FAMILY BREAKDOWN AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KOBOKO MUNICIPALITY; A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH DIVISION

BY

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RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELORS OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTARTION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

APRIL 2025

DECLARATIÓN

I OBOTE MILTON hereby declare that this is my original work, it is not plagiarised and has not been submitted to any other institution for any award.

SIGNATURE



DATE

28th May, 2026

APPROVAL

APPROVAL

This is to clarify that **OBOTE MILTON** has successfully completed the research under my guidance as the academic supervisor and is now ready for submission to the university.

MRS. NDARU PROSCOVIA

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Signature_____ Date 2/6/2026.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to all children who have been affected by family breakdown that this research will serve as a step towards their healing and holistic development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep gratitude and humility, I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to all those who played a significant role in the successful completion of my Research, conducted in KMC, South Division as part of my academic journey at Uganda Christian University.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

FGD : Focus Group Discussion

UWEP : Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program

PDM : Parish Development Model

YLP : Youth Livelihood Program

ABSTRACT

Family breakdown remains a significant social problem that has affected the overall wellbeing of children. While numerous factors interplay and contribute to poor psychosocial development, family breakdown played a key role in shaping the attachment styles of children to their caregivers, as they developed internal working models that are characterized with anxiety, avoidance and so on.

The first chapter of this study pointed out clearly the background of the study in relation to the problem statement that is being studied, the objectives of the study which centred on identified causes, effects and strategies to enhanced psychosocial development and research questions that are derived from the objectives. It as well explained clearly the justification of the study and its significance to the broader world.

Chapter two of the research entailed the literature review. In this, past scholarly works are reviewed to identify existing gaps in the body of knowledge that can be researched on to bridge the gap. The literature review was done in accordance to the objectives of the study.

The third chapter covered the research methodology that was employed in the process of undertaking the study. This covered the research design, area of study that is Koboko municipality, South division, sources of information, population and sampling techniques and data collection tools and process.

The fourth chapter represented the findings of the data collected from the different categories of people like the community members, women who have experienced family breakdown, local authorities, school teachers and local leaders about the possible causes of family breakdown, its impact and strategies to enhance psychosocial support of children.

The discussion and the interpretation of the findings of the research was done in accordance to the research objectives. This chapter discussed the relationship between the research objectives, the existing literature and family breakdown and psychosocial development of children. This chapter as well provides conclusion and recommendations that were drawn from the findings in the field to ensure family stability.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research report focused on understanding Family breakdown and Psychosocial development of children which has become a key concern affecting children, families and communities. This study mainly tried to investigate common causes of family breakdown, its effects majorly on children and also analysed strategies to curb family breakdown and ensure enhanced psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality, a case study of South Division.

The chapter outlined the background, problem statement, objectives, justification of the study, research questions, significance, the scope of study and the theoretical framework of the research

1.1 Background of the Study

The family unit is often considered as the primary and as well as the cornerstone in influencing the psychosocial development of persons as from being a child. The foundational unit of a child's development is the home, where they are initially integrated as full members of a recognized group joined by marriage or cohabitation (Gul & Nadeemullah, 2017).

The family served as a basic point for the upbringing, nurturing, socialization and the transmission of societal values, behaviours and morals to the children. This primary environment is crucial for fostering their initial understanding of social norms, emotional regulation, and cognitive growth, as it provided both physical and psychological nurturing (Gul & Nadeemullah, 2017)

Family breakdown is the disruption of the stability of the family as a unit which later leads to separation and later divorce. This breakdown of the family structure can have profound and lasting effects, particularly on the psychosocial development of children, whose early years of growth and development are critically dependent on a stable and supportive family environment. Psychosocial development refers to the growth in the mind, emotions throughout the individuals life in context to their social environment. The psychosocial well-being of children is intricately linked to the quality and stability of their family relationships, and disruptions in these

relationships can lead to a lot of challenges affecting their psychosocial development (Costa & Armijo, 2018; Gul & Nadeemullah, 2017).

Research consistently highlighted that family breakdown precipitated a range of adverse outcomes in children, encompassing heightened anxiety, depression, and behavioural issues (Apata et al., 2023). This research report sought to delve into the multifaceted consequences of family breakdown on child psychosocial development, identify prevalent forms and underlying causes of such breakdown within households and communities (Felisilda & Torreon, 2020). Furthermore, it aimed to assess the specific psychosocial challenges encountered by children from broken families and analyse the in-depth relationship between family breakdown and their development (Falculan et al., 2019). This research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of family breakdown on children psychological wellbeing thereby guiding and informing the prior development of more effective and reliable strategies of support policies that should be aimed at combatting these causes and effects and promoting the healthy development of children in the contemporary world.

1.2 Statement of the problem

While a stable family is crucial for the required psychosocial development of children, the increased rates of family breakdown has created a chasm in emotional and social support systems for the wellbeing of children. Trends indicated that children experiencing family breakdown often face psychosocial development challenges. Despite that fact, there remained a limited clear strategies and actions to curb these challenges. It is clear that if the root causes and impact of family breakdown are not responded to, the cycle will hence continue to affect first children and the community at large. Thus, the drive to study and respond to this need through this research.

