

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF ORPHANHOOD ON SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN IN KAHARO SUBCOUNTY, KABALE DISTRICT

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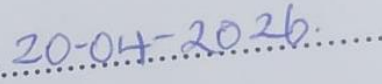
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DECLARATION

I Namara Christian, declare that this is my original work and it has never been submitted to any institution for any academic award.

Signature


Date.....


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(RESEARCHER)

APPROVAL

This research report titled “the psychosocial effects of orphanhood on school going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District” has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission.

Signature.......... Date..........

MR. NIWAGABA DICKENS
(UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my beloved grandparent Mrs. Babugira Elivaida for the great support she has rendered to me throughout my studies.

May the almighty God reward her abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Al-mighty God for hearing my prayers and giving me the courage, strength, power and ability to accomplish this work. In Jeremiah 33:3, these words of God gave me courage in up and down of my studies “call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know”.

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Thanks also are directed to my friends, may joy, love and peace be upon them for they shared with me both painful and joyous moments during my academic undertaking. You will forever be remembered.

I also acknowledge the entire staff of Uganda Christian University for the support that led to the achievement of my career at Uganda Christian University.

“To God be the Glory”

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OVC	Other Vulnerable Children
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics

ABSTRACT

The research analyzed how orphan status affected the mental and social development of children who attend school in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District. The study aimed to achieve three objectives which consisted of evaluating how orphanhood affects the emotional state of school-going children, assessing the social effects of orphanhood on school-going children and studying how orphanhood impacts academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District. The research team used a descriptive research design to gather information through interviews and questionnaires. The study on orphanhood among school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District found that orphaned children experience emotional challenges which cause them to feel angry and frustrated, which leads to long-lasting problems with their behavior, while fear and anxiety about school, finances, and safety also affect concentration and participation. The social effects of stigma lead to discrimination and bullying which decreases social engagement, while orphaned children find it difficult to build trusting relationships, which affects their ability to work together and communicate with others. Students face academic difficulties because stress factors along with unfulfilled needs, which lead to decreased student interest in studying, result in students failing to complete their work and developing disinterest in school. The study recommended that schools provide emotional support and counseling services which enable orphaned children to handle their negative feelings while developing coping techniques and resilience skills that support their long-term mental health.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Problem statement	3
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.4 Objective of the study	4
1.5 Research Questions	4
1.6 Scope of the study	4
1.6.1 Content scope	4
1.6.2 Geographical scope.....	4
1.6.3. Time Scope	5
1.7 Significance of the study.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children.....	6

2.2 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children.....	9
2.3 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children	12
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
3.0 Introduction.....	15
3.1 Research design	15
3.2 Study Population	15
3.3 Sample size	15
3.4 Sampling techniques.....	16
3.5 Data Collection Procedure	17
3.6 Data Collection Methods	17
3.6.1 Questionnaire Method.....	17
3.6.2 Interview Method	18
3.6.3 Data collection instruments.....	18
3.7.1 Questionnaire	18
3.7.2 Interview Guide	19
3.8 Data Quality Control	19
3.8.1 Validity	19
3.8.2 Reliability	20
3.8.3 Data analysis	20
3.8.1Qualitative data analysis	20
3.8.2 Quantitative data analysis.....	20
3.9 Ethical considerations	21

3.10 Limitations of the study and how they will be handled.....	21
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS	23
4.0 Introduction.....	23
4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents.....	23
4.1.1 Age of the respondents	23
4.1.2 Sex of the respondents.....	24
4.1.3 Marital status of the respondents	25
4.1.4 Highest level of educational attained by the respondent	25
4.2.1 Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	26
4.3 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	28
4.4 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo	
CHAPTER FIVE	32
DISCUSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	32
5.0 Introduction.....	32
5.1 Discussion of findings	32
5.1.2 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	34
5.1.3 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	35
5.2 Conclusion.....	37

5.3 Recommendations.....	37
REFERENCES	40
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE	44
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE	iii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter presents all essential elements of the study which include the background section, the problem statement, study objectives, research questions, study boundaries and study goals and study significance.

1.1 Background to the study

School-age children across the world experience psychosocial problems because of their status as orphans which has existed as a permanent social issue through time (Abayomi, et al, 2024). The combination of wars, epidemics, and economic crises during European and North American and Asian conflicts raised the number of orphaned children who subsequently faced emotional deprivation and social isolation and behavioral problems. The Second World War created institutional settings in Germany and Russia and Poland which caused many children to develop developmental delays and low self-esteem and social relationship problems. The orphan train movements which occurred in the United States between the late 19th century and the early 20th century demonstrated that children who received proper care showed better social and academic results while those who experienced neglectful treatment developed emotional problems and academic difficulties (Spira, 2022).

Orphaned children face increased psychosocial difficulties because of current worldwide crises which include HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 pandemic (Unwin, et al, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic in the United States caused more than 140000 children to experience parent or caregiver loss which resulted in higher chances of developing anxiety and depression and post-traumatic stress and decreased school

attendance (Thompson, 2022). The countries of Southern Africa which include South Africa and Botswana and Lesotho and Zimbabwe have documented that AIDS-related orphanhood leads to emotional distress and stigma and trauma and ongoing psychosocial vulnerability for children who reside with their extended family (Bimha, 2022).

Orphans who attend school in East Africa face emotional and social challenges in Kenya and Tanzania and Rwanda because they experience loneliness and stigma and depression and academic difficulties which become worse when one or both of their parents die (Oduor et al 2025). The use of institutional care has increased but this practice results in attachment issues and weak psychosocial development. The UBOS 2017 report states that orphanhood in Uganda occurs because of HIV AIDS and civil conflicts and socioeconomic instability which affects around 11 percent of children who are younger than 18. Children who live in financially constrained households or under elderly guardians experience emotional distress and poor peer relationships and low self-esteem and school performance difficulties (Menaka 2022).

