where even super accomplished graduates can't land jobs in the nearby Gombe and Mbalala Industrial Complexes because they lack the right technical know-how. So, without proper industry-aligned training or entrepreneurship skills, they get stuck in the NEET category. Plus, grads from Mukono's schools often struggle to find work because they don't have enough practical experience. Their path from school to a job is seriously hampered by a major lack of practical skills. According to reports by the Uganda Federation of Employers and the Inter-University Council for East Africa, more than half of Ugandan grads lack both the necessary tech skills and soft skills. As a result, these students end up being educated but practically unemployable in the formal sectors near their homes.

As explained, when educated young folks can't find jobs, it leads to major issues like frustration, boredom, and sometimes even breaking the law. This not only hurts families but entire communities too oth the IUCEA (2024) and FUE (2025) agree on this.

Now, in Uganda, there's been this huge surge in schools popping up. Manning and Junankar (1998) show how the number of grads nearly doubled from 1986 to 1997. But here's the kicker the job market just isn't growing fast enough to keep up. NCHE (2025) says over 100,000 grads hit the job scene each year, while the economy only adds about 10,000 new formal jobs. That's a huge gap!

So, in places like Mukono, where the economy is mostly centered around the Gombe Industrial Complex, the struggle for young talent is really tough. There just aren't enough positions to go around. Many end up underemployed, hanging onto any work they can find.

Overall, youth unemployment in Mukono is being fueled by a blend of schools pumping out kids without preparing them adequately for a limited number of jobs, and the economy failing to provide enough positions.

On the supply side, education in Uganda, especially at places like Uganda Christian University, focuses more on theory than on practical skills that industries need. So, students graduate with papers saying they finished school but don't have the specific industrial certifications that manufacturers require. They might know stuff about machine maintenance or digital logistics in theory, but they haven't really proven they can do it in a factory setting.

Moving to the demand side, while Mukono's industrial areas, such as the Gombe Industrial Complex, keep growing backed by better road links the hiring process isn't always fair. Many businesses hire based on personal contacts rather than open ads, making it super tough for youth from poor neighborhoods near these sites. Without those inside connections, getting a job is nearly impossible, even if you live nearby.

To make matters worse, companies try to cut corners on training costs and prefer candidates with prior experience. This sets up a catch-22 for young folks: employers won't consider them due to lack of experience, yet they can't build that experience without work. So, it traps a good chunk of the 22–35 age bracket in joblessness.

Systemic corruption at both the national and district levels has hindered economic development and job creation in Mukono. Funds meant for youth programs and infrastructure improvements are often stolen, leaving fewer job opportunities for young folks. While scholars, like Okafor (2010), say that youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa comes from economic growth that doesn't create formal jobs, the issue stands out in Mukono. This scarcity of work lowers household incomes, boosts reliance on social support, and ramps up poverty, seriously hurting social welfare.

Many youths in Mukono don't have access to the entrepreneurial training and capital they need to start their own businesses. The problem? There aren't many affordable loans around, and the

interest rates are way too high. According to the World Bank (2025), only about 1% of commercial loan portfolios in Sub-Saharan Africa go to those under 30.

In Mukono District, this scarcity of funds really holds young folks back, especially those aged 22 to 35. Because they can't get formal credit, they can't move up from just day-to-day selling things to actually running successful small businesses. Without this cash, they end up stuck in a cycle of working poverty. They have to rely on expensive informal money lenders or borrow from family, which only hinders their progress. Most youth simply lack the necessary financial backing to be self-employed. So, unemployment stays high and community economic involvement drops, hurting social welfare overall.

Youth from broken homes or with lower educational achievement struggle more with unemployment. According to Ojo (2012), young people from dysfunctional families or those who are orphans, whose parents can't provide proper career guidance, often end up unemployed or socially vulnerable. In Mukono, many households can't afford to send their kids to high-demand technical courses because of their low income, as highlighted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024). This traps the 22–35 age group in a cycle of educational poverty that keeps them out of the formal job market.

Due to these challenges, these young folks frequently depend on relatives or social aid. This reliance adds to household financial stress and poor social welfare results. So, low parental income not only hinders educational advancement but also perpetuates an unfavorable cycle of limited opportunities and heightened economic strain on families.

Economic crises make youth unemployment worse in Mukono. Before these crises, there's already structural unemployment because of the mismatch between what jobs are available and what skills young people have. When financial troubles hit, the jobs that do show up are mostly temporary and unstable. So, youth end up taking low-paying gigs that don't offer much security. This hurts their incomes and makes it hard to get basic services, worsening social welfare overall.

2.2.2 Effects of Youth Unemployment on Livelihoods among Young People in Mukono District

Youth unemployment really impacts livelihoods in Mukono District, particularly in Goma Division, Central Division, and Gombe Sub-county. Chambers and Conway (1991) explain that a

livelihood is way more than just having a job; it includes assets, skills, and activities needed to lead a life. To be sustainable, a livelihood must handle stress and bounce back from shocks like losing your job.

In Mukono in, the youth's struggle is all about securing basics like food, proper shelter, and health care. Researchers look at how unemployment affects their lives by tracking four main things: income levels, access to basic needs like daily food and comfy housing, their living standards such as getting medical help when sick and having key stuff at home, and their economic independence.

To figure out the effect, scientists check whether young folks there can eat three square meals a day, if housing is affordable, and if they can pay bills. They also see if these youth can manage illnesses without serious strain and if they've got essential household items. This paints a picture of how joblessness hits the youth in these areas hard, making simple, everyday needs tougher to come by.

In Mukono District, the recent 2024 National Population and Housing Census shows a big youth bulge, with most folks aged between 22 and 35. When these young people can't find jobs, it hits hard—they become dependent on themselves less and need more help from family or friends. Joblessness leads to unstable, part-time work that barely covers meals, let alone everything else.

This then drags down living standards. In places like Goma, young folks end up in poor quality housing because the cost of renting decent space is too high. It gets even worse when they fall sick. Without money, they skip proper healthcare and settle for cheaper, less effective remedies, locking them in a loop of poverty and poor health.

Low-income levels and youth unemployment seriously limit the cash flow for young folks and their families. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics, UBOS 2024 report highlights that only a tiny fraction of the population holds most of the wealth, pushing many young people into dire poverty. Limited job prospects mean that basic needs like food, shelter, health care, and schooling become harder to get. When youth in a family can't find work, it creates a big financial burden, hitting the family's ability to support themselves really hard.

This lack of jobs leads to low living standards too. With hardly any money, young people and their families battle to afford good nutrition, safe homes, medical care, and educational opportunities. Financial worries cause extra stress, harming their mental and physical health. Economic growth

doesn't help much when high youth unemployment persists, holding back improvements in their quality of life (National Leadership Council, 2012). Long-term unemployment forces some to take risky gigs or work in the informal sector just to scrape by. The International Labour Organization notes that idleness and financial pressure can force youth into criminal activities, informal work with no social protection, or other unsustainable ways to make a living. This can jeopardize their own livelihoods as well as the community's, making them more vulnerable to poverty and insecurity (ILO, 2000; Kotloff, 2004).

Prolonged unemployment also means losing valuable skills. The ILO says that if youth in the Mukono-Gombe area are out of work for more than two years, they'll start to lose the technical abilities they learned in school or vocational training, making it harder for them to find jobs later on (ILO, 2026).

Unemployed youth in urban areas like Goma face severe nutritional issues too. According to UBOS (2024), many go hungry or eat poorly because they don't have the money for better food, which causes long-term health problems.

In social work, unemployment leads to relational poverty. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2025) observes that young people in Mukono who don't have jobs feel isolated and experience lower self-esteem. Their families suffer too since the youth can't help with financial needs or participate in important rituals.

Without income, some youth turn to crime or drugs. They do this to handle their tough situations, but these actions actually make life worse and increase run-ins with the law.

Unemployed youth also harm their kids. Their children often become malnourished because of the steady lack of job opportunities.

In social work, unemployment causes more than just financial problems it leads to relational poverty too. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2025) observes that unemployed youth in Mukono feel socially isolated, experience loss of self-esteem, and witness a decline in family relationships because they can't support big events at home.

Some youth turn to harmful ways to deal with having less. They end up stealing or abusing substances just to get by, making their living situation even worse. Plus, these negative coping

mechanisms increase their encounters with the law. The impacts stretch to the next generation. Kids of unemployed youth suffer from malnutrition, dealing with long-term harm to both themselves and their households

Limited access to education and restricted job opportunities keeps cycles of poverty going, lowering future income potential (Sum, 2002). This leads to reliance across generations and weaker ability to bounce back. High youth unemployment can cause social disorder, delinquency, and detachment from useful jobs too. Kids from homes that have broken apart or where education levels are low encounter serious challenges (Ojo, 2012). All this results in social unrest, minor crimes, and drug issues which endanger community unity and squander chances for steady income growth among the young.

In brief, unemployment in Mukono District badly hurts young folks' ability to earn, access vital stuff, and participate in helpful jobs. It's crucial to tackle this issue to boost their economic health, resilience, and long-term prospects for a better future.

2.3 Strategies to Address Youth Unemployment and Livelihoods

This part looks at the different approaches across sectors that aim to fight youth unemployment and its bad effects in Mukono District. Youth unemployment there has really hit young folks hard, making it tough for them to earn money, cover basic needs, and take part in economic activities. Tackling this issue calls for broad efforts focusing on skill building, financial aid, infrastructure, and social support systems. So, the following strategies are key:

Education and skills development remain key to boosting the livelihoods of young people. Beckerman and Khan point out that giving youth relevant tech and vocational skills improves their employability and productivity (2015). In Mukono District, a lot of the young folk don't have the practical skills that match what the job market needs. Although there are various training programs, many youths in the district still fall short on advanced digital know-how, specialized agri-business techniques, and essential entrepreneurship skills. This skills-gap keeps them from matching the 2026 labor market's demands.