1.3 Research objectives

The study aimed at;

1.3.1 Identifying the common causes of family breakdown in Koboko Municipality, South Division

1.3.2 Examining the effect of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children In Koboko Municipality, South Division

1.3.3 Analysing the strategies to curb family breakdown in order to enhance psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality, South Division.

1.4 Research questions

The study was guided by the following questions;

1) What were the main causes of family breakdown in Koboko Municipality, South Division?
2) What were the effects of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality, South Division?
3) What strategies can be used to curb family breakdown in order to ensure enhanced psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality, South Division?

1.5 Justification of the study

With Koboko at the border of South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and having suffered the impact of the LRA war in 1990-2006 at its peak, research has been carried out on the impact of the war in other areas of Northern Uganda, while Koboko remains under covered. Coupled with that is the fact that Koboko hosts refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo and Urban Refugees from South Sudan who lived in Koboko and have experienced an intense effect of the war where families lost their dear ones and other effects thus resulting to Family breakdown. This hence made this study crucial in regards to understanding the prevalent causes, effects of family breakdown and finding out strategies to mitigate the problem and its effects in Koboko Municipality, South Division

1.6 Significance of the study

The research was of great importance and of immense contribution towards creating a clear understanding of family breakdown on psychosocial development. With a

clear aim to identify the causes, effects and strategies to curb family breakdown and ensure enhanced psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality, South Division, the findings guided, supported and strengthened efforts to mitigate family breakdown

Guided policy development

By being in position to identify forms of family breakdown and its underlying causes and their impact, the research offered evidenced based recommendations to policy makers to create supportive family and children's policies that guided the wellbeing of children and ensure their proper psychosocial development. This also guided in resource allocation and implementation of precautional measures aimed at strengthening family units and curbing adverse outcomes.

Enhanced professional practice.

The findings of this research were in position to equip professionals in child welfare, education and counselling with an in-depth and critical understanding of the complexities in the interplay between family structures and child development. This ensured that professionals identified children at risk, tailored intervention and offered support hence improved general wellbeing

Promoted public awareness

This study was pivotal in raising awareness in the communities and the public at large in relation to the causes and consequences of family breakdown on children's well-being. This fostered a more empathetic and informed societal approach to supporting families and children affected

Contribution to academic knowledge.

This research was as well in position to add to existing body of theoretical and empirical literature on family and children development dynamics. This potentially refined and synthesized existing theories and creating new avenues and insights for future research to create tangible and long-lasting interventions.

Facilitated identification of early developmental challenges.

Through analysing the relationship between family breakdown and developmental outcomes, this study was invaluable in helping the early identification of children at risk of emotional, social and even academic challenges. Such early identifications helped to tailor Early Interventions that can curb the child from severe long-term difficulties.

1.7 Scope of study

1.7.1 Geographic Scope.

The study was conducted in Koboko Municipality, South Division in specific Ward of Mengo Ward particularly Nyarilo cell located in eastern part of the Division, and South East of Koboko Main Town centre covered by majorly urban settlements. To the West Nyarilo cell is bordered by Sinyani Cell and to the South by Lipa cell,

1.7.2 Content Scope

The study was mainly and directly centred on the objectives of the study:

Identify the common causes of family breakdown, its causes and analyse strategies to curb family breakdown in order to enhance psychosocial development of children in KMC, South Division in Mengo Ward - Sinyani Cells

1.7.3 Time Scope.

The research was conducted in a timeline of 6months

1.8 Theoretical framework

This study was mainly guided by the Attachment Theory. This theory posits that early childhood experiences with caregivers are significantly influential in shaping the individual's psychological and Socioemotional development. Developed by John Bowlby and further expanded by Mary Ainsworth, the Attachment theory emphasized the innate human need to form strong affectionate bonds with caregivers and other significant individuals. Through these bonds a sense of security was created that in turn serves as a foundation for exploring the world and thus forming future relationships.

In context to the impact of family breakdown and child psychosocial development, the Attachment Theory was pivotal in building understanding for the psychosocial challenges faced by children. When a family unit experiences disruption such as parental conflict, divorce, separation or even parental loss, the existing attachment bonds are tempered with and can be threatened. Such disruption led to insecure attachment styles that could either be anxious-ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganized. This as well is characterised by prevalent difficulties in emotional regulation, trust and forming stable interpersonal connections.

This theory suggested that children who have or are experiencing inconsistent caregiving and parental conflict or loss of an attachment figure as a result of family breakdown are more likely to develop internal working models of attachments that are characterised by anxiety, avoidance, disorganization. With this internal working model formed in early stage, this influenced how these children perceived themselves, others around them and the world at large thus influencing their emotional, social and academic development through their lives. (Ainsworth, 1987).