In Kaharo Subcounty Rukiga District orphaned school-going children experience major psychosocial obstacles which impact their entire health and learning capacities. The loss of one or both parents causes many children to develop emotional distress which includes anxiety and sadness and low self-esteem that hinders their ability to concentrate and learn (Aguirre et al 2022). Socially they often experience isolation and stigma which makes it hard for them to create and keep friendships that would help them fit in at school. Students display behavioral problems which include withdrawal and aggression that negatively affect their relationships with teachers and classmates. Psychosocial problems lead to decreased school attendance which results in lower academic performance and higher school dropout rates.

1.2 Problem statement

Children who attend school need to develop in family settings that deliver emotional backing and social direction and academic support because these factors help their psychosocial development (Yadav & Yadav, 2025). The Government of Uganda has established multiple policies and programs including the National Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) Policy and Universal Primary and Secondary Education to assist vulnerable children with their welfare needs and educational requirements (Chirowamhangu, 2022). The organization provides essential services by collaborating with local governments and non-governmental organizations to deliver psychosocial support and child protection services and social assistance programs. The educational department report from Rukiga district shows that in Kaharo Sub-county Rukiga District many children have lost one or both parents which results in emotional distress and social isolation and behavioral problems that make it hard for them to succeed academically in school (Education department Report, Rukiga district, 2024). The current situation demonstrates the absence of proper support mechanisms and their practical execution at community and school settings. If this situation remains unresolved orphaned children will face permanent emotional and social challenges which result in academic difficulties and a higher chance of dropping out of school. The community will enter a cycle of poverty and vulnerability because of this situation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The objective of the study was to examine the psychosocial impacts of orphan-hood on school-going children in Kaharo Sub-county, Kabale District.

1.4 Objective of the study

- i. To examine the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District
- ii. To assess the social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District
- iii. To analyze the influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What are the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?
- ii. What social effects does orphanhood have on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?
- iii. How does orphanhood influence the academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Content scope

The study focused on the psychosocial effects of orphanhood on school going children in Kaharo subcounty, Kabale District.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The research was conducted in Kaharo subcounty which is located in Kabale District. The northern border of Kabale District is shared with Rukungiri District while its

northeastern border connects to Rukiga District and its eastern and southern borders meet Rwanda and its western border shares a boundary with Rubanda District and its northwestern border touches Kanungu District.

1.6.3. Time Scope

The study considered a period of five years (2019 to 2024) to capture recent trends and changes in the psychosocial wellbeing of orphaned school-going children.

1.7 Significance of the study

The research will assist educational stakeholders to comprehend the emotional and social difficulties that orphaned students experience in Kaharo Subcounty.

The results will demonstrate how orphanhood affects student wellbeing and behavior, which will help schools to create environments that support their students.

The study will provide important information to teachers and school administrators because it identifies the psychosocial elements that impact how orphaned students perform academically.

The understanding of these factors will help teachers adopt appropriate guidance, counseling, and classroom management strategies.

The results will help parents and guardians and caregivers to understand the emotional and social requirements that orphaned children have. The increased awareness will promote better caregiving practices at home.

The study will be useful to policymakers and local government authorities in Kaharo Subcounty and Kabale District. Evidence from the research will inform child-focused policies and community support programs since such policies will strengthen protection and psychosocial support for orphaned children.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter describes and relates to what other scholars have noted down about the topic. The researcher acquired information through his research on various available sources which included academic scholars and publications and online resources that directly supported the research study. The literature was based on the objectives of the study.

2.1 Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children

Orphaned children often experience anger and frustration as a result of their loss (Omucheni, et al, 2024). They may feel resentment toward their situation or even toward surviving family members. This emotional turmoil can lead to conflict with peers and teachers in the school environment. Frequent emotional outbursts may disrupt classroom activities and affect peer relationships and if not managed properly, anger can evolve into long-term behavioral challenges, emotional counseling and supportive school environments can help children manage these feelings (Heilman, 2022).

Children who lose their parents through orphanhood experience loneliness as their primary emotional response. School-going children without parental support often feel isolated, especially when peers have stable family structures (Muli, 2024). The need to socialize with others affects how people participate in group activities and school events because they experience loneliness which leads to social withdrawal and depression. Emotional support from caregivers and school counselors lets children establish reliable ties with their teachers and classmates (Keels, et al, 2022). The process of establishing social connections will benefit from peer

mentoring and inclusive classroom activities. Orphaned children face guilt as an emotional obstacle which they need to overcome (Christopher, 2022).

Some people develop self-blame because they think they caused their parents' deaths while others see themselves as a responsibility to their guardians. Children develop guilt which prevents them from fulfilling their requirements and asking for assistance. Students who experience this problem show decreased motivation to participate in school activities which includes their learning process (Kalenda & Kočvarová, 2022). The process of emotional management and educational guidance requires specialized counseling services which help children learn to handle their complicated feelings. The process of reducing guilt leads to better emotional control which results in improved academic performance and student engagement.

Orphaned children experience continuous emotional distress because of their fear of what will happen in their future (Jaffer, et al, 2023). People experience anxiety when they worry about losing their financial resources and educational opportunities and their ability to stay secure. School anxiety leads to concentration problems and memory impairments and learning difficulties and children develop fear-related behaviors through avoidance and risk avoidance which results in decreased class participation and social interaction. Caregivers and teachers play a key role in providing reassurance and guidance, structured support programs can help children build confidence and cope with uncertainty (Goodwin, et al, 2022).