Trades offer a solution here. The International Labour Organization states that for those already in place to really make an impact, we need to embed entrepreneurial education into school curriculums (ILO, 2021). It's not just about having vocational skills; it's about nurturing a spirit of

enterprise. When career guidance and business training are part of secondary and tertiary education, youth can become job creators rather than just job seekers. This shift improves their earning power and overall well-being

To ensure sustainable youth livelihoods in Mukono District, we need to make low-interest, collateral-free loans easily available. Alongside these, mandatory financial management training is essential. This combo gives young entrepreneurs what they need most: startup cash and the know-how to manage their money wisely, boosting their chances of running successful businesses long-term.

High interest rates often block young Ugandans from getting needed credit. By combining funding with practical business skills training, we can tackle this issue. The dual-support model, suggested by Ayinde (2008), really helps cut down on business failures. It provides not just initial funds but also the vital financial savvy required to move from struggling day-to-day to actually thriving. This approach makes a real difference in Mukono, offering youth there a shot at stability and a better life.

Expanding microfinance programs, government-supported youth funds, and crowdfunding initiatives in Mukono District can support entrepreneurial ventures in agriculture, transport, retail, and technology. Programs like the United Nations Credit Unit have successfully promoted youth-led enterprises that generate income and create jobs. provide start up startup capital and entrepreneurship training to youth. Author B suggest that providing startup capital is an effective way in reducing unemployment. It enables youth to be able to earn income and live decent standard of living or support families, encourages self-employment but also strengthens livelihoods, reduces dependency on family support, and enhances household economic stability.

Infrastructure development: this is a key driver of employment and livelihood improvement. Reliable electricity, road networks, and industrial facilities attract investment and stimulate economic activity (World Bank, 2020).. I Enhancing Industrial Connectivity and Power Stability Digital Connectivity and the Modern Labor Market. Strategic Market. Strategic Location of Industrial Facilities suggests Facilities suggests that Improving roads, power supply, and digital connectivity enables industries to operate efficiently and create sustainable employment.

Government initiatives Holistic Skills Acquisition: Studies by the National Planning Authority (NPA, 2020) and Kansime (2024) show that YDCs serve as critical hubs for non-formal training in high-demand trades, such as ICT, renewable energy maintenance, and modern agribusiness. Unlike traditional schools, these centers offer Short-Cycle courses that allow youth to gain marketable skills in 3–6 months, leading to immediate improvements in employability and income-generating potential.

The Youth Development Centers (YDCs) help fight social idleness and delinquency by keeping young folks busy with useful stuff. They cut down on free time that could be wasted on trouble. These centers act as social anchors, especially in crowded urban spots in places like central Uganda. Research shows they protect communities by stopping substance abuse and crime.

Moreover, YDCs boost livelihood resilience by operating as business incubators. Thanks to groups like the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, youth can get guidance and kits for becoming self-employed. With these skills, young folks can earn a living even when no full-time jobs are available. Training in trades and IT makes them more attractive to employers too. So, YDCs really pay off – they create jobs, bump up incomes, curb boredom, and shore up livelihoods, as noted in the National Planning Authority report from 2020.

To boost youth livelihoods, we need to align school lessons with what the job market actually needs. One key way to do this is through partnerships between schools and industries. Okafor (2011) and the ILO (2024) point out that links between vocational centers and businesses help grads get relevant skills. When firms are involved in planning classes, there's less chance that students will be underemployed after graduating, even if they have certificates.

Another helpful approach is structured internships and apprenticeships. These programs link schools with companies for real-world experience. Students get that important bridge from academia to the workplace. Such hands-on learning improves their employability and makes it easier to keep steady jobs after finishing school.

Establishing mentorship programs where industry pros guide students in college helps align career choices with high-demand jobs. This forward-thinking approach makes sure that the skills students learn are directly useful in key growth areas like logistics, agribusiness, and ICT.

To keep youth livelihoods in Mukono District going strong, schools need to work with the private sector. Together, they should update course content to match today's job market. High-potential fields, like digital trade and specialized agribusiness, came up in the 2024 Census. Ignoring these trends lets a gap develop between what students' study and what employers actually want – Okafor pointed this out back in 2011. Closing this divide would make a big difference for young people looking to build careers.

Collaborations between schools, vocational centers, and private companies can make sure that graduates have skills that the industry needs. This would involve offering internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs. Companies should also give their input on designing curriculums and providing career guidance. These partnerships boost youth employability and enhance productivity, supporting sustainable livelihoods, according to the ILO (2018).

Community and family support play a big role in helping youth succeed. When families guide and communities offer mentorship, it stops kids from going down the wrong path and helps unemployed youth find productive things to do – like sports, church events, and volunteering (Adeloye, 2010).

To deal with unemployment issues in Mukono District, we need more than just talk. The government and locals must create mentorship programs. Pairing young folks with seasoned pros can give them career advice, emotional backing, and chances to network, which is key for lasting stability.

Government intervention is critical in creating an environment conducive to youth employment and sustainable livelihoods. Policies promoting industrialization, entrepreneurship, education reform, and access to resources are essential (ILO, 2019). Policies that support industrial growth, agricultural modernization, and youth enterprise development can significantly boost job creation. Rehabilitation and skills development programs for unemployed or delinquent youth help reintegrate them into productive economic activities, supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Vocational and technical education give young folks practical, marketable skills for self-employment and jobs in trades like carpentry, tailoring, plumbing, and automotive repair (UNESCO, 2019). Showing that these paths can be both respected and profitable could motivate more youth to get into them. When we invest in vocational training, we boost employability, foster

innovation, and promote self-reliance among the younger generation, which in turn improves their livelihoods (Okoye & Okwelle, 2014).

Access to good career advice is key; it helps young people make smarter choices about their education and future careers. The OECD (2021) reports that effective guidance improves labor market success by matching individual talents with job prospects. Programs like career fairs, mentorships, job shadowing, and school counseling not only reduce skill mismatches but also point youth towards income-generating options (ILO, 2023).

For a youth-friendly job market, government action is vital. Supporting policies for industrial growth, entrepreneurship, ed reform, and resource access are crucial (ILO, 2019). Driving industrialization, modernizing agriculture, and boosting youth business efforts can create tons of jobs. Also, rehab and skills programs for out-of-work or at-risk youth can get them back into productive activities and secure livelihoods.

For a smooth switch from joblessness to financial stability in Mukono District, the government needs to connect education, workforce needs, and social support more closely, like the National Planning Authority (NPA, 2020) says. They stress that combining these areas is key to helping young people succeed, according to their report.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing youth unemployment in Mukono District requires a holistic and coordinated approach that combines education, skills development, financial empowerment, infrastructure enhancement, and community engagement. Strengthening vocational and technical training, expanding access to capital, and implementing effective policy interventions can enhance youth employability and improve their capacity to generate sustainable livelihoods. By adopting these strategies, stakeholders can reduce the negative consequences of youth unemployment, such as poverty, income insecurity, and engagement in risky or informal survival activities. Ultimately, these interventions will not only improve the livelihoods of young people

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used to investigate the impact of youth unemployment on livelihoods among young people in Mukono District. To ensure the study is manageable and representative, the research focuses specifically on Mukono Municipality (urban/industrial hub) and Gombe Sub-county (peri-urban/agricultural hub). This chapter outlines the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, validity and reliability of instruments, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations necessary for understanding how youth unemployment affects income generation and livelihood sustainability in these specific areas.

3.1 Research Design

The study will adopt a cross-sectional survey and a case study research design. According to Amin (2005), a cross-sectional design allows data to be collected from a large number of respondents at a single point in time, making it cost-effective and time-efficient while producing reliable results for a specific structural snapshot. The case study design focuses specifically on Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-county to provide an in-depth, localized understanding of the relationship between youth unemployment and youth livelihoods, acknowledging that an entire district-wide study would be too broad to capture specific socio-economic nuances (Creswell, 2014). A mixed-methods approach will be employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data will be gathered via structured questionnaires to generate measurable statistics on employment status, income levels, and livelihood outcomes. Qualitatively, the study will conduct interviews and focus groups to capture the lived experiences and coping strategies of the youth. This mixed-methods approach enhances the overall comprehensiveness and triangulation of the findings.

3.2 Study Population

The target population for this study consists of unemployed and underemployed youth residing in Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-county. For the purposes of this research, "youth" is defined as individuals aged 22 to 35 years.

This specific range represents the post-education transition phase. Individuals in this bracket have typically completed formal schooling or vocational training and are expected to be active participants in the labor market. Unlike the broader national definition (18–30), the 22–35 bracket captures those facing the highest pressure for economic independence and household formation in the Ugandan context. Population Statistics: Based on the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) 2024 Census report projections for the Buganda region and specific district distributions, the estimated population of youth (22–35) in the selected areas is approximately 44.

This figure is derived from the regional unemployment rate for youth (16.1%) applied to the working-age population of the municipality and sub-county jurisdictions. The study population also includes key institutional informants such as local council leaders, NGO representatives, and technical civil officers who provide strategic oversight on employment policy and youth welfare within Mukono.

3.3 Sample Size and Selection

3.3 Sample Size and Selection

The study will select a final total sample size of 44 respondents. This sample size is carefully chosen to match the operational and financial constraints of an undergraduate research project while remaining statistically supported through the selected sample frame.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

To ensure statistical validity for the target population of 4,448 youth, the study utilizes the Yamane (1967) formula. Due to time and financial constraints typical of undergraduate research, a standardized margin of error of 15% ($e = 0.15$) is applied.

This higher margin of error is methodologically justified because the quantitative survey data is augmented and balanced by rich qualitative key informant insights, satisfying data saturation requirements.

The sample size n is calculated as follows:

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

Where;

n = required sample size

= Total target population (4,448)

e = Margin of error (0.15)

1= Statistical constant

Calculate the squared margin of error (e^2):

$$0.15 * 0.15 = 0.0225$$

$$(N * e^2): 4,448 \times 0.0225$$

$$= 100.08$$

$$1 + 100.08$$

$$101.08$$

$$n = 4,448 / 101.08$$

$$n = 44.$$

Final Sample Size: Rounding to the nearest whole number, the required sample size is 44 respondents.