Therefore, this framework guided the investigation into how the disruption of attachment bonds due to family breakdown contributes to the observed psychosocial developmental challenges in children

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This reviewed existing literature which regarded the causes of family breakdown, its effects on the psychosocial development of children and possible strategies to curb the challenge and thus ensure enhanced psychosocial development of children. It as well identified gaps in the existing literature and guided the current research undertaken in Koboko Municipality, South Division. Literature shall be reviewed through analysing the research objectives.

2.1 Literature Review by objectives

2.1.1 Identify the common causes of family breakdown.

Attachment theory originally developed by John Bowlby and further more expanded by Mary Ainsworth (1987), presented and explained through a clear lens to understand the cause of family breakdown and its impact on the child's psychosocial development. This theory posited that human beings are born with an innate psychobiological system that stirs them to seek attachment with other people especially in times of need, distress and challenges.

In context to family breakdown and psychosocial wellbeing of children, the attachment theory pointed out several ways through which the psychosocial development of children can be disrupted with impact directly seen on loss of an attachment figure. This can be due to several causes such as passed down habits, divorce, separation, parental death, conflict, poverty and stress which led to the absence of the primary care giver. Such a disruption can trigger anxiety, grief and sense of neglect and abandonment in the children

2.1.2 To examine the effect of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children

According to Kelly and Emery. (2003) the breakdown of families often involved high rates of parental conflicts which also was determinant in formation of insecure attachment. According to Kelly and Emery, children that are exposed to chronic parental conflicts may create a perception of the environment being threatening and unsecure hence making them develop emotional breakdown. This manifested through anxious ambivalent attachment.

The nature of caregiving deteriorates during and even after family breakdown. That is parents who experienced, stress, trauma and even financial hardship as a result of family breakdown become in most instances more emotionally absent, consistent to the needs of the children. Thus, children experienced lack of emotional attachment stemming out feelings of loneliness, low sense of self work. (Cao, 2022)

Empirical research has as well aligned with predictions of attachment theory in relation to its impact on family breakdown on child psychosocial development. Studies have clearly shown that children from Divorced families or separated homes are at higher risk of developing insecure attachment when they are compared to children from stable families. For instance, a study by Fraley and Shaver (2000) show that divorce of parents in the childhood stage of a child was always associated higher levels of attachment anxiety that can even affect up to adulthood.

Research by Hetherington, showed how exposure to family conflict affects and ruins the emotional development of a child. Such children usually struggle to express their emotions in a constructive manner manifesting inform of sadness, withdrawal. This contributed to emotional insecurity and maladjustment. (Hetherington et.al 2002)

In terms of the child's social development. Insecure patterns formed in the context of family breakdown significantly impair a child's ability to form and maintain healthy social and peer attachments with friends and family members and other individuals. These effects manifested inform of regression in younger children, anger and resentment in adolescents, social withdrawal, low self-esteem and self-worth.

2.1.3 To analyse the strategies to curb family breakdown in order to enhance psychosocial development of children.

The attachment theory provides a robust framework for understanding how family breakdown can profoundly affect and disrupt a child's psychosocial development. The disruption and loss of attachment figures, exposure to parental conflict, divorce, and changes in caregivers can breed and lead to formation of insecure attachment styles. Thus, the attachment theory ensures that children have a safe attachment that is necessary for their psychosocial development through secure attachments with caregivers.

Such attachments that are formed with parents and care givers shape the internal working models hence guiding their expectations, perceptions and behaviours in future years. According to this theory ensuring secure attachments

Bowlby's theory critically emphasized the vital role of secure base that needed to be provided by a consistent and responsive attachment figure. Coupled with that is a safe haven where the child can return to after distress When the needs of a child are consistently met, they develop a secure and safe attachment built up on trust as result of the availability of the caregiver. Meanwhile the opposite in the truth, inconsistent and frightening caregiver can lead to a sense of insecurity within the child and the care giver bringing about anxious, ambivalent and avoidant relationships.

According to Amato 2007, advocacy for economic and social intervention. Financial stability in family is a key drive-in ensuring family stability and reduced conflicts. This is possibly done through ensured tax incentives for families, flexible work arrangements and access of mental health services that are paramount in ensuring family cohesion

A child's psychosocial well-being greatly depended on having a predictable, safe home; therefore, families should be protected from conflicts and situations that bring about breakdown to ensure every child has a privilege to thrive in life.

While prior research highlights the impact of family breakdown on child psychosocial development, a number of studies have examined how family breakdown influences child psychosocial development. This study aims to fulfil the gaps by exploring and understanding the specific forms and causes of family breakdown within particular

households and communities, the detailed psychosocial challenges and their impact faced by children from broken families and as well analyse the precious relationship between children's emotional and social development and the identified causes of family breakdown

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter clearly described the research methods that were used for carrying out the research. Qualitative research referred to scientific study that focus on human experiences rather than numbers and statistics. It outlined the research design, data collection tools, population and sampling techniques and data collection process.

3.1 Research design

The study employed qualitative research methods that helped to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of how family breakdown impacts child psychosocial development. This involved use of techniques to collect and analyse non numerical data.