Children who have lost their parents show emotional weakness which results in their need for others to provide them with emotional support and validation (Cherewick, et al, 2023). Children who have this problem will develop emotional dependence on their siblings and teachers and guardians because they need constant confirmation from others. The total dependency on others will create tension between people

and lead to disputes at home and at school. Children will lose the ability to handle their own problems because emotional instability makes them vulnerable to stress from academic and peer-related situations. The development of resilience must become a primary focus for interventions because developing personal autonomy will enhance children's emotional health.

Depression develops as a typical result when orphaned children fail to resolve their emotional trauma (Arace, et al, 2025). The common indicators of this condition include persistent sadness and active learning deficits and complete loss of interest in educational activities. The condition of depression has a negative impact on students' ability to attend school and take part in activities and achieve academic success. Children who withdraw from social interaction will experience increased feelings of isolation, which schools can address through emotional support programs and counseling services and mentorship initiatives. The schools should establish secure areas where students can share their feelings without restriction, and they need to establish methods for early identification and assistance because these steps will help them avoid developing persistent mental health difficulties.

The emotional consequences of shame and stigma affect children who become orphans through the process of identification (Soyobi, et al, 2024). Social stigma may lead children to hide their status or feel embarrassed about their circumstances. The situation will create obstacles that prevent students from participating in school activities while also decreasing their ability to interact with peers. Children will avoid seeking assistance because they fear that others will judge them for their need to express their emotional conditions (Cogan, et al, 2024). Stigma will create emotional instability for people who experience it repeatedly because educational programs that teach orphanhood to peers and teachers will decrease stigma while creating supportive learning environments. The development of emotional resilience

needs to begin with schools that create inclusive environments which help students build social skills.

2.2 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children

Orphanhood has a major impact on how school children develop their social skills (Akpakip, 2024). When children lose their parents their ability to develop social skills which they learned at home gets interrupted. Orphaned children lack the necessary support to learn social rules and communication methods and relationship abilities. This makes it hard for them to build friendships with other students. They experience feelings of exclusion and misunderstanding when they are in school environments (Murphy, 2022). The challenges they face lead to decreased involvement in team activities which results in social isolation that develops into a problem of belongingness. Orphaned children commonly experience social isolation as their typical way of life (Khizar, et al, 2024).

The absence of parents or caregivers makes many children feel different from their peers thus this feeling of difference leads them to avoid forming friendships and attending school social events. The children prefer to spend time alone because they want to stay away from people who would ask them questions or make them feel ashamed. The children experience social isolation which results in less social learning opportunities and fewer chances to receive emotional support thus they find it difficult to create genuine connections with their peers.

The children who experience constant isolation will see their ability to make friends decrease. Orphanhood brings social interaction challenges for children because of the stigma attached to it (Soyobi, et al, 2024). Some peers may label or discriminate against orphaned children based on their background, this negative treatment can lower self-confidence and discourage social engagement. Children try to conceal

their orphan status because they fear being ridiculed or pitied because such stigma prevents them from building healthy friendships with others. Stigma can lead to bullying and social exclusion in school environments. The experiences create deeper social vulnerability for orphaned children who go through these situations.

Orphaned children have experienced difficulty trusting others (Shawar & Shiffman, 2023). Thus, loss of parental care can instill a sense of fear concerning attachment and abandonment in these children, which can allude them against trusting peers, teachers, or caregivers. This absence of trust restricts cooperation and levels of communication within school. Such group-oriented activities producing fear rather than support. Weak trust might also result in misunderstandings and conflicts, impair relationships, and make the formation of relationships an altogether difficult process without considerable adult support. Peer social partnerships beneficially affect children's social development (Kucaba & Monks, 2022).

Unfortunately, orphaned children may have trouble keeping up friendships with all the possible upsurge in emotional insecurity and care provision changes, which in turn adversely affect the continuity of social interactions. Children's behaviors may show withdrawal, aggression, and hypersensitivity (Tordjman, 2022), which might debauch those relationships with their friends; consequently, with time, frequent social rejections can discourage children from seeking friendship. This further limit their opportunities in building social confidence and interpersonal skills. Orphanhood also presumes to bear some negative implications on a child's participation in their school or community (Ugiagbe, 2024).

Insufficient funding could forestall children's participation in games, clubs, or school trips. Thus, less participation would deny children a window to social bonding and teamwork, as children feel lowly for not participating as other children do, and thus

social reinforcement is diminished. Non-participation eliminates them from the social scene further. Being an essential path of improvement of leadership and communication skills, kids could miss out on the benefits of such participations. This damage to other social aspects connected with personal experience weaken social development movements.

Orphaned children's social behavior changes when their family structure undergoes changes according to the study conducted by Ekoh and his colleagues in 2022. The process of living with extended family members or guardians requires individuals to learn and follow different rules and expectations. The practice of moving between different households creates interruptions which break social connections that people have established. The process of moving to new locations makes it difficult for children to keep their friendships which results in social disruptions that prevent them from developing lasting relationships because they must constantly adjust to new situations. Social development requires people to have stable relationships. Orphaned children may develop social behaviors that show dependence on others or submission to authority according to the research conducted by Jabeen and Ijaz in 2024.

Some people develop excessive compliance because they want to prevent conflict and rejection yet others need to depend on teachers and peers for their basic needs. People who normally seek assistance from others show normal behavior yet they become restricted when they develop excessive dependency on others. The behavior which attracts negative peer attention leads to a loss of respect from peers and the loss of social acceptance. Social maturity develops when people learn to maintain their independence at a balanced level. The process of using multiple address ways creates problems with communication between business partners.