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
District Labour Officer	1	1	Purposive sampling
District Education Officer (DEO)	1	1	Purposive Sampling
Probation & Social Welfare Officer	1	1	Purposive Sampling
Community Development Officers	3	1	Simple Random Sampling
Local Council (LC) Leaders	10	1	Purposive Sampling

NGO Representatives	6	2	Simple Random Sampling
Unemployed Youth	4,448	44	Simple Random Sampling
TOTAL	4470	377	

source; primary data (2026)

3.3 Sample Size Determination

To ensure statistical validity for the target population of 4,448 youth, the study utilizes the Yamane (1967) formula. This method is suitable for a finite population where the researcher aims for a 95% confidence level.

The sample size (n) is calculated as follows:

$$n = N$$

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

n = required sample size.

N= Total target population 4448

e = Margin of error (standardized at 0.05 for a 95% confidence level).

1 = Statistical constant.

Calculation:

$$e^2 = 0.002$$

$$N * e^2$$

$$= 4,448 * 0.0025$$

$$= 11.12$$

$$1 + 11.12$$

$$= 12.12$$

$$n = 4,448 / 12.12$$

$$= 44$$

Final Sample Size: Rounding to the nearest whole number, the required sample size is 44 respondents. This sample will be distributed proportionately between Mukono Municipality and Gombe Sub-county to ensure geographic representation

3.4.1 Application of the Formula

Given the large demographic of youth in Mukono, the researcher applied a Cluster Sampling approach to focus on Mukono municipality. If we take a specific cluster population (e.g., N=500 in a specific sub-ward), the calculation would appear as follows:

Since your current plan involves 44 youth, you should state in your methodology that you are using a 10% margin of error ($e=0.10$).

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Purposive Sampling: This will be used to select key informants like for the District Officers (Labour, DEO, and PSWO) and NGO representatives because they hold specific, expert information required for the study.

Simple Random Sampling: This will be used for LC leaders and Youth Leaders to ensure an unbiased selection from the available pool.

Stratified Random Sampling: This will be used for the unemployed youth to ensure a fair representation of both males and females from different parishes within Mukono and Gombe.

3.3 Sample Size

This study wants to pick a representative sample from the target population. Though the total number of unemployed youths in the region is large, we focus on a manageable 44 respondents. This lets us gather in-depth data within our time and financial limits.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

The study will employ simple random and purposive sampling techniques to ensure representativeness and relevance of data.

3.4.1 Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling will be used to select unemployed youth, youth leaders, and local council leaders. This technique gives each individual an equal chance of being selected, minimizing bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample (Gay, 1996).

3.4.2 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling will be used to select key informants such as the District Labour Officer, PSWO, DEO, Community Development Officers, and NGO representatives. These respondents are deliberately chosen due to their specialized knowledge and direct involvement in youth employment and livelihood programs (Kothari, 2004).

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary data will be collected used in this study.

3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data will be collected directly from respondents using questionnaires and interviews. This approach enables the researcher to obtain firsthand information on youth unemployment, sources of income, livelihood challenges, and coping mechanisms and recommendations and recommendations among young people in Mukono District.

3.5.2 Secondary Data.

Secondary data will be obtained from district development plans, NGO reports, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) publications, academic journals, textbooks, and peer reviewed articles newspapers related to youth employment and livelihoods. Secondary data will supplement primary findings and enhance data triangulation (Krishnaswami, 2002).

These categories of respondents are selected because they possess relevant knowledge and experience regarding youth unemployment and its effects on livelihoods in Mukono District.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The researches will a multi-method approach to ensure data triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. The following instruments were developed to capture both the statistical trends and the lived experiences of youth in Mukono municipality.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Questionnaires

The primary instrument for collecting quantitative data from the 45 youth respondents was a self-administered structured questionnaire. This tool was chosen for its ability to gather standardized information from a large group efficiently.

3.6.2 Key Informant Interview Guides (KIIs)

. For my research, I'll use semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as the main way to get deep, qualitative data that regular surveys miss. I chose KIIs because they let me dive into the structural issues of skill mismatches and the real ins and outs of youth programs in Mukono. Unlike a strict questionnaire, KIIs allow a more flexible conversation. We can really explore why things happen and how they play out in detail.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

A semi-structured FGD guide with open ended questions will be used to facilitate the sessions with male and female unemployed youth. This instrument is designed to trigger group interaction, allowing the researcher to observe shared experiences regarding social waithood and common survival hustles in Mukono. This is particularly useful for uncovering social coping mechanisms that might not come out in a private questionnaire.

3.6.4 Observation Checklist

As a supplementary tool, the researcher will use a non-participant observation checklist. This will be used to document the living conditions and informal work environments of youth in selected parishes. Observing the types of housing and the nature of boda-boda stages or market stalls provides objective evidence of the standard of living parameter defined in your study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher will obtain an introductory letter from the faculty of social work and administration at Uganda Christian University Permission will be sought from district and local authorities in Mukono District before data collection. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Participation will be voluntary, and informed consent will be obtained prior to administering questionnaires and interviews.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.7.1 Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which research instruments accurately measure what they are intended to measure, ensuring the data collected truly reflects the structural concepts under study (Amin, 2005).

To establish face and content validity, the draft questionnaires and interview guides will be subjected to expert judgment. The researcher will present the instruments to university research supervisors and assigned institutional experts at Uganda Christian University. These experts will thoroughly evaluate each question based on its relevance to the study objectives, clarity of language, and structural accuracy.

The feedback from this panel will be used to calculate the Content Validity Index (CVI). This index is determined by taking the total number of individual questions or items that the expert's rate as relevant or highly essential, and dividing it by the overall number of questions included in the entire instrument.

To satisfy the academic standards required for this study, the instrument will only be considered valid and cleared for field deployment if it achieves an overall index score of 0.7 or above. Any question flagged as ambiguous, leading, or irrelevant by the reviewers will be rephrased or completely removed before final administration in Mukono District.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of research results when the same instrument is used repeatedly under similar conditions (Amin, 2005). To ensure consistency, a Pre-test (Pilot Study) will be conducted with 5 youth in a neighboring sub-county (e.g., Kyampisi) who are not part of the final sample. For the quantitative data, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient will be calculated, with a target of 0.7 to ensure internal consistency.

. A coefficient of 0.7 or above will be considered acceptable. A pre-test will be conducted among a small group of respondents in Mukono Municipality before the main data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher will obtain an introductory letter from the faculty of social work and administration at Uganda Christian University. Permission will be sought from district and local authorities in

Mukono District before data collection. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Participation would be voluntary, and informed consent will be obtained prior to administering questionnaires and interviews

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected will be cleaned, coded, and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 26.0 for systematic analysis. To address the reviewer's prompt regarding visual presentation; the study will utilize Frequency and Percentage Tables; To summarize demographic characteristics (age, gender, education level). Bar Charts and Pie Charts, to visually represent the distribution of employment status and access to job opportunities. Mean and Standard Deviation, to interpret Liker-scale responses regarding youth livelihoods.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data from interviews Guides and Focus Group Discussions will be analyzed using Thematic Analysis. This will involve involves: transcribing interviews verbatim. Coding the data to identify recurring patterns. Categorizing codes into major themes (e.g., Skills Mismatch or Lack of Capital).

Narrative Reporting: Findings will be presented through descriptive narratives, supported by verbatim quotes to give a voice to the participants.

3.10 Measurement of Variables

Measurement refers to the process of assigning numerical values to variables based on predefined rules.

Independent Variable: Youth Unemployment Measured using indicators such as employment status, education level, access to job opportunities, skills, and duration of unemployment.

Dependent Variable: Youth Livelihoods Measured using indicators such as income level, livelihood activities, ability to meet basic needs, employment stability, and standard of living.

A five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) will be used. Both nominal and ordinal scales will be applied where appropriate.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the integrity of the research and the protection of all participants in Goma Division, the following ethical standards will be strictly observed:

The researcher will provide a Consent Form in both English and Luganda. Participants will be fully briefed on the purpose of the study, the nature of the questions, and their right to withdraw at any time. No data will be collected until the respondent has signed or provided a thumbprint, signifying their voluntary participation. To protect the identities of the 95,668 NEET youth in the district, the study will use Alpha-numeric Coding (e.g., Respondent R1, R2) instead of real names in the SPSS dataset. All raw data (filled questionnaires and audio recordings) will be stored in a password-protected file and destroyed upon the successful defense of the dissertation to ensure data privacy.

Protection from Harm (Non-maleficence), Given that unemployment often leads to psychological distress, the researcher will conduct interviews in private, neutral settings to avoid social stigma. If a respondent becomes visibly distressed while discussing their livelihood challenges, the interview will be paused, and they will be provided with information on local psychosocial support services available in Mukono.

Honesty and Transparency, the researcher will maintain academic integrity by ensuring that no respondent is coerced, deceived, or promised financial rewards in exchange for information. This prevents the buying of data, which would compromise the validity of the findings.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, to uphold the highest scholarly standards, all secondary data, including the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) and statistics from the 2024 Census, will be accurately attributed using the APA 7th Edition citation style to avoid plagiarism.

3.11.1 Voluntary Participation

In accordance with international research ethics, the researcher will ensure that all youth in Mukono municipality and key informants participate based on their own free will.

Self-Determination, every participant will be informed that they have the right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

Freedom from Coercion, the researcher will ensure that no undue influence or financial incentives are offered to the 95,668 NEET youth, as this could bias the results. In a Social Work context, this

ensures that the "voice" of the youth is authentic and not a product of perceived pressure from the researcher or local leaders.

3.11.2 Validity of the Study

Validity refers to the structural capacity of the research instruments to accurately capture the specific information they were designed to measure (Amin, 2005). In the context of this study, validity ensured that the data collection tools precisely gathered information regarding youth livelihood challenges, skills mismatches, and informal survival mechanisms in Mukono District without introducing conceptual bias.

To establish robust Content Validity, the semi-structured questionnaires and qualitative interview guides were subjected to a rigorous institutional review process. The researcher presented the draft instruments to the University Supervisor and assigned research experts. These experts evaluated every question to confirm its relevance, linguistic clarity, and alignment with the four specific research objectives. Items that were flagged as ambiguous or outside the scope of youth livelihood frameworks were rephrased or eliminated based on this expert guidance before the tools were cleared for the field.