3.1.1 Justification for the design

This design was important as it gave the researcher the open privilege to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the people, views, behaviours and perspectives. It was suitable for understanding and analysing family breakdown and psychosocial development of children

3.2 Area of Study

South Division is located in Koboko Municipality. South Division is bordered by Midia Sub-county and Lobule Sub-county in the East, Dranya Sub-County in the South, North Division in the North and West Division in the West.

The Division is 574 km away from Kampala the capital city of Uganda, 19km from Kaya Town of the Republic of South Sudan and only 3km to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Division has a total land area of 22.km^2, it is also 3160-5283ft above sea level. It lies between 36.6’N and 30’38E

3.3 Data Collection tools

Qualitative data collection tools were administered to collect standardized Data from participants that encompassed care givers and teachers, local leaders, Government Community Development workers. They were important as they gathered key information on attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and characteristics. Through tools like:

3.3.1 Questionnaire

This qualitative method of research involved a written set of question given to participants to answer in relation to the research topic and its particular objectives. It collected views, experiences and behaviours allowing respondents to answer in in their own words. This tool was administered to Local Government officials, Teachers, local leaders.

3.3.2 Interview

Interview as a qualitative method of research was a direct conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. It allowed the researcher to ask questions and probe further for more information. This helped gather in-depth information. In this Health Workers, Humanitarian Workers, Women from Broken families were interviewed

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussion

FDG involved small group discussions between the researcher and a particular group of people about a particular topic. This tool was key as it helped collect different perspectives, experiences and thus provide rich information. This tool was administered to groups of women in trading centres, men that were relaxing.

3.4 Population and sampling techniques

3.4.1 Study Populations

The study population was the entire group of individuals and events that the researcher is interested in studying and to which findings were applied to. This entailed a population of Women who have experienced family breakdown as the

primary population and the children aged 6-12 years old living in homesteads that have gone through family breakdown in the past years.

3.4.2 Sampling technique

This is a specific method used by the researcher to select a small group of people as a sample for an entire population. A random sampling approach was employed to select the sample that was based on the nature of family breakdown and the socioeconomic status. That was to ensure proportional representation since participants were randomly selected from public schools and communities. A random sample of caregivers, teachers were sampled to provide in-depth understanding.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The study ensured high adherence to ethical standards without compromise to ensure professionality.

Confidentiality.

This referred to the duty of the researcher to keep the information of participants private and secure from access by any other party. The data collected shall not be shared with unauthorized individuals and sensitive information shall be protected

Informed Consent.

This was the process of providing to participants with the full and realistic information so that they decided voluntarily whether to participate or not. In this consideration, participants were enlightened on the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the research before agreeing. Consent was given freely without pressure.

Anonymity.

This entailed keeping the identity of participants not known. The researcher and the readers of the report should not be in position to identify who gave the responses.

Anonymity ensured that even the researcher cannot trace responses back to individuals. This reduced fear and increases honesty.

Non-maleficence

This principle ensured that the researcher did not cause harm to the participants during the process of engagement. This made it key for the researcher to assess risks before conducting the study and put in place measures that ensured they do not occur and affect the participants.

Integrity and Honesty

This involved research conducted genuinely and reported findings of research with truthfulness, accuracy and due transparency. This principle ensured the credibility and the reliability of the research findings which ensure there is no fabrication and falsification. Maintaining integrity and honesty built public trust in the entire research process and ensured decisions based on research findings are valid

Respect for Participants.

Respect for participants meant treating individuals with dignity, fairness and sensitivity to their values, beliefs and rights. This included respecting cultural differences and diversity, ensured polite communication and avoided discrimination. The researcher also respected participants privacy, time and autonomy.

Voluntary Participation

This consideration meant that participants that took part in the research should participate in their own free will without any form of coercion, pressure and undue influence. Participants were not be forced to take part and they were informed that in the case they want to withdraw, there is no negative consequence.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTAION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the finding of the data collected at Koboko Municipality – South Division collected from the different categories of people like the community members, women who have experienced family breakdown, local authorities, school teachers and local leaders. The data analysis is dependent on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the possible causes of family breakdown, its impact and strategies to enhance psychosocial support of children.

4.1 Rate of Response.

A total of 15 interview, 15 questionnaires and focus group discussion were administered to respondents in Koboko Municipality – South Division. Out of the different tools administered 4 of questionnaires were not returned making the percentage to be 88% of the target data collected from the different tools administered.

This 88% typically shows a good response rate from the respondents and willingness to give the required information about family breakdown and its impact on the psychosocial development of children.

4.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics

Having a clear understanding of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is crucial in analyzing the data to ascertain the findings of the study in KMC. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are categorized in areas of age, marital status, education level, designation.

Majority of the participants up to around 60% were between the age bracket of 30-40 years meaning this group is majorly constituting of people taking active role in parenting and perhaps are the most who encounter the family breakdown and its impact on children.