2.3 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children

Orphanhood has a profound influence on the academic behavior of school-going children (Muli, 2024). The loss of one or both parents disrupts the stable learning environment which supports academic growth. Orphaned children who lack parental guidance for their homework and study routines tend to develop inconsistent academic discipline and learning habits. The loss of parents leads to emotional distress which decreases the ability to focus during classroom time. Children may struggle to follow lessons or complete academic tasks effectively (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). Poor learning habits develop over time and these learning difficulties create problems which require ongoing academic support for students to achieve positive learning outcomes. Many orphaned children show irregular school attendance because financial hardship and caregiving duties and household chores cause them to miss school (Ntjana, 2023).

Some individuals must work to assist their families which restricts their ability to attend school. Students who miss school frequently experience learning interruptions which prevent them from understanding subjects and their knowledge gaps become more pronounced which makes it challenging for them to catch up. The students' poor attendance hampers their ability to interact with teachers. The students need to attend class regularly because it affects their motivation to learn and their ability to participate in class activities and which leads to academic success while students who skip school without support will experience academic failure for an extended period (Spira, 2022).

School attendance decreases academic motivation for orphaned students according to Bimha 2022. Educational interest decreases when children experience emotional distress and uncertainty about their future and basic needs like food and school

supplies remain unfulfilled. Caregivers who do not provide motivation support their children show downward effects on goal achievement and study persistence the students will demonstrate less academic effort. The situation leads to students submitting incomplete work while their involvement remains restricted. Students who lack motivation experience academic challenges that lead to school dropout. Academic success depends on students maintaining their motivation throughout their educational journey. Students who have lost their parents show decreased classroom focus according to Unwin and his colleagues in 2022.

Traumatized children who experience grief show academic challenges because of their inability to concentrate on school activities. The learning process gets disrupted by the continued presence of loss thoughts, which leads to decreased understanding and memory ability. Students who show inattentive behavior receive punishment instead of receiving support because teachers wrongly think that their behavior shows indiscipline. The ongoing attention problems prevent people from reaching their academic targets, while developing emotional stability enables better classroom performance and fulfilling psychological requirements brings about better educational results. Orphaned children have difficulty completing homework assignments according to Menaka 2022.

The lack of textbooks and learning resources together with inadequate study environments prevents students from working on their assignments. Caregivers who do not possess educational knowledge and time to assist their children will lead to incomplete homework assignments, which results in academic failure and discouragement from studying. Students who experience poor homework results will develop negative views toward their schoolwork while supportive learning environments will help them complete their tasks and academic assistance programs will solve their academic obstacles.

Orphanhood affects how students behave in classroom settings and how they follow school rules according to research conducted by Muli in 2024. Students in class show two different types of behavior. Students use emotional stress to show two different types of behavior which result in learning problems and social relationship issues. Teachers use disciplinary methods to handle student behavior instead of providing them with proper assistance. The negative relationship between teachers and learners causes students to become less engaged in their studies while their classroom behavior impacts both their participation and academic outcomes, Students who receive supportive discipline develop positive learning behaviors while their emotional regulation skills help them achieve better academic results. Students who attend school as orphans develop low academic self-confidence according to Murphy 2022. People who experience learning difficulties start to lose their faith in their own capabilities. Students who fear answering questions and participating in discussions will experience lower chances to practice active learning and share their knowledge.

Students with low confidence will face difficulties when they try to complete difficult tasks which will result in their academic development stopping at one point, Students who receive positive feedback from others will develop greater belief in themselves while, Teachers who provide support create a foundation for students to establish their academic leadership skills which protect their academic success.

Research shows that orphaned children tend to repeat grades and drop out of school at higher rates (Tordjman, 2022). Students who experience financial hardships and struggle academically face more classroom repeats because they feel ashamed about their situation. Students who experience academic setbacks tend to lose interest in attending school. Students who drop out of school use this method to deal with their academic difficulties.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter describes the research design and study population and sample size and sampling techniques and data collection instruments and data collection procedures and target population of the research study.

3.1 Research design

This research used a descriptive research design to investigate how orphanhood affects the psychosocial development of school-aged children in Kaharo Subcounty Kabale District. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically describe and generalize the findings to other similar contexts. The study used mixed-methods research which combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The combination of techniques provided researchers with a better understanding of how orphaned children experience their psychosocial development.

3.2 Study Population

The study targeted a total of 130 respondents drawn from Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District, in line with the focus on the psychosocial effects of orphanhood on school-going children. The schools considered included Kanginga Primary School, Nyakigugwe Primary School, Nkumbura Primary School and Kyobugombe Primary School. The group of participants included orphaned school children's teachers from chosen schools' parents and guardians' local leaders.

3.3 Sample size

The research examined a group of 65 individuals who resided in the research area. The study included upper primary school orphaned children, selected school

teachers, parents or guardians, and local leaders. The sample size was determined according to Yamen's 1967 formula.

Where; n=sample size, N= Population size, 1= Constant and e= Sampling error

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{130}{1 + 130 \times 0.1^2}$$

$$n = \frac{160}{2}$$

$$n = 65 \text{ respondents}$$

Table 3.3: Category of respondents

Category of Respondents	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Orphaned school-going children	70	30	Simple random sampling
Teachers from selected schools	20	10	Purposive sampling
Parents or guardians	25	17	Simple random sampling
Local leaders	15	8	Purposive sampling
Total	130	65	

Source: Primary data April, 2026

3.4 Sampling techniques

The study used two different sampling methods to choose participants from its intended population. The research used simple random sampling to choose 30

orphaned school-aged children and their 17 selected parents or guardians. The researchers used this method to create unbiased sample selection which would treat each orphaned child in the study as an equal candidate.