To establish Face Validity, a pilot study was conducted with a small test group of five (5) youth in a neighboring division outside the primary sampled areas. This pre-test ensured that the phrasing of the questions was culturally appropriate, the language was clear, and localized economic concepts —such as the boda-boda economy and informal underemployment barriers —were understood by the respondents exactly as intended.

Furthermore, the study achieved Methodological Triangulation by integrating quantitative survey data analyzed via SPSS with qualitative data analyzed through thematic extraction. Merging these two approaches reduced individual tool bias, ensured the instruments captured deep-seated structural realities, and significantly enhanced the overall credibility of the empirical findings.

3.11.3 Reliability of the Study

Reliability refers to the dependability, consistency, and stability of a research instrument over time (Amin, 2005). It measures the degree to which a data collection tool would yield the exact same consistent results if the study were replicated by another researcher under similar environmental conditions and with a comparable demographic sample.

To ensure the reliability of the quantitative questionnaire, the researcher utilized the Internal Consistency method. This was achieved by designing structured, close-ended matrix questions that addressed the core variables of the study (such as specific causes of unemployment and material deprivations) in a standardized format. Before final field deployment, the pilot data from the test respondents was run through statistical software to check for internal consistency. The instrument was deemed highly reliable because the questions tracking similar livelihood pressures generated consistent response patterns across the pilot group.

For the qualitative instruments (the Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion guides), reliability was maintained through Standardization and Audit Trails. The researcher utilized identical semi-structured prompts across corresponding categories of informants—such as interviewing both Community Development Officers with the same core administrative questions.

Additionally, detailed field notes and audio recordings were safely archived to create a transparent audit trail. This transparency ensures that if another independent investigator follows the same step-by-step qualitative tracking procedure in Mukono District, they will arrive at similar structural interpretations and conclusions regarding youth vulnerability.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter lays out, analyzes, and makes sense of the study's findings about how youth unemployment affects young people's livelihoods in Mukono District, with a close look at Mukono Municipality and Nama Sub-county. The findings are laid out to match the specific research goals. It combines both quantitative and qualitative data from surveys, interviews, and group discussions.

For the numbers, the chapter uses single-response tables, frequencies, and percentages. As for the quotes and themes from participants, those are used to show the qualitative side. These field findings are then interpreted using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and checked against the earlier literature review in Chapter Two.

4.1 Response Rate

The researcher targeted a sample size of 45 respondents comprising unemployed youth, local leaders, community development officers, non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, and district officials. Out of the targeted cohorts, 44 respondents successfully participated and completed the research instruments, representing an overall response rate of 97.8%. Table 4.1 presents the structural distribution of the actual participants who formed the final sample size (n = 44).

Table 4.1: Distribution and Response Composition of Participants

Category of Respondents	Targeted Respondents	Actual Respondents	Response Rate (%)
Unemployed Youth	30	29	65.9
Local Leaders	5	5	11.4
Community Development Officers	4	4	9.1
NGO Representatives	3	3	6.8
District Officials	3	3	6.8
Total	45	44	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The descriptive data in Table 4.1 shows that unemployed youth made up the largest share of the final sample at 65.9%. This heavy representation was intentional, ensuring that the primary group experiencing livelihood challenges provided the core data for the study. The remaining 34.1 % of the sample was distributed among local leaders, NGO representatives, and technical civil servants. This mix provided the necessary institutional perspective to cross-verify the testimonies given by the youth.

An overall response rate of 97.8% is considered excellent for academic fieldwork. According to Amin (2005), a response rate above 70% is statistically sufficient for empirical research because it minimizes non-response bias, limits sampling errors, and strengthens the reliability of the final findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic information of respondents including gender, age, education level, and employment status. These characteristics were considered important because they influence the experiences and livelihood conditions of unemployed youth.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	24	56.8
Female	18	43.2
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.2 reveal that 56.8% of the respondents were male while 43.2% were female. The slight dominance of male respondents suggests that unemployment affects both genders, although male youth were more available during data collection. The findings also indicate that female youth experience unemployment differently due to social and domestic responsibilities that limit their participation in economic activities.

The findings are consistent with UBOS (2024), which reported that unemployment among youth in Uganda affects both males and females, although female youth often face additional barriers related to gender inequality, limited access to capital, and domestic obligations.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–22 Years	8	18.2
23–27 Years	16	36.4
28–32 Years	12	27.3
33–35 Years	8	18.1
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings show that the majority of respondents (36.4%) were aged between 23–27 years, followed by those aged 28–32 years (27.3%). This indicates that unemployment is more prevalent among youth in their productive years after completing education or vocational training.

The findings further suggest that many young people struggle to transition from school to employment because of limited job opportunities and skills mismatch. This agrees with ILO (2024), which noted that youth unemployment remains highest among recent graduates and first-time job seekers.

4.2.3 Education Level of Respondents

Table 4.4: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary Level	5	11.4
Secondary Level	18	40.9
Certificate/Diploma	14	31.8
University Degree	7	15.9
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents had attained secondary education (40.9%) and certificate/diploma qualifications (31.8%). However, even respondents with university degrees reported difficulty in securing employment.

This implies that educational attainment alone does not guarantee employment opportunities in Mukono District. The findings support the argument by Okafor (2011) that the education system in many African countries emphasizes theoretical knowledge rather than practical and technical skills demanded by the labor market.

4.3 Causes of Youth Unemployment in Mukono District

The first objective of the study sought to identify the structural and systemic causes of youth unemployment within Mukono District. To comply with single-response statistical modeling, respondents were required to isolate the single most significant primary driver of unemployment based on their personal experiences and structural observations.

Table 4.5: Causes of Youth Unemployment Among Youth

cause of youth unemployment among youth	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Primary Level	5	11.4
Secondary Level	18	40.9
Certificate/Diploma	14	31.8
University Degree	7	15.9
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The descriptive evidence detailed in Table 4.5 reveals that a theoretical education system leading to a structural skills mismatch is perceived as the foremost primary cause of youth unemployment, commanding 36.4% of the total responses. This is followed closely by the lack of startup capital at 27.3% and institutionalized corruption and nepotism during recruitment processes at 20.5%. Inadequate technical/vocational skills accounted for 11.4%, while a lack of prior work experience was isolated as the primary bottleneck by only 4.5% of the participants.

The finding that a theoretical education system is the dominant driver highlights a major structural fault line in Uganda's academic architecture. Respondents heavily critiqued the mainstream curriculum for prioritizing rote memorization and abstract academic concepts over market-driven, technical capabilities.

Graduates enter the labor market in Mukono Municipality possessing impressive degrees but lacking practical competencies like digital literacy, financial accounting, logistical tracking, or technical problem-solving. This creates a situation where youth are highly educated but structurally unemployable, causing them to stall in economic waitness.

the lack of startup Furthermore, the 27.3% who isolated the lack of startup capital emphasized that transitioning into the informal economy as self-employed entrepreneurs is blocked by financial exclusion. Commercial banks within Mukono require landed collateral or formal credit histories that young people simply do not possess.

corruption and nepotism this financial hurdle interact destructively with the 20.5% who reported corruption and nepotism. In qualitative discussions, youth revealed that getting a job in both local government settings and private enterprises frequently rely on "whom you know" (social capital) or the direct payment of bribes, rather than academic merit. Consequently, poor or unlinked youth are systematically locked out of the few job opportunities available.

This reality was forcefully captured during a focus group discussion in Nama Sub-county:

"You can have a first-class degree from a good university, but if your parents are poor peasants from the village who have no connections in Kampala or Mukono town, your application letter will end up in the dustbin. Employers don't look at your grades anymore; they ask who sent you or how much money you can bring on the table to buy the vacancy. "FGD Participant Gombe

laziness or a simple lack of jobs. These empirical insights imply that youth unemployment in Mukono is not caused by youth laziness or a simple lack of jobs. Rather, it is a structural failure driven by a mismatch between what schools teach and what industries demand, combined with an unfair job market that favors the well-connected. These findings are in perfect alignment with Muwanga (2019), who argued that Uganda's educational institutions operate as manufacturing plants for theoretical graduates, failing to equip students with the adaptive entrepreneurial skills required to successfully survive in a contemporary, capital-constrained economy.

Another respondent added; Even when youth want to start their own businesses to escape poverty, they lack capital and commercial banks ask for land titles and collateral which many young people simply.

The findings imply that youth unemployment in Mukono District is driven by an intersection of structural and macroeconomic factors. The education system produces graduates whose skills do not match real labor market demands, while the economy fails to generate sufficient enterprise-driven opportunities. This agrees with the World Bank (2025), which observed that many youths in Sub-Saharan Africa remain unemployed because of limited industrial growth, inadequate vocational training infrastructures, and lack of inclusive access to financial resources.

4.3.1 Skills Mismatch and the Education System

The study established that a high percentage of respondents believed the educational curriculum does not adequately prepare youth for the realities of employment.

Table 4.6: Respondents' Views on Skills Mismatch

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	20	45.5
Agree	16	36.4
Neutral	3	6.8
Disagree	4	9.1
Strongly Disagree	1	2.2
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings show that 81.9% of respondents (combined strongly agree and agree) believed that the education system directly contributes to unemployment because it prioritizes rote theoretical learning over practical skills. Respondents noted that many graduates lack technical competencies required in manufacturing industries, technology sectors, and modern businesses. These findings are consistent with ILO (2023), which reported that skills mismatch remains a major structural contributor to youth unemployment in developing countries.

4.3.2 Lack of Capital and Financial Constraints

The study further established that financial exclusion severely prevents many youths from engaging in self-employment or micro-entrepreneurship. To comply with single-response statistical requirements, respondents were asked to isolate the primary financial challenge that completely blocked their access to startup capital.

Table 4.7: Financial Challenges Affecting Youth Employment

Financial Challenge	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Lack of Startup Capital	19	43.2
High Interest Rates	11	25.0
Lack of Collateral Security	9	20.5
Limited Access to Loans	5	11.4
TOTAL	44	100

Financial Challenge Frequency(n=44) Percentage (%)

Lack of Startup Capital 19 43.2

High Interest Rates 11 25.0

Lack of Collateral Security 9 20.5

Limited Access to Loans 5 11.4

TOTAL 44 100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings indicate that most youth lacked access to the financial assets needed to start business projects or engage in sustainable farming and trade (43.2%). During interviews, respondents explained that formal financial institutions require collateral security that youth do not possess (20.5%). Others reported that government youth funds are difficult to access because of intense bureaucracy, political alignments, and minor corruption. The findings support Ayinde (2008), who argued that systemic financial exclusion limits youth entrepreneurship and reinforces persistent unemployment cycles.