The respondents were chosen based on their constant interaction with children and their deeper understanding of family dynamics

4.3 Analysis of finding on Causes of family breakdown.

4.3.1 Economic challenge and financial Instability

A common cause towards family breakdown identified was financial stress which are coupled with poverty, unemployment. Respondent give their views of how lack of money at the family brings misunderstanding as basic needs like food, medication is not met timely thus bringing conflict among the family heads and eventual resulting into separation and even divorce in most instances.

One participant noted that;

"where money is not available at home, small issues turn into big problems." Another respondent noted that "when lack of money comes through the door, peace and stability in the family fly through the windows and the ventilators."

Financial instability weakens the state of the relationships at the household thus breeding stress, frustration.

4.3.2 Ineffective communication and poor conflict management

Respondents pointed out clearly their inability to resolve conflicts amicably as a house hold thus contributing to breakdown. They as well cited that fact poor communication especially at the occurrence of conflicts affects peaceful resolutions.

For instance, a member in the FGD noted that;

"my husband doesn't know how to talk when he gets angry but rather scolds at me and sometimes only keeps quiet and cuts communication when its due"

Poor communication gives birth to unresolved conflicts, distancing emotionally and leading to family instability hence family breakdown. This portrays a destruction in cohesion at the household level of which family cohesion is crucial for the psychosocial development of a child in a stable and peaceful environment.

4.3.3 Domestic Violence and constant conflicts.

Domestic Violence is cited to be a common cause of family breakdown by majority of the respondents. Domestic violence takes different forms not only physical but

also emotional in nature, it is verbal, and sometimes psychosocial harmful towards the stability of the family.

A Community member cited;

"In some homes around where we live violence seems to be the order of the night characterized by constant fights, quarrels and abuses most especially in the night hours when majority of the families are indoors"

A local leader said

"when purpose of the family and the respect for each is undermined, abuse and violence become unavoidable"

Constant subjection and exposure to domestic violence in its different forms leads to misunderstanding that later leads to separation and in turn family breakdown as one party may decide to leave for self-safety and perhaps the safety of the children in the house family.

4.3.4 Inadequate Social and Support from Community.

Some findings from the respondents indicated households that have inadequate support systems to offer timely help to the families in the time of crisis when such support is duly needed to resolve challenges.

A community elder cited,

"*In the old days elders used to help in resolving family challenges with due solidarity and ensuring that the two parties are united back together to move on as a family but now people handle their own problems alone with any support from any other community support"*

This weak traditional system of support has great impact as they increase the vulnerability and susceptibility of families to instability with no support to sustain a healthy relationship during family crisis which are inevitable.

4.4 Effects of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children

4.4.1 Emotional impact on child development

Participants consistently reported about children from families who experienced family breakdown show experiences in sadness and dull mood, feelings of rejection making it a challenge to attach with other people freely. such children as well struggle with anxiety and feelings of insecurity due to the exposure to conflicts, violence at the family.

A parent said,

"such children are characterized with feelings of isolation and being unloved in the point of separation of the parents."

Such findings from the research clearly resonates with Attachment theory that points out clearly where the family and relationship between the child and the caregiver is destroyed the emotional wellbeing of the child is affected and thus a creation of an insecure attachment which is not ideal for the proper development of a child.

4.4.2 Social Impact on Relationships and attachments

Various participants cited children struggle to relate social with those within their cycles and beyond socially. This is manifest as such children often back off from peers especially during play and group work in school and other social relationships even at household level. such children to tend to be aggressive in behavior to other peers and as well they suffer trust issues.

Breakdown of the family disrupts the ability of the child to build healthy interpersonal and intrapersonal attachments and relationships with caregivers, peers, teachers and the rest of the people of which such relationship is so crucial for the Social development of the child.

4.4.3 Behavioral Impact

Findings showed that children experience behavioral challenges as a result of family breakdown. This is evident as such children become indiscipline and unruly in nature and engage in risky behaviors and sometimes are truancy in behavior.

A teacher cited,

"Such children when supervised well in school tend to misbehave more compared to others"

The manifestation of behavioral challenges by children can basically be attributed to broken attachment between the caregiver and the child and lack of parental direction and guidance towards the development of the children as a result of emotional distress the children from broken family's face.

4.5 Strategies to mitigate family breakdown and enhance the psychosocial development of children.

4.5.1 Strengthening and upholding family communication and amicable ways of conflict resolution.

Participants emphasized a need for family heads to embrace open communication in all times while solving conflicts in peaceful ways that leaves no part harmed more than the other but rather come to consensus after conflict and live on together.

A local leader noted,

"families have to be able to sit together and solve conflicts through open communication and understanding rather fighting."

Improvement in ways of communication in the family setting is crucial in strengthening relationship in the midst of conflicts and perhaps prevent its escalation.

4.5.2 Economic empowerment and skilling.

Findings showed economic empowerment of household and individuals is crucial in improving their financial security for family stability. Suggestions included offering loans to individuals, groups at a low interest rate, skilling of individuals and especially women in areas of tailoring, bakery, carpentry and so on.