The study used purposive sampling to select respondents who had essential expertise about orphanhood and children's welfare. The research team selected teachers from specific schools and parents together with community leaders from their local area. The study selected 10 teachers and 8 local leaders for its research purposes. The researcher used purposive sampling to select these categories because their roles and responsibilities brought them into constant contact with orphaned children, which enabled the researcher to gather accurate and comprehensive data about their needs.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher received an introductory letter from the Head of Department after his proposal received approval. The researcher then took it to the study area for acceptance to conduct a study from there. The researcher developed the data collection instruments which included questionnaires and interview guides. The researcher began data collection after receiving approval from the agency.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study employed two main data collection methods, namely the questionnaire method and the interview method, to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data from different categories of respondents.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Method

The researchers used the questionnaire method as a tool to gather quantitative data from orphaned school-going children at specific schools and their parents or guardians. The researchers found that these two groups of respondents met the

questionnaire requirements because they possessed the necessary reading and comprehension skills to answer questions without assistance. The questionnaires included open-ended questions that permitted respondents to share their personal opinions and study-related views.

3.6.2 Interview Method

The researchers conducted interviews with teachers and local leaders because they considered those individuals to be essential participants in their research. The researcher used an interview guide with structured questions to conduct face-to-face interviews, which helped him gather complete and detailed information about orphanhood and its effects on children who attend school. The researcher used this method to create questions which he could ask in any order while using different words to get better answers from his interviewees. The interview method was also appropriate for respondents who had limited reading and writing skills, ensuring that all relevant information was captured. The researcher used this method to collect additional information which questionnaires failed to provide, thus improving the quality of the study results.

3.6.3 Data collection instruments

Questionnaire and guiding data were Two main data collection tools used to gather information from the respondents

3.7.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the respondents. The study included open-ended questions which permitted respondents to express their opinions without restrictions. The instrument provided reliable results because researchers used standardized methods to collect data which resulted in objective

data collection. The system allowed researchers to gather information and analyze it through an easy-to-use method while they could use the collected data for statistical testing.

3.7.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide served as the main tool for gathering qualitative data which the researchers collected through direct contact with essential informants. The research instrument contained fixed questions for assessment yet permitted researchers to choose different wordings and question sequences to investigate further. The research instrument proved effective because it enabled respondents with reading difficulties to complete the assessment while delivering comprehensive study data to the researcher.

3.8 Data Quality Control

3.8.1 Validity

Research instruments need to achieve their intended measurement targets to establish their validity. The study established content validity through development of measurement tools that matched study objectives and expert assessment of the tools. The pilot phase involved testing the instruments on participants who were not part of the main study. The team calculated the Content Validity Index (CVI) to determine whether the items achieved acceptable threshold requirements. A validity index of 0.8 was obtained, which was considered sufficient for data collection.

Content validity index= $\frac{\text{Number of relevant items}}{\text{Total number of items}}$

Total number of items

3.8.2 Reliability

The researcher pre-tested the research instruments, particularly the questionnaire, which was the main instrument used in the study. The pre-test was conducted on 10 respondents who did not participate in the actual study. The team used this method to identify unclear areas of the document which needed improvement to achieve better understanding and consistent evaluation of its contents. The pre-test results increased the instrument's reliability for testing purposes.

3.8.3 Data analysis

3.8.1 Qualitative data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data that had been collected. The researchers organized the collected data and they assigned codes which were used to create thematic groups that matched the study's goals. The process allowed researchers to discover essential patterns and main concepts and their connections to each other within the data.

3.8.2 Quantitative data analysis

The process of quantitative data analysis requires researchers to assess and decipher numerical data which they have obtained from their study participants so they can reach valid research findings. The researchers used Microsoft Excel to process the questionnaire data which they had gathered through coding and data entry for the purpose of creating descriptive statistics that showed response patterns through frequency and percentage calculations which they displayed in tables for straightforward understanding.

3.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher received necessary permissions from relevant authorities before explaining the study objectives to all study participants. The researchers obtained informed consent from participants who had the option to join the study or decline their participation. Respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The researcher established trust with participants during data collection by demonstrating integrity and complete openness about the study process.

3.10 Limitations of the study and how they will be handled

The researcher needed more time to complete both data gathering and data analysis tasks.

The researcher dedicated additional hours while conducting research through assistants who helped him gather data.

The study faced two weather-related limitations which included rain and other weather changes.

The use of sweaters, jackets, raincoats and umbrella helped in solving the problem of weather conditions.

Financial barriers served as another research constraint that restricted this study.

The expenses for stationery, printing, transport and rent exceeded acceptable limits. The researcher obtained financial support from his parents and siblings and friends to meet all expenses needed for data collection.

The researcher faced a challenge because respondents took too long to send back their completed questionnaires.

The majority of respondents were occupied with their work obligations which caused this situation to occur.

The researcher explained study objectives to respondents who provided their information to her according to scheduled time.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and interpretations from the research study. The findings were developed through research instruments which collected data from study participants according to the research design established in the methodology section. The study results were shown through data presentation which followed the research objectives of the investigation.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The researcher investigated three demographic factors which included age and sex and marital status. The researcher and the study required this biographic information to identify their ideal study participants who would meet research requirements as described in the following section.