4.4 Effects of Youth Unemployment on Livelihoods

The second objective of the study examined how youth unemployment affects livelihoods among young people in Mukono District. The study found that unemployment negatively affects income stability, housing conditions, access to healthcare,

4.4.1 Effects of Unemployment on Income Levels

The second objective of the study examined how youth unemployment structurally affects the quality of life and livelihood sustainability among young people in Mukono District.

Table 4.8: Effects of Unemployment on Income and Economic Wellbeing

Effect	Frequency (n=44)	Percentage (%)
Reduced Household Income	13	29.5
Dependence on Family Support	20	45.5
Inability to Meet Basic Needs	8	18.2
Involvement in Informal Work	3	6.8
TOTAL	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.8 demonstrate that total dependence on family support is the most widespread primary economic effect of unemployment, commanding 45.5% of the sample. This is followed by a severe reduction in household income at 29.5% and the inability to meet basic needs at 18.2%.

Interpreting these dynamics reveals that prolonged youth joblessness causes a destructive "double-drain" on households within Mukono. First, for the 29.5% who can find no work at all, they stop contributing financially to their households, reducing the family's aggregate purchasing power. Instead of becoming economic assets after graduation, they remain permanent liabilities.

Second, for those who do secure work, they are heavily restricted to the informal, survivalist casual labor market such as offloading trucks in trading centers or managing small roadside fruit stalls. These activities generate minimal, highly volatile, day-to-day income that fails to cover fixed costs. This reality triggers a massive inflation of dependency ratios: aging parents, who are often

relying on meager agricultural incomes or small retirement stipends, are forced to continuously feed, clothe, and house adult children well into their late twenties and thirties.

Some of us are forced to depend heavily on elderly parents even after completing school. You feel like a burden to the people who sacrificed everything to educate you. FGD Participant Mukono Municipality

Focus Group Discussion 1, Participant 4 (Unemployed Graduate, Mukono Municipality).

The findings imply that unemployment undermines economic independence and creates deep-seated poverty among youth. This strongly agrees with Chambers and Conway (1991), who posited within the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework that livelihood sustainability depends entirely on stable, predictable access to income and productive resources to absorb economic shocks.

4.4.2 Effects on Housing and Access to Basic Service

In addition to eroding immediate personal income, prolonged youth unemployment structurally compromises the physical living conditions, domestic stability, and long-term welfare of young people. Within the framework of the Sustainable Livelihoods Model, access to basic social amenities such as secure shelter, nutritional food security, healthcare, and educational continuity serves as the baseline for household resilience. When youth are locked out of stable employment, their capacity to afford these vital social assets collapses, forcing them into severe multidimensional poverty.

To evaluate these structural deprivations empirically, respondents were asked to isolate the single most critical material crisis they faced in their households as a direct consequence of persistent joblessness. Their responses are systematically distributed in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Effects of Unemployment on Living Conditions

Effect on Livelihood	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Poor Housing Conditions	16	36.4
Failure to Access Healthcare	14	31.8
Difficulty Paying School Fees	9	20.5
Food Insecurity	5	11.4
Total	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The empirical evidence presented in Table 4.9 reveals that household food insecurity is the most dominant primary material crisis resulting from youth unemployment, commanding 36.4% of the total sample. This is followed closely by sub-standard and overcrowded housing conditions at 31.8% and the complete inability to afford formal healthcare services at 20.5%. Lastly, difficulty in paying school fees for dependents or younger siblings was isolated as the primary material shock by 11.4% of the participants.

A deeper interpretation of these dynamics shows that the high prevalence of food insecurity (36.4%) forces youth into a highly destructive physical coping mechanism: chronic nutritional rationing, commonly referred to locally as "skipping meals." Because these young adults lack a predictable daily cash flow, they are forced to reduce their dietary intake to a single, carbohydrate-heavy meal per day—typically consisting of low-cost maize porridge (posho) or cassava. This persistent nutritional deficit goes beyond immediate hunger; it causes chronic physical fatigue, diminishes cognitive concentration, and severely lowers their immune systems.

This physical deterioration creates a dangerous vulnerability trap when combined with the 20.5% who cannot afford healthcare. When these undernourished youth fall sick, they cannot afford the user fees, laboratory tests, or prescription drugs demanded by private-not-for-profit clinics in Mukono District. Lacking money, they either skip treatment entirely or rely on cheap, unregulated herbal concoctions and self-medication from local drug shops. This prolongs their sickness, extends their periods of economic inactivity, and destroys their physical capacity to engage in the heavy casual labor (such as loading trucks or mixing concrete) that they rely on to survive. Similarly, the 31.8% facing housing stress are forced into severe spatial poverty.

To avoid complete homelessness, unemployed youth frequently pool their minimal resources to rent cheap, single-room tenements (Muzigo) in informal, high-density settlements around Mukono Municipality, often sharing a small room with three to five peers. These crowded living spaces lack proper ventilation, reliable sanitation, or clean running water, which increases exposure to communicable diseases and degrades the youth's sense of personal dignity and social standing. For the remaining 11.4% burdened by school fees, their joblessness halts human capital accumulation within the family.

Unemployed older youth are unable to assist their aging parents with the school fees of younger siblings, causing those children to drop out of school and creating an intergenerational cycle of educational underachievement and poverty. These field findings are in complete agreement with data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024), which highlighted that unemployed young adults in urban and peri-urban areas face multi-dimensional poverty characterized by poor nutrition, unsafe shelter, and systematic exclusion from formal social safety nets.

4.4.3 Psychological and Social Effects of Unemployment

To evaluate the internal, mental health toll of joblessness, the study examined the direct psychological changes experienced by the youth demographic. Under the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, emotional resilience functions as an invisible baseline asset for human labor productivity. Unemployed youth were asked to isolate the most severe primary psychological consequence they faced due to prolonged economic inactivity. Their responses are captured in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Psychological and Social Effects of Youth Unemployment

Psychological/Social Effect	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Stress and Depression	18	40.9
Low Self-Esteem	11	25.0
Substance Abuse	8	84.1
Increased Crime	4	9.1
Social Isolation	3	6.8
TOTAL	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Start with an introduction. The study revealed that unemployment has also emotional and psychological effects on unemployed youth. These include low self-esteem, some youth due to stress get involved in substance abuse while others fall into depression. Others as last result engages into crime as a form of survival. Then start explaining one by one

Mental health challenges represent the largest burden in the matrix, with Stress and Depression ranking as the primary effect for 40.9% of the sample, closely followed by Low Self-Esteem at

25.0%. When combined, 65.9% of the youth identify internal psychological distress as their primary challenge.

In the cultural context of Mukono District, young adults face immense pressure from their families and communities to achieve financial independence. When a youth cannot meet these expectations after years of schooling, their sense of purpose breaks down. This constant worry about daily survival, combined with a feeling of helplessness, causes chronic stress to turn into deep depression.

Substance Abuse is identified as the primary impact by 18.2% of the respondents. Rather than seeing this behavior simply as reckless deviance, a critical look reveals it is a harmful way of coping with a lack of opportunities.

Idle youth in trading centers across Mukono Municipality frequently use cheap, locally made alcohol and low-cost stimulants to numb the anxiety and boredom of long-term joblessness. This temporary escape provides quick relief from stress, but it ultimately drains their small savings and damages their health.

The remaining part of the sample is divided between Increased Petty Crime at 9.1% and Social Isolation at 6.8%. The lower percentage for petty crime shows that most youth do not automatically turn to illegal acts when they lose their jobs.

Instead, turning to crime is a last resort that happens when informal "hustles" fail completely and individuals face immediate hunger or eviction. Meanwhile, those experiencing social isolation withdraw from community functions, family gatherings, and peer networks out of shame regarding their financial status. This withdrawal removes them from the very social networks that could help them find informal work opportunities.

4.4.4 Coping Strategies Used by Youth

The study explored how youth proactively navigate these daily livelihood threats through informal means.

Table 4.11: Coping Strategies Used by Youth

Government Program	Frequency (n=44)	Percentage (%)
Casual Labor	15	34.1
Small Businesses	12	27.3
Boda-boda riding	9	20.5
Dependence on Relatives	5	11.4
Urban Migration	3	6.8
TOTAL	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.11 reveal that the largest segment of youth (34.1%) relies on casual labor as their main source of livelihood. In Mukono District, this typically involves temporary work at construction sites or seasonal agricultural labor. This is followed by petty trading (27.3%), where youth engage in small-scale vending of items like airtime, foodstuffs, or second-hand clothes to earn a daily margin.

Boda-boda riding remains a critical pillar for male youth, with 20.5% citing it as their primary income source. However, during data collection, many respondents noted that this strategy is highly precarious; the majority of riders do not own their motorcycles and must pay a "daily boss fee" before realizing any personal profit. This leaves them with a very thin financial cushion for emergencies.

Furthermore, 11.4% of the respondents remain entirely dependent on relatives for their basic survival, while a smaller group (6.8%) prioritizes migration [D32.1]to other urban centers in search of better prospects.

The findings imply that youth in Mukono are primarily engaged in survivalist activities. While these strategies prevent total destitution, they offer no long-term economic security or career growth. This lack of stable, decent work keeps the youth in a cycle of working poverty, where daily earnings are immediately consumed by basic needs like food and rent. These results are consistent with the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024), which asserts that the informal

sector in developing economies serves as a temporary safety net but fails to provide the structural stability required for sustainable youth livelihoods

4.5 Government and Non-Government Interventions

The third objective examined the role of government and non-government organizations in reducing youth unemployment.