Reducing the level of financial stress as families are able to provide the basic needs of the house like food, medication, shelter, education and so on, the occurrence of conflicts can be minimized in the family level and thus bring about stability.

4.5.3 Counseling and guidance services in the community

The importance of counseling and guidance was highlighted by the community women in different formats such as marriage counseling, school-based counseling

for learners majorly by the senior woman and senior men teachers. if counseling is available, many families can be saved.

Counseling and guidance by professional counselor at the community level is crucial to families to address both root causes and emotional impact of family breakdown. Through counseling and guidance families facing instability seek for help form counselors to navigate family crisis and ensure that challenges are resolved with a common understanding

4.5.4 Establishing Community and Religious Support Systems

Respondents noted the vital role played by community leaders especially the elders who are key in mediating and embrace peaceful coexistence in the family level. Coupled with that are the religious leaders who offer guidance and support to families from a religious point of view through the available churches, Mosques and so on.

Reinforcement of the traditional systems in family management and conflict resolution is a big asset in ensuring family stability and psychosocial development of children tagged together with the role of religious leaders in the community.

4.6 Summary of findings in line with the objectives.

4.6.1 Objective 1: Cause of family breakdown

The cause of family breakdown from the findings were Economic challenge and financial Stability, Ineffective communication and poor conflict management, Domestic Violence and constant conflicts, Inadequate Social and Support from Community.

4.6.2 Objective 2: Impact of Family breakdown on psychosocial development of Children

The effects of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipality-South Division included in areas of Emotional impact on child development that manifests through dull mood, feelings of rejection, children struggle with anxiety and feelings of insecurity making it hard for them to attach with others. Social Impact on Relationships and attachments; in this, children

struggle with aggression, isolation from peers and even affecting their participation in school and have a challenge in trusting people around him or her.

4.6.3 Objective 3: strategies to mitigate family breakdown and enhance the psychosocial development of children

Strengthening and upholding family communication and amicable ways of conflict resolution by embracing open communication even in the midst of conflicts and embracing peaceful ways of solving conflicts amicably.

Economic empowerment **and** skilling through offering financial help to families inform of individual loans, group loans for business startup and skilling of households in areas of baking, tailoring, horticulture and so on.

Offering counseling and guidance services to families and individuals inform of community-based marriage counseling, school-based counseling for the school going children.

Establishing Community and Religious Support Systems to strengthen family cohesion and stability through the direction from community elders and religious leaders towards family stability and proper development of children.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the discussion and the interpretation of the findings of the research in accordance to the research objectives. This chapter discussed the relationship between the research objectives, the existing literature and family breakdown and psychosocial development of children. This chapter as well provides conclusion and recommendations that are drawn from the findings in the field to ensure family stability.

5.1 Discussion and Conclusion of the findings.

This study was guided by three objectives which identified the causes of family breakdown, examined the effect of family breakdown on the psychosocial development of children and analyzed strategies to mitigate family breakdown and enhance the psychosocial development of Children in Koboko Municipality-South Division.

5.1.1 Causes of family breakdown

This study through the findings pointed out clearly the cause of family breakdown in Koboko Municipality-South Division as an interplay of multiple and interrelated factors.

Ineffective communication and poor conflict management that bring about unresolved conflicts, among mostly husband and wife that later create an emotional distance between couples in the household and eventually separation and later divorce hence family breakdown

Domestic Violence which is a critical factor involving physical, emotional, sexual, verbal in the family thus creating unsafe environment for members thus separation in the desire to find safety and security out of home and hence divorce.

Inadequate Social and Support from Community which reduces the family's ability to thrive on their own and perhaps manage conflicts and challenges well. Community

and social support systems are vital and their absence can probably ruin the wellness of the family

Economic challenge and financial instability which are evident in form of poverty resulting into failure of provision of the basic needs of the family like food, medication and so on which are essential for the stability of the family. Such financial stress is a bigger trigger for conflicts at the family level thus causing family breakdown

The interaction of these multiple factors determines family breakdown as a gradual and dynamic process compared to it being an instant event occurrence at once.

5.1.2 Effects of family breakdown on the Psychosocial development of children.

Through the findings of the research, family breakdown is clearly of negative effect on the psychosocial development of children.

Emotional impact on child development in that such children experience high feelings of stress that later matures to anxiety and depression. Emotionally such children struggle with insecurities in in attaching with others as a result of the experience of family instability through conflicts, domestic violence.

Social Impact on Relationships and attachments with caregivers, peers, teachers and so on. Children socially are affected as they struggle to attach and relate with peers. this takes shape as they withdraw from relationships. embrace isolation as a result of mistrust of those around them.

Behavioral Impact that is to family breakdown alters the behaviors of children as such struggle with aggression as way of repulsion of their fears and insufficiencies. unruly behaviors and indiscipline manifests as children failure to heed instruction especially from teachers in school and even their parents.