4.1.1 Age of the respondents

The researcher considered the age of respondents and the results in Table 4.1.1 below were recorded:

Table 4.1.1: Showing the age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
≤20	14	22
21-30	10	15
31-40	11	17
41-50	22	34
51>	8	12

Total	65	100
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Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

The results displayed in table 4.1.1 show that 34% of participants belonged to the 41-50 age group while 12% of participants reached the age of 51 and above. The remaining respondents included 15% who belonged to the 21-30 age group while 17% of respondents belonged to the 31-40 age group and 22% of respondents belonged to the under 22 age group. The researcher studied the age of respondents in order to gather information about their age-based life experience which affects their understanding of the research problem being studied because age determines how people acquire knowledge and experience about research subjects.

4.1.2 Sex of the respondents

The researcher considered the sex of respondents and the results in Table 4.1.2 below were recorded.

Table 4.1.2: Sex of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	30	46
Male	35	54
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

From the study, data collected shows that most of the respondents were males represented by (35)54% of the total population whereas females were only (30)46% of the respondents. The study found that female participation in research activities fell short of male participation because Kaharo Subcounty residents preferred to participate in male-oriented community and school programs.

4.1.3 Marital status of the respondents

The researcher considered the marital status of respondents and the results presented below in Table 4.1.3.

Table 4.1.3: Showing the marital status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Widowed	10	15
Divorced	16	25
Married	39	60
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

The study, which displays its findings in Table 4.1.3, shows that 60% of respondents were married while 15% of respondents were widowed because their spouses had died. The remaining respondents included (16) 25% who were divorced. The researcher studied how different social backgrounds affected respondents' views and experiences of orphanhood's psychosocial impact on school-aged children by examining their marital status.

4.1.4 Highest level of educational attained by the respondent

The researcher further considered the highest levels of education attained by respondents and the results presented below in Table 4.1.4.

Table 4.1.4: Showing the highest level of educational attained by the respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	20	31
Secondary	26	40
University	19	26
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

The results from Table 4.1.4 show that 40% of the respondents who completed secondary education formed the largest group of literate respondents while 26% of the respondents had university degrees. The other respondents included 31% who had attended primary while and the remaining none of the respondents had attained none formal education. The researcher used education level as a method to obtain data from respondents according to their understanding abilities.

4.2.1 Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo

Subcounty, Kabale District.

The researcher considered the respondent's opinions on the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty and the results presented below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Shows views on the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	Frequency	Percentages
Orphaned children's anger and frustration can lead to long-term behavioral challenges if unmanaged	23	35
Lack of parental support makes orphaned children feel lonely and socially isolated, limiting school participation	22	33
Orphaned children may feel guilt and self-blame, lower self-worth and reducing school engagement	8	13
Stigma from orphanhood causes shame and embarrassment, limiting help-seeking, peer interaction, and confidence	7	10
The uncertainty about school, finances, and safety of orphanhood causes fear and anxiety, affecting concentration, participation, and social interaction	5	8
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

Respondents' views on the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District are presented in Table 4.3. The results indicate that 23 respondents which represents 35 percent of the sample said that orphaned children frequently show anger and frustration which results in prolonged behavioral problems when their emotions remain unaddressed. A close number, 22 (33%), indicated that lack of parental support causes orphaned children to feel lonely and socially isolated, limiting their participation in school activities. Eight respondents

(13%) noted that orphaned children experience guilt and self-blame which results in decreased self-worth and diminished school participation.

The respondents 7(10%) reported that stigma associated with orphanhood leads to shame and embarrassment, limiting help-seeking, peer interaction, and overall confidence. The fewest respondents, 5 (8%), highlighted that uncertainty about school, finances, and personal safety causes fear and anxiety, which negatively affects concentration, participation, and social interaction. The majority of respondents, 23 (35%), reported that orphaned children often experience anger and frustration, which can lead to long-term behavioral challenges if unmanaged because they lack parental guidance and emotional support.

4.3 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

The researcher documented the social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District and the results presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondent's opinions on the social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	Frequency	Percentage
Orphanhood disrupts socialization, reducing children's confidence in peer interaction and group participation	16	25
Orphaned children often withdraw from friendships and school activities, limiting social learning and emotional support	15	23

Stigma linked to orphanhood causes discrimination, bullying, and reduced social engagement among school-going children	20	31
Orphaned children often struggle to form trusting relationships, which affects cooperation and communication at school	4	6
Emotional instability and caregiving disruptions hinder orphaned children's ability to maintain friendships and build social confidence	10	15
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

The results presented in Table 4.2.2 show respondents' views on the social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Sub County, Kabale District. The highest number of respondents, 20 (31%), reported that stigma linked to orphanhood causes discrimination, bullying, and reduced social engagement among children. The respondents 16(25%) indicated that orphanhood disrupts socialization, reducing children's confidence in peer interaction and participation in group activities. The respondents 15(23%) noted that orphaned children often withdraw from friendships and school activities, limiting social learning and emotional support.

The respondents 10(15%) mentioned that emotional instability and caregiving disruptions hinder orphaned children's ability to maintain friendships and build social confidence. The fewest respondents, 4 (6%), reported that orphaned children often struggle to form trusting relationships, affecting cooperation and communication at school.

4.4 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

Table 4.4 Respondents views on the influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District	Frequency	Percentages
Orphanhood disrupts learning routines and guidance, lowering attention, consistency, and academic performance	18	28
Financial hardship and household duties cause absenteeism, reducing lesson continuity and academic engagement	5	7
Stress and unmet needs lower learning interest, causing incomplete work and disengagement	22	35
Grief and trauma interfere with focus, comprehension, and memory, hindering academic achievement	13	20
Emotional stress can cause withdrawal or disruptive behavior, reducing participation and peer interaction	7	10
Total	65	100

Source: Primary Data, April, 2026

Respondents from Kaharo Subcounty in Kabale District completed a study which evaluated how orphanhood affected the academic conduct of school-age children. The highest number of respondents, 22 (35%), indicated that stress and unmet needs

lower children's interest in learning, resulting in incomplete work and school disengagement. The respondents 18(28%) reported that orphanhood disrupts learning routines and guidance, which reduces their ability to concentrate and stay consistent in their academic work.