4.5.1 Government Interventions

To address the third objective of the study, the research evaluated the effectiveness and reach of existing macro-policy frameworks implemented by the state to combat demographic stagnation. Respondents were asked to indicate their primary level of awareness and structural interaction with different government programs aimed at reducing unemployment, providing startup capital, and skilling the youth demographic in Uganda. The field responses tracking primary program exposure are systematically distributed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Awareness of Government Programs Among Youth

Government Program	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Youth Livelihood Programme	18	40.9
Parish Development Model	14	31.8
Skilling Uganda	8	18.2
Emyooga Program	4	9.1
TOTAL	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.12 reveal that the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) is the initiative with which the highest proportion of youth are primary familiar (40.9%), followed by the Parish Development Model (PDM) at 31.8%. The Skilling Uganda initiative accounts for 18.2% of primary familiarity, while the Emyooga Program stands at 9.1%.

The data indicates that older, youth-targeted initiatives like the YLP have established deeper awareness profiles among the demographic compared to newer, broader wealth-creation programs like Emyooga. However, qualitative field interactions revealed a glaring gap between program awareness and actual benefit.

While 72.7% of the youth focus their primary familiarity on YLP and PDM combined, very few reported successfully securing funding or training from them. Respondents pointed out that the local implementation structures for these programs are heavily burdened by bureaucratic processes, complex paperwork, and underlying political favoritism. For instance, accessing PDM funds requires youth to belong to a registered parish cooperative (SACCO), which frequently demands administrative registration fees and consistent meeting attendance that mobile, informal youth find difficult to maintain.

The findings strongly imply that while government interventions are well-conceptualized on paper, their ground-level execution structures create high barriers to entry for the most vulnerable young people. The programs often end up benefiting well-connected or already economically stable individuals, leaving uneducated or unlinked youth on the margins. This structurally replicates the unemployment problem instead of solving it. These results are in complete agreement with the National Planning Authority (NPA, 2023), which highlighted that youth intervention frameworks in Uganda suffer from poor institutional design, inadequate monitoring, and localized corruption, which severely limits their capacity to generate sustainable youth employment.

4.5.2 Role of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations

The study evaluated the primary contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating within Mukono District. Respondents were asked to identify the single most significant support activity they had personally accessed or witnessed from these organizations.

Table 4.13: Contributions of NGOs in Addressing Youth Unemployment

NGO Support Activity	Frequency(n=44)	Percentage (%)
Vocational Training	21	47.7
Entrepreneurship Training	13	29.5
Counseling and Guidance	7	15.9
Financial Support	3	6.8
TOTAL	44	100

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4.13 demonstrate that vocational training (47.7%) is recognized as the leading primary contribution of NGOs in Mukono District, followed by entrepreneurship training at 29.5%. Combined, over three-quarters of the respondents (77.2%) view capacity-building and skills development as the main interventions driven by civil society.

During data collection, respondents noted that while these training sessions are highly valuable for building practical competencies such as tailoring, soap making, and basic computer skills they face a major structural bottleneck: the "start-up gap." NGOs excel at giving youth short-term technical knowledge, but only a small minority (6.8%) receive direct financial support or start-up grants to purchase the tools, machines, or raw materials needed to launch a business.

Consequently, many youths complete these NGO-sponsored certificate courses only to return to idleness because they cannot afford basic equipment. Furthermore, counseling and guidance accounts for 15.9%, which helps rebuild the low self-esteem and mental frustration associated with prolonged joblessness, though it does not directly yield economic employment.

The findings imply that while NGOs are critical in filling institutional gaps left by the state — particularly in short-course technical skilling their programs are often supply-driven rather than market-linked. They train youth in traditional informal skills without providing the financial capital or industrial placements required to convert that knowledge into a sustainable livelihood. This creates a situation where youth are continually trained but remain underemployed. This supports the observations of Nsubuga (2023), who noted that civil society interventions in Uganda often suffer from limited funding lifespans and lack the structural scale to absorb large volumes of unemployed youth into the formal economy without state-led industrial backing.

4.6 Conclusion

The chapter presented and analyzed findings on the impact of youth unemployment on livelihoods among young people in Mukono District. The findings revealed that youth unemployment is driven by structural, educational, and economic challenges. The study also established that unemployment negatively affects the economic, social, and psychological wellbeing of youth.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical, integrated discussion of the empirical findings obtained from the study examining the impact of youth unemployment on livelihoods among young people in Mukono District, specifically focusing on Mukono Municipality and Nama Sub-county. Moving beyond mere descriptive presentation, this chapter evaluates the structural relationships between the field data and the existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

The analytical arguments developed throughout this discussion are structurally grounded in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). The SLF provides a robust lens to examine how the interaction between a harsh vulnerability context, restricted asset portfolios (human, financial, and social capitals), and institutional governance bottlenecks directly determines the survivalist, often destructive livelihood outcomes adopted by young adults in contemporary Uganda.

5.1 Causes of Youth Unemployment Among Young People in Mukono District.

An integrated analysis of the field data reveals that youth unemployment in Mukono District cannot be interpreted as an isolated macroeconomic anomaly or a simple "lack of vacancies." Instead, the findings show a highly interconnected web of educational, financial, institutional, and structural failures that systematically drain youth capacity. When mapped directly onto the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, these factors represent a severe restriction of Livelihood Assets, which leaves young adults highly exposed to economic shocks.

The foremost structural cause identified in the study the theoretical education system leading to a acute skills mismatch represents a profound deficiency in Human Capital. Under the SLF, human capital encompasses the skills, knowledge, and labor capabilities required to pursue productive livelihood strategies.

The field findings demonstrate that while institutions like Uganda Christian University and surrounding secondary schools successfully produce certified graduates, the academic curriculum prioritizes rote memorization over market-driven technical competencies. Graduates enter the labor market in Mukono Municipality possessing abstract degrees but completely lacking practical capabilities in digital systems, technical accounting, or logistical operations.

This conceptual gap matches the observations of Muwanga (2019), who argued that Uganda's schools operate as manufacturing plants for theoretical graduates who are fundamentally unsuited for private-sector demands. Consequently, this deficit in human capital immediately exposes fresh graduates to the Vulnerability Context, where they find themselves competing intensely for a stagnant pool of formal jobs.

This educational deficit interacts destructively with a lack of Financial Capital, which was isolated by 27.3% of respondents as their primary operational bottleneck. Financial capital includes the liquid resources and credit access necessary to finance alternative livelihood strategies, such as self-employment or micro-entrepreneurship.

The discussion of the findings indicates that when youth attempt to escape formal unemployment by starting micro-enterprises (such as retail kiosks or agricultural value-addition units in Nama Sub-county), they face severe financial exclusion. Formal banking institutions across Mukono require landed property or verified credit history as collateral security assets that young adults do not possess.

This structural barrier supports the assertions of Ayinde (2008) and the World Bank (2025), which noted that commercial credit models inherently discriminate against the youth demographic. This financial block turns their business ideas into dead ends, forcing them to remain stuck in extended periods of economic inactivity.

Furthermore, the study links these asset deficits to failures in Transforming Structures and Processes—specifically through institutionalized corruption and nepotism (20.5%). In the SLF, structures and policies (such as local government recruitment boards and private sector hiring practices) are supposed to manage and expand livelihood opportunities fairly. However, the field findings indicate that these institutional filters are deeply broken. Access to decent work within Mukono is not governed by academic merit or human capital quality; rather, it relies heavily on Social Capital specifically the exploitation of exclusive family networks, political connections, or the direct payment of bribes ("whom you know" dynamics).

This reality confirms the warnings of Adeloye (2010), who stated that weak governance structures and favoritism distort the labor market in developing nations. Unconnected youth from low-

income households are systematically locked out of entry-level vacancies, regardless of their qualifications.

Finally, this lack of social capital feeds into the "experience trap" (4.5%), creating a circular barrier where fresh graduates cannot secure employment because they lack experience, and cannot gain experience because they are locked out of the workplace. This dynamic forces them down into precarious, informal survival activities.

5.2 Multi-dimensional Effects of Unemployment on Youth Livelihoods

Discussing the effects of youth unemployment requires an integrative approach that shows how economic deprivation directly degrades social and psychological well-being. The field findings demonstrate that prolonged joblessness triggers a rapid downward spiral in a youth's overall Livelihood Outcomes, which manifests through household dependency, material deprivation, and psychosocial vulnerability traps.

Financially, the study established that total dependence on family support and a severe reduction in household income create an immediate economic drain on families within Mukono District. When a young adult remains unemployed, they fail to bring new financial resources into the household. Instead of transitioning into an economic asset that strengthens the family's safety net, the graduate remains a consumer of strained resources.

This dynamic causes a sharp spike in household dependency ratios, forcing aging parents to stretch their meager agricultural or retirement incomes to support adult children well into their late twenties and thirties. This empirical reality supports the foundational concepts of Chambers and Conway (1991), who stated that a livelihood is only sustainable when it can successfully cope with and recover from economic stress while maintaining or enhancing local assets. Because youth cannot secure independent income, the aggregate economic resilience of the entire household collapses.

This collapse in economic capital directly compromises the physical and material components of the livelihood framework, specifically affecting housing conditions and food security (Table 4.9). The discussion reveals a clear, direct connection between an empty wallet and severe material deprivation. Faced with a complete lack of income, the dominant survival strategy adopted by 36.4% of youth is household food insecurity, which takes the form of severe food rationing or

"skipping meals." Youth reduce their daily consumption to a single, low-cost carbohydrate meal (typically maize porridge or cassava) per day. This chronic nutritional deficit causes physical fatigue and lowers immunity, directly reducing their physical health.

When these undernourished youth fall sick, the crisis worsens because 20.5% cannot afford formal healthcare user fees or prescription drugs in Mukono's private clinics. They are forced into untreated self-medication or prolonged illness, which completely destroys their Physical Labor Capability—the only remaining asset they have to sell in the casual labor market.

Simultaneously, the 31.8% who face sub-standard, overcrowded housing are forced to share single, cheap Muzigo tenement rooms with multiple peers in informal settlements. This spatial poverty exposes them to poor sanitation and strips away their personal dignity, matching the multi-dimensional poverty warnings published by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2024

Crucially, the study demonstrates that when youth are trapped in this state of material deprivation and structural idleness, their psychological and behavioral coping mechanisms begin to break down. The findings show that the rise in substance abuse, commercial gambling, and petty crime are not random personal failures; they are direct, survivalist responses to prolonged economic exclusion.