These impacts are related and interconnected and they clearly point out the distraction of the secure attachment relationship between the child and caregiver which are necessary and foundational for healthy development at an early stage

5.1.3 Strategies to mitigate family breakdown and enhance the psychosocial development of children

This study pointed out clearly reliable and actionable strategies to reduce the level of family breakdown and enhance the psychosocial development of children

Strengthening and upholding family communication and amicable ways of conflict resolution. Embracing open communication at the family level especially between the couples is important as it helps in sharing of information and aid quick resolution of conflicts in the family and hence reduce on the chances of family breakdown enhancing the psychosocial development of children

Economic empowerment and skilling of households through different schemes like individual loans, group learns to invest in business and agriculture coupled with Government poverty alleviation schemes like PDM, UWEP, YLP and so. Vocational skilling in areas of carpentry and joinery, horticulture, tailoring, saloon and hairdressing and so on are vital individuals to earn a money and sustain the families.

Counseling and guidance services provision in the communities inform of help desks where families facing challenges can reach out to for help in time of crisis. such services can be provided for free or at minimal cost for easy access by the poor families.

Establishing Community and Religious Support Systems to offer support to the families that are facing challenges and strengthen them to cope up with family life. Community support systems include elders who are experienced offering guidance and direction, helping conflict resolution together with the religious wing as well.

These strategies are effective as they call for multisectoral approach of the different stakeholders like the local community, local leaders, religious systems, institutions, Government and Organizations.

Based on the findings from the data, the study deduces its conclusions as below.

Family breakdown is a dynamic and complex social problem that involves the interplay of social, emotional, economic factors that significantly affects the psychosocial development of children as it alters their emotional wellbeing, social attachment skills and behavioral traits. It’s clear from the research, children who are exposed to family breakdown later develop insecure attachment with caregivers, peers, and the community members.

Despite the fact that coping skills and social support systems to exist in the community, the role they pole doesn't sufficiently meet the arising need for the stability of families and enhanced wellbeing of children thus calling for collective responsibility of different community structures like the families, organizations, Government and so on.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations to families

Families ought to prioritize open and timely communication as the basis of peaceful conflict resolution in the challenges to ensure stability of the family and reduce on the chances of family breakdown

Parents ought to provide the required emotional support to the children and ensure secure attachment with the children from the early stages of their growth and even during conflicts.

Seeking early interventions by the couples before crisis hits at its core to ensure that conflicts are solved at an early stage. This can be achieved through seeking help from Social Workers and other relevant professionals in ensuring family stability.

5.2.2 Recommendations to Schools.

Provision of structured guidance and counseling to learners who show signs and symptoms of psychosocial challenges and ensuring the cope with life.

Equipping both teaching and non-teaching staff to be able to identify, support and perhaps refer children who are at risk of struggling psychosocially in the school settings.

Creating safe spaces within the school setting is crucial for children who have been victims of family breakdown. Such supportive environment is vital for such children to thrive and so schools ought to embrace it.

5.2.3 Recommendations to Government

Strengthening poverty alleviation and social protection programs to benefit the poor and reduce on the economic burden that faces the families

Employing more community Development Officer who are social workers to be able to offer to guidance and counseling services to families to ensure stability in the midst of challenges

5.3 Arears for Further research

Cultural beliefs and practices and its influence on family breakdown.

Family structures and its impact on the wellbeing of children

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 01: QUESTIONAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am Obote Milton a Student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor in Social Work and Social Work Administration. I am undertaking research with the Topic: **FAMILY BREAKDOWN AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KOBOKO MUNICIPALITY-SOUTH DIVISION**. You have been chosen carefully to participate in this research so that you can provide us with information to the best of your knowledge. Be informed that the information you shall share shall be treated with the highest confidentiality and your identity shall remain anonymous. this information shall strictly be used for Academic purposes.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (Please tick where appropriate)

Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Age

☐ **18-25** ☐ **26-35** ☐ **36-45** ☐ **46 above**

Educational level

☐ None ☐ A-level

☐ Primary ☐ Tertiary

☐ O-level ☐ University

Designation

☐ Youth ☐ Local Authorities ☐

☐ Community member ☐ Health Worker ☐

☐ School Teacher

Marital status

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Widow

SECTION B: CAUSES OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN (PLEASE TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE)

1. In the last year has your family struggled with money or job loss?

   ☐ YES

   ☐ NO

2. Do you feel that you work places gives you enough time to be with your children?

   ☐ YES

   ☐ NO

3. When there is a big disappointment at home, how do usually handle it?

   ☐ We talk and resolve it quietly with peace

   ☐ We shout at each other

   ☐ We stop communicating with each other.

4. Do you have a friend or relative you can go to for advice when your marriage or relationship is hard?

   ☐

   ☐

SECTION 3: EFFECTS OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN ON PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION

For these questions, please rate according to your level of agreement or disagreement. please rate from 1-4 with (1)- Never. (2)- Sometimes, (3)- often, (4)- Always

QUESTION	CATERGORY OF RESPONSES

How often do you notice these things?	1 (NEVER)	2 (SOMETIMES)	3 (OFTEN)	4 (ALWAYS)
The child looks unhappy and does not talk when there is trouble at home				
The child gets sad or fights more with colleagues				
The child struggles with classwork and concentration				
The child comes to you for safety when in fear				

SECTION 4: STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION.