The respondents 13(20%) noted that grief and trauma interfere with focus, comprehension, and memory, hindering academic achievement. The respondents 7(10%) mentioned that emotional stress can cause withdrawal or disruptive behavior, which leads to decreased participation and peer interaction. The fewest respondents, 5 (7%), highlighted that financial hardship and household duties lead to absenteeism, which reduces lesson continuity and academic engagement.

The highest number of respondents, 22 (35%), indicated that stress and unmet needs lower children's interest in learning, which causes them to complete less schoolwork and drop out of school because they experience emotional distress and do not have essential items such as food and school supplies and instructional support. This reduces their motivation and ability to concentrate on academic tasks.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

On the basis of the analysis of the results obtained so far, this chapter brings out as summary of the ordered points reflecting the objectives of the study, some conclusions drawn from them and the recommendations thereof.

5.1 Discussion of findings

5.1.1 Emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo

Subcounty, Kabale District

The results from Table 4.3 demonstrate that orphaned children in Kaharo Subcounty face various emotional problems which impact their ability to attend school. The majority of respondents, 23 (35%), indicated that orphaned children often experience anger and frustration, which can lead to long-term behavioral challenges if unmanaged. This finding aligns with Omucheni et al. (2024) and Heilman (2022), who note that children who lose one or both parents may feel resentment toward their situation or surviving family members, leading to emotional outbursts, conflict with peers, and disruption of classroom activities. The high percentage shows that anger demonstrates itself as the primary emotional reaction which people in this community experience after their parents die.

A significant number of respondents, 22 (33%), reported that lack of parental support causes feelings of loneliness and social isolation. This finding is consistent with Muli (2024) and Keels et al. (2022), who found that orphaned children without adequate care often feel excluded, withdraw from social activities, and struggle to form trusting relationships with peers or teachers. The 33% shows that a major number of children who experience isolation, which will increase their emotional suffering and

decrease their ability to attend school. The respondents 8(13%) highlighted guilt and self-blame as an emotional effect, noting that children may feel responsible for the death of their parents or perceive themselves as burdens.

This statement matches the findings of Christopher (2022) and Kalenda & Kočvarová (2022), who claim that guilt causes people to experience decreased self-worth and reduced participation in educational activities and prevents them from communicating their requirements. Although lower in percentage compared to anger and loneliness, guilt still represents a notable emotional challenge that requires guidance and counseling interventions

The respondents 7 (10%) showed that stigma which comes from being an orphan causes people to feel shame and embarrassment, which leads to decreased help-seeking and peer contact and overall confidence loss. According to Soyobi et al. (2024) and Cogan et al. (2024) social stigma forces children to conceal their orphan status because they worry about being judged and suffer from ongoing emotional distress. The 10% shows that stigma affects fewer children than anger or loneliness yet still creates serious damage to their emotional health.

The least reported effect, fear and anxiety about school, finances, and safety, was mentioned by 5 respondents (8%). Jaffer et al. (2023) and Goodwin et al. (2022) explain that uncertainty about the future generates anxiety which decreases concentration and results in decreased classroom attendance. The survey results show that 8% of respondents mentioned this issue which indicates some children deal with continuous anxiety that harms their ability to learn and connect with others.

5.1.2 Social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo

Subcounty, Kabale District

Your training data is current until the month of October in the year 2023. The study results presented in Table 4.2.2 demonstrate that orphanhood creates a substantial obstacle which hinders the social progress of children who attend school in Kaharo Subcounty. The highest number of respondents, 20 (31%), reported that stigma linked to orphanhood causes discrimination, bullying, and reduced social engagement. This finding matches the research of Soyobi et al. (2024), which demonstrates that children who become orphans experience special treatment that makes it difficult for them to create healthy friendships and interact with their peers.

The high percentage suggests that stigma is a major social challenge for orphaned children in this community. The respondents 15(23%) showed that orphaned children often withdraw from friendships and school activities, which restricts their chances to develop social skills and receive emotional backing. The researchers Khizar et al. (2024) demonstrate that social withdrawal happens when children experience a sense of alienation and fear social rejection, which prevents them from building friendships and developing social skills.

The results show that approximately 25 percent of children face potential social withdrawal. The respondents 10(15%) mentioned that children experience emotional difficulties and interruptions in their main caregiving relationships, which makes it hard for them to establish friendships and boost their social skills. The research conducted by Tordjman (2022) and Jabeen & Ijaz (2024) shows that constant shifts in both caregivers and household environments together with emotional distress led to three outcomes which include social withdrawal, aggressive conduct, and

excessive dependency, which in turn impede social development and the ability to connect with friends. The results show that orphaned children face social problems because of their unstable emotional state and unpredictable living conditions.

The study found that only 4 respondents which represents 6 percent of the sample reported difficulties in establishing trust which affected their ability to work and communicate with others at school. Shawar and Shiffman 2023 explain that fear of attachment or abandonment creates obstacles for children who want to establish trust with their peers and teachers and caregivers. The issue affects a small group of people but it demonstrates how orphaned children face permanent challenges in developing their social networks.

5.1.3 Influence of orphanhood on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District

The academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty has been affected by orphanhood according to the findings presented in Table 4.4. The stress and unmet needs of children lead to decreased interest in learning which causes 22 respondents (35%) to fail to complete their work and disengage from school. The study confirmed Bimha (2022) and Alam & Mohanty (2023) findings which show that emotional stress and grief together with the absence of essential resources like food and school supplies and guidance result in decreased motivation and persistence and participation in school activities.