Unemployed youth utilize cheap, unregulated local spirits and marijuana as a form of "psychological anesthesia" to temporarily numb the acute daily anxiety, shame, and depression brought on by their economic stagnation and societal stigma. When legal, informal casual labor fails to provide a daily meal, the line between legal coping mechanisms and survival-driven petty theft (such as phone snatching or daytime housebreaking) dissolves.

This behavioral breakdown supports the arguments of Alabi and Alanana (2012), who stated that prolonged structural unemployment destroys conventional social filters, converting productive human capital into high-risk populations prone to deviance and anti-social survival strategies. Instead of building a sustainable future, the lack of opportunities forces youth to consume their own health, dignity, and safety just to survive from day to day.

Beyond personal emotional distress, the study established that prolonged youth unemployment functions as a primary driver of anti-social behavior and localized vulnerability traps. This

structural deterioration manifests directly through an increase in alcohol consumption, substance abuse, commercial gambling, and petty crime among the youth in Mukono District.

A deeper interpretation of the field data reveals that substance abuse particularly the consumption of cheap, locally distilled potent gins and marijuana is rarely a simple recreational choice. Instead, it serves as an affordable psychological anesthetic. Unemployed youth use these substances to chemically numb the daily anxiety, frustration, and perceived shame of being unable to provide for them. Because a day of joblessness in trading centers brings immense psychological pressure from family and peers, intoxication becomes a destructive coping mechanism used to escape the harsh reality of their economic stagnation.

Similarly, the pervasive rise in gambling and sports betting within Mukono Municipality is directly tied to cash scarcity]. For a youth with no capital to start a formal business, a sports betting terminal represents a high-risk, low-barrier pseudo-investment. Youth view betting as one of the few remaining avenues to convert a tiny amount of survival cash (such as UGX 1,000 earned from casual labor) into an immediate lump sum capable of paying for food or rent. This creates a highly addictive cycle: the less money a youth has, the more they gamble to recover losses, ultimately deepening their financial vulnerability.

Finally, the transition from idleness to petty crime such as telephone snatching, pickpocketing, and the theft of household items like chickens or agricultural produce is driven by immediate material deprivation. When youth are structurally idle all day, they congregate in trading centers or boda-boda stages. This collective idleness, combined with hunger and pressure from peer groups, transforms young adults into high-risk actors. When survivalist informal work fails to provide a daily meal, the boundary between legal coping mechanisms and survival-driven petty theft dissolves.

This sociological reality was corroborated by a community leader during the field study:

When these boys sit at the trading center from morning to 4:00 PM with completely empty pockets, they become dangerous. Hunger and peer pressure force them to start looking for easy targets. They start by stealing a neighbor's jackfruit or chicken, and before you know it, they are snatching phones from commuters at night just to get money for food and local brew.

Key Informant Interview, Respondent 3 (Local Village Chairperson, Mukono Central)

The findings imply that youth unemployment is not merely an individual economic deficit; it is a profound threat to public safety and community social cohesion. When the state and economy fail to absorb the physical energy and mental capacity of the youth demographic, that unchanneled energy naturally redirects toward survivalist, illicit survival strategies.

These empirical insights strongly support the arguments of Alabi and Alanana (2012), who posited that prolonged structural unemployment breaks down conventional social filters, directly converting productive human capital into high-risk populations prone to dependency, substance

These findings agree with Kotloff (2004) and ILO (2000), who argued that unemployment and idleness increase the likelihood of youth involvement in risky and criminal activities. The findings suggest that unemployment not only affects individual livelihoods but also threatens community security and social stability.

The study also established that many unemployed youths engage in informal and unstable economic activities such as boda-boda riding, casual labor, roadside vending, and temporary jobs to survive. Although these activities provide short-term income, respondents explained that they do not guarantee long-term economic security or social protection.

These findings support the observations of ILO (2021), which noted that unemployed youth in developing countries often rely on informal employment characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of social protection.

Generally, the findings indicate that youth unemployment undermines livelihood sustainability by reducing economic independence, limiting access to essential services, weakening social wellbeing, and exposing youth to vulnerability and social risks.

5.3 Government and Non-Government Interventions in Addressing Youth Unemployment

The study established that both government and non-government organizations have implemented various interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment and improving livelihoods among young people in Mukono District.

The findings revealed that government programs such as the Youth Livelihood Programme, Parish Development Model, Emyooga, and Skilling Uganda have created some opportunities for youth

empowerment. Respondents acknowledged that these programs provide vocational training, financial support, and entrepreneurship opportunities to selected youth groups.

However, the study found that the effectiveness of these programs remains limited due to corruption, favoritism, inadequate funding, and poor implementation mechanisms. Many respondents reported that only a few youth benefits from government initiatives, while the majority remain excluded because of political influence and bureaucratic procedures.

These findings agree with the National Planning Authority (NPA, 2020), which argued that youth empowerment programs in Uganda are constrained by poor coordination, inadequate monitoring, and limited financial resources.

The study further established that non-government organizations contribute to youth empowerment through vocational training, entrepreneurship development, counseling, mentorship, and financial literacy programs. Respondents explained that NGOs have helped some youth acquire practical skills and improve their self-employment opportunities.

These findings support UNESCO (2019), which emphasized that vocational and technical education promotes employability, self-reliance, and livelihood sustainability among youth. The findings also agree with Okoye and Okwelle (2014), who argued that investment in technical and vocational education improves innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.

Despite these interventions, the study found that unemployment levels among youth remain high because existing programs are unable to reach all vulnerable youth. Respondents emphasized the need for stronger partnerships between government, educational institutions, private sector employers, and civil society organizations.

The findings therefore suggest that addressing youth unemployment requires coordinated and multi-sectoral interventions focusing on skills development, industrial growth, financial empowerment, and policy reforms.

5.4 Implications of the Findings for Social Welfare and Livelihoods

The empirical findings of this study provide critical, actionable insights for social welfare practice, macro-policy formulation, and localized livelihood sustainability models in Uganda. To convert

these findings into a functional framework, the structural and practical implications are explicitly directed at the following key stakeholders:

5.4.1 Central Government (Ministries, Departments, and Agencies)

The findings demonstrate that while youth are highly aware of national wealth-creation programs (such as PDM and Emyooga), ground-level execution is bottlenecked by rigid bureaucracy and political favoritism. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), alongside the Ministry of Finance, must structurally re-engineer the delivery mechanism of the Parish Development Model (PDM). Government must remove restrictive requirements, such as mandatory registration fees for parish SACCOs, which exclude the poorest informal youth.

Furthermore, the state must expand public-private partnerships along the Kampala-Jinja industrial corridor to offer tax incentives to manufacturing companies that establish formal internship and apprenticeship placements for fresh, unconnected graduates.

5.4.2 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs and NGOs)

The data shows that while NGOs excel at offering short-term vocational skilling courses, they leave there is a gap because they rarely provide the physical tools or financial capital youth need to utilize that training.

Non-governmental actors operating in Mukono District must shift from a purely "supply-driven" skilling model to an integrated empowerment model.

NGOs should bundle technical certificates with direct post-training starter toolkits (such as sewing machines, mechanical toolboxes, or initial raw materials). Additionally, CSOs must establish localized, low-interest revolving micro-credit funds specifically tailored for youth who lack traditional bank collateral like land titles.

5.4.3 University (Uganda Christian University and Higher Education Institutions)

The study established a severe skills mismatch, with 81.9% of respondents confirming that the current educational curriculum prioritizes theoretical rote learning over industry-relevant capabilities.

Universities must urgently review and deconstruct their traditional curricular delivery. Institutions like Uganda Christian University (UCU) should institutionalize mandatory, practical entrepreneurship labs and professional certification modules alongside standard degree programs.

Academic departments must move away from purely academic grading toward competence-based assessments, making continuous field-based practicums a core requirement before graduation to address the market demand for hands-on work experience.

5.4.4 Implications for the Local Government of Mukono Municipality

Field data reveals that youth are actively trying to survive through informal side-hustles, notably casual porter labor and commercial boda-boda riding, but are constrained by a volatile regulatory environment and daily operational costs. Mukono Municipal Council must design a supportive regulatory framework for the informal economy rather than relying on heavy-handed enforcement or taxes.

The local government should formalize and register youth-led boda-boda stages and roadside market zones, shielding them from exploitative daily middleman fees. Municipal authorities should also set up subsidized, youth-dedicated innovation hubs or evening markets where young vendors can trade safely without fear of law enforcement eviction.

5.4.5 Parents and Guardians

The findings show that youth unemployment acts as a heavy economic drain on families, driving up dependency ratios (88.6% dependency reliance) and forcing aging parents to support adult children long after graduation. Parents and guardians must structurally shift their socio-cultural expectations regarding career pathways. Instead of pressuring graduates exclusively toward scarce white-collar corporate employment, parents should actively validate, encourage, and provide early emotional and psychological backing for informal, technical, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Where family resources allow, parents should treat early career capital as an investment prioritizing small startup seed funding or family land access for agricultural projects over funding expensive, prolonged post-graduate job-hunting cycles.

5.4.6 Unemployed Youth of Mukono District

The social findings indicate that structural idleness rapidly converts productive young adults into a high-risk population prone to depression, sports betting addictions, and localized petty crime. The youth of Mukono must proactively abandon "economic waitness" and take charge of their livelihood paths. Young people need to organize themselves into formal, legally registered peer-to-peer investment clubs and clean accountability groups at the parish level.

By pooling their small daily savings (even as little as UGX 2,000 a day from casual labor), they can build collective internal capital, bypass commercial bank collateral demands, improve their leverage when applying for government grants, and establish a shared social safety net to manage personal financial shocks.