1. If counselling services are provided for free or minimal costs near your homesteads, would you seek help from there to help your family be stable

   ☐ YES

   ☐ NO

   ☐ MAY BE

2. What is one thing that would help your family be in stability and peace?

   ☐ Better and job security.

   ☐ Guidance from elders and religious leaders.

   ☐ Timely help from social Workers and other relevant authorities.

   ☐ Learning better ways of communication and conflict resolution.

3. Does your child have constant routine in eating, sleeping, playing and so on every day?

   ☐ YES

☐ NO

4. Even though parents don't live together, do you think they can raise happy children?

☐ YES

☐ NO

THANKS VERILY FOR YOUR TIME

APPENIX 02: INTERVIEW

SECTION A: CAUSE OF FMAILY BREAKDOWN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION

1. In your opinion, when a parent loses a job or has financial challenges, how does that stress change the way the family gets along?
2. Before a family separates, what are the most common problems that start to push them apart.
3. Do you think families break down more often because they don't have enough help from relatives, friends or the community?

SECTION B: EFFECTS OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN ON PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION

4. When a family is going through hard times, how does it change the child's feeling of being loved and safe at home?
5. Have you noticed children feeling and acting differently at school or with friends when things are bad at home?
6. In your opinion, does seeing a family breakdown make it hard for a child to trust people?

SECTION C: STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE FAMILY BREAKDOWN AND ENHANCE PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OD CHILDREN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION.

7. What is the best kind of help that can stop family from splitting up?
8. Even if parents are live apart, what can be done to make sure the child still feels happy, supported and stable?

THANK YOU VERILY

APPENDIX 03: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Target Group: Parents, Community members.

Approximate time: 20 minutes.

SECTION 01: INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone.

My name is Obote Milton and I am a student of Uganda Christian University undertaking research with the topic: FAMILY BREAKDOWN AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISION.

I encourage us to set ground rules together.

SECTION 2: OPENING AND ICE BREAKER

1. In your own opinion, what makes a family be happy and at peace

SECTION 3: CAUSES OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN IN KMC-SOUTH DIVISON.

1. When we take look at our families in the community, what could be the main reasons towards families breaking down?
2. How do the parents treat each other when there is a challenge, they are facing that can bring stress in the family?
3. Do you think that married people have available time to reach out to for timely help during family challenges?

SECTION 4: IMPACT OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN ON CHILDREN.

1. In a situation where a mother and a father are always quarrelling and fighting or even decide to part, how does it alter the behaviours of the child?
2. Does the child show isolation from his usual friends when the family is at conflict resulting to breakdown? How?

3. In long run, do you think children from broken homes will find it a bit challenging to trust people as they grow? how will it affect their safety when faced with challenges?

SECTION 5: STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE FAMILY BREAKDOWN

1. In your own opinion, what do you think is the immediate help a family needs when they are facing challenges that can result to a break up?
2. In the case of parents living apart, what possibly can they do to ensure the child leaves a happy, stable life while feeling loved?
3. What ways do you think can the government, local leaders and other appropriate do to prevent families from breaking down?

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

1. Could there be anything else about family breakdown and psychosocial development of children that is important for me to know

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX 04: WORK PLAN

TIMELINE ACTIVITY	DEC 2025	JAN 2026	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY
Research Proposal development						
Data Collection						
Data Analysis						
Research Report Writing						
First Draft submission						
Final submission						

APPENDIX 05: BUDGET

SNO	ITEM	AMOUNT
01	Secretarial services	100,000
02	Transport	100.000
03	Welfare and refreshments	80,000
04	Printing and Photocopying	120.000
05	**TOTAL**	400,000

APPEDNIX 06: ENDORSED INTRODUCTION LETTER

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

ARUA CAMPUS

April 7, 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

This is to introduce you to Obote Milton, Reg No: S23/ASC/BSW/026, a student at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus, pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work. As a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree mentioned above. Each student is required to conduct a research study. The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request that your office grant the above-mentioned student access to your organisation so that he may collect the necessary information for his studies. The study is on the topic: ***Family breakdown and psychosocial development of children in Koboko Municipal Council; A case study of South Division.***

The information obtained will be strictly used for study purposes.

Any assistance rendered to this cause will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Eyotaru Loyce
Ag Head of Department, School of Social Science

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
ARUA CAMPUS
SOCIAL SCIENCES
07 APR 2026
P.O.BOX 356
ARUA-UGANDA

Permission granted

Ensure that you stick on the purpose of the activity (research) only

SENIOR ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK
KOBOKO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
28 APR [illegible]
SOUTH DIVISION
P. O. BOX 6, [illegible]

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Founded by the Province of the Church of Uganda. Chartered by the Government of the Republic of Uganda

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