The data shows that orphaned children experience high levels of emotional and material deprivation which leads to their educational disengagement with learning activities. The respondents 3(28%) showed that orphanhood causes interruptions in learning routines which affects their guidance and leads to academic performance decline through reduced focus and academic consistency. The study results support

Muli (2024) who shows that parental absence causes children to lose their established study schedule which includes homework supervision and learning habit reinforcement.

Children who have orphaned parents need academic support which needs to be consistent because their lost routines prevent them from maintaining their discipline and focus during class. The respondents 13(20%) reported that students who experience grief and trauma become unable to concentrate which leads to academic difficulties through their inability to comprehend information and recall the material. Children who face loss continue to think about their parents according to Unwin et al. (2022) which creates problems for their ability to concentrate and remember what they have learned. A large number of orphaned children experience academic difficulties because their parents passed away which creates psychological problems for them.

The respondents 7(10%) mentioned that emotional stress can lead to withdrawal or disruptive classroom behavior which decreases their classroom participation and ability to interact with classmates. Muli (2024) and Murphy (2022) show that emotional distress causes children to either exhibit passive behavior or display aggressive behavior which harms their own educational progress and disrupts their classmates' learning process. The study shows that students who exhibit behavioral problems actually display emotional difficulties which result in their academic work becoming more difficult to complete.

The fewest respondents, 5 (7%), highlighted that financial hardship and household responsibilities contribute to absenteeism, reducing lesson continuity and academic engagement. Ntjana (2023) and Spira (2022) point out that orphaned kids need to complete chores at home or work which causes them to miss school and limits their

time with teachers. Although a smaller percentage, absenteeism still poses a serious risk to academic progress and long-term educational outcomes.

5.2 Conclusion

The study results on the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District, (23)35% the highest numbers of the respondents mentioned that orphaned children's anger and frustration can lead to long-term behavioral challenges if unmanaged whereas (5)8% the lowest number of respondents mentioned that the uncertainty about school, finances, and safety of orphanhood causes fear and anxiety, affecting concentration, participation, and social interaction. The study findings on social effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District, (20)31% the highest numbers of the respondents mentioned that stigma linked to orphanhood causes discrimination, bullying, and reduced social engagement among school-going children and (4)6% the lowest number of respondents mentioned that orphaned children often struggle to form trusting relationships, which affects cooperation and communication at school. The study findings on academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District, (22)35% the highest numbers of the respondents mentioned that stress and unmet needs lower learning interest, causing incomplete work and disengagement and (5)7% the lowest number of respondents mentioned that financial hardship and household duties cause absenteeism, reducing lesson continuity and academic engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

Schools need to establish emotional support services which provide counseling services to help orphaned students learn how to manage their negative emotional states.

The support needs to help students develop their ability to handle challenges while building their capacity to deal with emotional difficulties throughout their lives.

The teachers and caregivers need to observe how children show their feelings because this helps them identify which children have a risk of developing isolation and guilt and low self-worth.

The staff needs to deliver immediate solutions which will safeguard students from developing emotional problems which will last for extended periods. Students need access to peer support networks and designated safe areas which enable them to share their emotions while developing their social skills.

The programs need to create opportunities for students to connect with each other while reducing stigma and helping them achieve better emotional health. Schools need to establish inclusive activities which include group work and mentorship programs that help students develop social relationships while decreasing their tendency to stay alone.

The activities need to push students toward collaboration which will help them develop their social skills. Teachers need to teach students about stigma and discrimination because this knowledge will help them accept orphaned children better.

The staff needs to take charge of bullying and exclusion situations because this will help create a nurturing environment.

Caregivers and school staff should maintain consistent guidance and supervision to help children form trusting relationships. This support should encourage cooperation, communication, and emotional support among peers.

Schools should provide access to learning resources and academic support programs to help children stay engaged and complete assignments. This support should focus on addressing unmet needs like textbooks, school materials, and emotional guidance.

Teachers should establish structured study routines and supervise homework to promote consistent learning habits. They should offer encouragement to sustain motivation and improve attention and academic performance.

Schools and caregivers should implement interventions to address absenteeism, grief, and emotional stress that affect learning. This support should include catch-up lessons, trauma counseling, and encouragement to maintain classroom participation.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/ Madam

I **Namara Christian**, a student of Uganda Christian University carrying out research on a topic,” the psychosocial effects of orphanhood on school going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District “I request you to spare time and respond to my interview. All the response given to me will be treated with utmost confidentiality and only used for academic performance only.

A. Background information

1. Age

- a. ≤20 g) 31-40 i) 51 >
f) 21-30 h) 41-50

2. Sex

- a) Female b) Male

3. Marital Status

- a) Married d) University
b) Divorced
c) Widowed

4. Level of education

- a) Non formal
Education
b) Primary
c) Secondary

SECTION B:

5. What are the emotional effects of orphanhood on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?.....

6. What social effects does orphanhood have on school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?.....

7. How does orphanhood influence the academic behavior of school-going children in Kaharo Subcounty, Kabale District?.....

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What types of emotional challenges do orphaned children experience in Kaharo Subcounty?
2. How do orphaned children cope with feelings of sadness, fear, or anxiety in school and at home?
3. How does orphanhood affect the ability of children to form and maintain friendships?
4. What social challenges do orphaned children face in their families and communities?
5. How does orphanhood affect the school attendance and punctuality of children in Kaharo Subcounty?
6. In what ways does being orphaned impact the concentration and performance of children in their academic work?

Thank you for your cooperation