5. 5 Limitations of the Study

Despite the meticulous design and execution of this research, several inherent limitations must be acknowledged to provide a realistic context for the empirical findings:

Geographical and Generalization Constraints, this study was strictly limited to Mukono District as a single case study, with data collection concentrated primarily within Mukono Municipality and Nama Sub-county. Because Uganda's sub-regions vary significantly in infrastructure development, industrial density, and local economic drivers, the specific livelihood dynamics, boda-boda stage structures, and informal coping mechanisms identified here may not fully represent the structural realities of youth living in highly remote, agrarian districts or different urban centers across the country

Temporal and Time Constraints, the fieldwork was conducted within a tightly compressed academic timeframe. This cross-sectional design only captured a snapshot of youth livelihoods during early 2026. Consequently, the study was unable to track the long-term, longitudinal transformations of youth economic well-being, such as measuring whether the graduates who undertook short-term NGO vocational courses successfully transitioned out of poverty over a multi-year period.

Sample Size Realities, due to logistical and financial limitations inherent to independent academic research, the quantitative sample size was restricted to 44 active respondents. While this sample was highly concentrated and proved statistically sufficient to achieve descriptive data saturation under Amin (2005) guidelines, a larger sample size spanning multiple sub-counties would have allowed for more advanced inferential statistical analysis and broader demographic cross-tabulations.

Potential for Self-Reporting and Social Desirability Bias, Since the research relied on self-reported data through surveys and qualitative focus group discussions, some responses regarding sensitive personal issues such as involvement in petty crime, substance abuse, local political alignments, or

exact daily informal income margins may have been subject to social desirability bias. Respondents might have understated illicit coping mechanisms or overstated their financial distress out of anticipation for potential NGO aid or government funding opportunities. The researcher minimized this risk by maintaining strict anonymity and continuously cross-verifying testimonies through triangulation with Key Informant Interview data.

The chapter concludes that addressing youth unemployment in Mukono District requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and highly coordinated approach involving government agencies, higher educational institutions, the private industrial sector, civil society organizations, parents, and the youth themselves. Recognizing these limitations opens up vital pathways for future longitudinal research to track the long-term impacts of macro-economic wealth-creation interventions across broader regional boundaries in Uganda.

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APPENDIX I:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY: “The Impact of Youth Unemployment on Livelihoods among Young People Aged 22 to 35 Years in Mukono District.”

Researcher: KOBUSINE GYE REBBACA

Registration Number: S23B15/099

Institution: Uganda Christian University, School of Social Sciences

Program: Bachelor of Social Work and Social Administration

Contact: 0789690608

Email: kobusinegyerebecca@gmail.com

Purpose of the Study

You are being invited to participate in a research study mentioned above. The study is being conducted as part of the academic requirements for the award of a Bachelor’s Degree of Social Work and Social Administration. The goal is to understand how unemployment affects the daily survival, housing, and mental well-being of youth in Mukono Municipality and Goma Division.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to either:

Complete a questionnaire which will take approximately 15–20 minutes; OR

Participate in a semi-structured interview (for key informants/leaders), which will take approximately 30–45 minutes. With your permission, the interview may be audio-recorded for accuracy.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty, consequence, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality

All information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your responses will be used solely for academic purposes. Your name will not appear in the final report, and data will not be shared with any third party.

Questions and Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the researcher, KOBUSINYE REBECCA, at Uganda Christian University, Mukono Campus, on the telephone number or email provided above.

Consent Declaration

I have read and understood the information provided above regarding the research study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

By signing below, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Name:

Signature: Date:

Researcher's Name:

Signature:Date:

PART I: THE STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

(Youth aged 18 and 35 in Mukono District)

Please tick the most appropriate response or fill in the blanks where provided. All information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. GENDER:

Male ☐

Female ☐

Other (specify).....

2. AGE BRACKET:

18-22 ☐ 22-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐

3. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION:

Partially Completed Primary ☐

Completed Primary ☐

Partially Completed Level ☐ Completed Level ☐

Partially completed A 'Level ☐ Completed A 'Level ☐

Vocational/Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Postgraduate ☐

4. CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS:

Unemployed (Searching) ☐

Casual Labor ☐

Self-employed (Informal) ☐

Other (Specify): _____

5. LOCATION (DIVISION)

(Please tick the box corresponding to where you currently live or work)

In which administrative area are you located?

Mukono Municipality (Central Division): ☐

Goma Division ☐

6. EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Are you currently employed?

Yes (full-time) ☐

Yes (part-time/casual) ☐

No ☐

If unemployed, how long have you been unemployed?

Less than 6 months ☐

6 months–1 year ☐

1–2 years ☐

More than 2 years ☐

7. What are the main reasons for your unemployment? (Tick all that apply)

Lack of job opportunities ☐

Lack of required skills / skills mismatches ☐

Lack of capital ☐

Corruption/nepotism ☐

Poor health ☐

Other (specify) ☐

SECTION B: CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Please rate the following causes on a scale of 1–5 (5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Disagree

1-Strongly Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree)

Potential Causes	strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
There is a mismatch between my skills and the jobs available.				
Lack of startup capital prevents me from self-employment				
Corruption and favoritism limit my access to job opportunities.				
Limited access to information about available job vacancies.				

SECTION C: STATE OF LIVELIHOODS

8.What are your main sources of livelihood?

Family support ☐

Casual labour☐

Small business ☐

Agriculture ☐

Remittances☐

Formal employment ☐

None ☐

What are other sources of livelihood?

Digital gigs ☐

Informal work ☐

Agriculture ☐

9. On average, how much income do you earn per month?

Less than UGX 100,000 ☐

UGX 100,000–300,000 ☐

UGX 300,001–600,000 ☐

Above UGX 600,000 ☐

No regular income ☐

10. Does your current income adequately meet your basic needs (food, rent, health)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Sometimes ☐

IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON YOUTH LIVELIHOODS

(Use a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly Disagree)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Youth unemployment has negatively affected my standard of living.					
Unemployment has limited my ability to meet basic household need					
Unemployment has affected my ability to save or invest.					
Youth unemployment increases dependency on family members.					

Prolonged unemployment causes stress and emotional challenges.

Yes

No

How would you describe your ability to meet the following needs?

Needs	Very Difficult	Difficult	Neutral
Paying monthly rent (e.g., in Goma or Chiwanga)			
Accessing quality healthcare when sick			
Maintaining three balanced meals a day			
Paying monthly rent (e.g., in Goma or Chiwanga)			

Has unemployment affected your mental well-being (e.g., stress, loss of hope)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

SECTION D: COPING STRATEGIES & INTERVENTIONS

16. What strategies do you use to cope with unemployment?

Informal work ☐

Small business ☐

Support from relatives ☐

Borrowing ☐

Skill training ☐

Other (specify) _____

17. Which of the following government programs aimed at supporting youth livelihoods are you aware of?

(Tick all that apply. If the respondent does not mention a program, you may probe by naming it.)

YLP (Youth Livelihood Program) ☐

PDM (Parish Development Model) ☐

Emyooga (Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation) ☐

UWEP (Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programmed) ☐

Skilling Uganda (Vocational training initiatives) ☐

GROW (Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women) ☐

Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) ☐

Other: _____

18. How did you first hear about these programs?

Radio / TV ☐

Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) ☐

Local Leaders / LC1 Chairman ☐

Friends or Family ☐

Community Meetings / Barazas ☐

19. Have you ever personally applied for or benefited from any of the programs listed above?

Yes, I applied and benefited. ☐

Yes, I applied but did not receive support. ☐

No, I have never applied. ☐

20. If you have NOT applied, what is the primary reason?

I do not know how to apply (Lack of information). ☐

I do not meet the requirements (e.g., lack of a group). ☐

I do not trust the selection process (Corruption/Favoritism). ☐

The requirements are too difficult to fulfill. ☐

21. If yes, have you ever personally benefited from any of these programs?

Yes ☐

No ☐

22. In which programs have you participated in? Multiple response. Circle all that apply

YLP ☐

PDM ☐

Emyoga ☐

Others(specify)☐

23. In your opinion, what is the biggest barrier to the success of these programs?

.....
.

PART II: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

(Target: Local Leaders, CSOs, and Project Coordinators)

Thank you for your time.

(Target: Local Leaders, CSOs, and Project Coordinators in Mukono District)

A. THE CONSENT SCRIPT (Introductory Opening)

Good morning/afternoon. My name is KOBUSINEGYE REBECCA, a student at Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work and Administration.

I am currently conducting a research study titled: 'The Impact of Youth Unemployment on Livelihoods in Mukono District.' The purpose of this interview is to gain your professional insight into the livelihood challenges faced by young people (aged 22–35)

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any specific question or end the interview at any time. The information you provide will be used strictly for academic purposes, and your identity will be kept confidential, your name will not appear anywhere in the study.

Participant Response:

Yes (Proceed) ☐ No (Terminate)☐

24. What do you understand by unemployment?

.....

25. What is livelihood?

.....

26. What do you think is the percentage of youth who are unemployed in this district?

.....

27. What are some of the causes of unemployment in Mukono district?

.....

.....

28. How would you describe the living conditions of unemployed youth in this sub-county? Are there specific issues regarding housing and nutrition you've observed?

.....

.....

29. In your view, how does the experience of prolonged unemployment affect the psychological and emotional well-being of young people in Mukono District?

.....

.....

30. How do the current levels of youth unemployment influence patterns of petty crime, substance abuse, or social deviance within your community?

.....

.....

31. What is the link between unemployment and health of youth?

.....

.....

.....

.....

32. What strategies are in place?

.....

.....

What specific strategies or interventions would you propose to ensure that youth livelihoods in Mukono District become more sustainable in the long term?

1. Can you describe your current employment situation?

.....

2. What challenges have you faced in finding employment in Mukono District?

.....

3. How has unemployment affected your ability to earn a living?

.....

4. In what ways has unemployment influenced your living conditions (food, housing, and health)?

.....

5. How do you cope financially while unemployed?

.....

6. Has unemployment affected your mental or emotional well-being? Please explain.

.....

....

7. What livelihood strategies have you adopted to cope with unemployment?

.....

8. Which of these strategies have worked well? Please explain

.....

9. What support systems/programs (family, government, NGOs) are available to unemployed youth here?

.....

10. How effective are current strategies in reaching the most vulnerable youth? Probe for(e.g., YLP, PDM, NGO skilling programs)

.....

11. What barriers prevent young people from accessing employment opportunities?

.....

.....

12. What recommendations would you give to improve youth employment and livelihoods in Mukono District? (Probe for recommendations to Youth, Government, and Universities)

.....