

**ACADEMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY ADOLESCENTS FROM DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES
IN ST. JOHN SECONDARY SCHOOLS KIRA MUNICIPALITY**

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EM21B15/024**

**A DISSERTATION REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN
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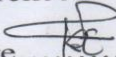


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Declaration

I, Eva Kisiibo, hereby declare that the research report entitled "academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in St. John secondary schools Kira municipality" is my original work. I affirm that this work represents my own ideas, insights, and findings. I further declare that all sources used in the preparation of this research report have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

Signature.....

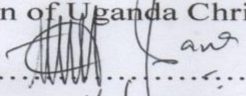
Date..... 14th June 2024.....

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Approval

This is to certify that this research report “Academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in St. John secondary schools Kira municipality” has been done and completed by the student under my supervision and is now ready for submission for an award of bachelor in social work and social administration of Uganda Christian University

Signature..........

Date 14th June 2024

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Abstract

This study investigated the academic challenges experienced by adolescents from dysfunctional families and explored their impact on academic performance in school. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving surveys and interviews with 45 students from dysfunctional families in St. John Secondary Schools, Kira Municipality.

The findings reveal that lack of family support (46.67%), financial instability (55.55%), and emotional distress (62.22%) were the key academic challenges facing the students, and they led to academic performance being generally poor (60%), a significant percentage of students (77.78%) reported the availability of counseling services at the school to assist students affected by their family situation. Additionally, a majority of students (66.67%) mentioned the provision of extra tutoring services for students facing family-related challenges.

The study underscores the importance of targeted interventions, such as counseling and tutoring programs, in supporting students from vulnerable backgrounds and promoting their academic success. Recommendations include strengthening support services, fostering collaboration with families, providing professional development for educators, and implementing long-term monitoring and evaluation practices to enhance the support offered to students from dysfunctional families.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This project sought to explore academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in Kira municipality secondary schools. This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, hypothesis, significance and justification of the study and scope of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Adolescents from dysfunctional families across the globe are often mired in emotional and behavioral challenges that significantly impede their academic progress (Whitcomb, 2013). The instability and conflict inherent in such family environments lead to issues like anxiety, depression, and attention disorders, which manifest in schools as difficulty concentrating, absenteeism, and disruptive behaviors (Huberty, 2012). These issues not only affect their ability to learn but also their social interactions and engagement with the school community. Compounding these difficulties are the economic hardships that many of these families face. Financial strain can mean that adolescents have limited access to crucial educational materials, such as textbooks, technology, and extracurricular activities, which are essential for a comprehensive learning experience (Collins & Halverson, 2018). These lack of resources results in a cycle of underachievement and low self-esteem as these students are unable to perform to their potential or engage fully with the curriculum. Moreover, economic stress within the family can lead to increased familial tension and conflict, which further detracts from the adolescents' focus on education. The disparities in educational outcomes become more pronounced as these adolescents are compared with their peers from more stable and affluent backgrounds (Legewie & DiPrete,

2012). While their classmates move forward, students from dysfunctional families often fall behind, not due to a lack of ability, but because of the myriad obstacles they must overcome simply to access the same level of education. This situation calls for targeted interventions and support systems that can provide these young individuals with the resources and emotional support they need to succeed academically.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the academic landscape for adolescents from dysfunctional families is particularly challenging due to deeply entrenched socio-cultural issues and public health crises (Theron, 2023). Early marriage is a prevalent practice that disproportionately affects girls, often leading to early childbearing and a consequent abrupt end to their education (Jones et al., 2014). These early life events, coupled with the responsibilities of parenthood, significantly diminish the chances of continuing education, as the demands of marriage and childcare take precedence over school attendance. The region also grapples with the HIV epidemic, which poses a dual threat to adolescents' health and their educational attainment (Mkandawire et al., 2014). Those who contract the virus may face stigma, absenteeism due to illness, or the need to care for sick family members, all of which can derail their academic pursuits. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive sexual education and healthcare services exacerbates these issues, as adolescents are not adequately equipped with the knowledge or means to prevent early pregnancies or protect themselves from HIV (Morris & Rushwan, 2015). The convergence of these factors creates a formidable barrier to education, calling for targeted interventions to address the unique needs of these young individuals and ensure their right to education is upheld.

In Uganda, the plight of adolescents from dysfunctional families is exacerbated by the nation's tumultuous history of civil unrest and a pervasive burden of infectious diseases (Luo, 2020). The psychological scars left by decades of conflict, including the use of child soldiers and the displacement of communities, have created an environment where mental health challenges are prevalent among the youth. These challenges are not solely the remnants of past violence but are continually fueled by ongoing struggles with diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and respiratory infections. The intersection of these health issues with familial dysfunction where support systems are often weak or absent creates a formidable barrier to educational attainment (Shanks & Robinson, 2013). The resulting mental health disorders, ranging from depression to anxiety, can lead to absenteeism, poor academic performance, and early school dropout. The academic pursuits of adolescents are often overshadowed by the struggle to find stable employment amidst a backdrop of familial instability (Vinogradov et al., 2022). Many youths are compelled to take up low-income jobs such as transit trading, hawking, or working as bar attendants and market vendors, which not only diverts their attention from education but also places them in precarious social environments that can lead to substance abuse and further disengagement from schooling (Gayle, 1983). Familial dysfunction, such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and neglect, can have a significant impact on adolescents' well-being and academic success. Similarly, socio-cultural challenges, such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to resources, can further exacerbate the difficulties faced by these students.

Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is essential in developing effective interventions and support systems for

students from dysfunctional families. By addressing the root causes of these challenges, educators, parents, and policymakers can create a more inclusive and nurturing environment for the adolescents from dysfunctional families in Uganda, St. John Secondary Schools in Kira Municipality.

1.2 Problem statement

Adolescents from dysfunctional families often face unique challenges that can significantly impact their academic performance and overall well-being. In St. John Secondary Schools, Kira Municipality, there is a growing concern about the academic struggles of these students (Robert et al., 2024). Dysfunctional family dynamics, characterized by instability, conflict, and lack of support, can lead to a range of issues for adolescents, including decreased concentration, lower academic achievement, and increased behavioral problems. These challenges are further compelled by the potential of social isolation and development of mental health issues (Deng et al., 2022).

There lies a gap in the need for a thorough understanding of the specific academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families. Further exploration and understanding of how dysfunctional family dynamics directly impact various aspects of academic performance as well as the potential mechanisms through which these effects occur, would help to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the specific academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families within the context of St. John Secondary Schools

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Main objective

The main objective of this study is to identify the academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in St. John secondary school, Kira municipality.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To identify the specific academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families.
- To examine how the identified academic challenges are affecting the academic performance of children from dysfunctional families at school
- To examine how the identified academic challenges are being addressed

1.4 Research questions

- What are the specific academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families?
- How are the identified academic challenges affecting the academic performance of children from dysfunctional families in school?
- How are the identified academic challenges affecting children from dysfunctional families being addressed?

1.5 Significance of the study

This information in this study will help provide insights into the specific needs of adolescents from dysfunctional families, leading to improved academic support and interventions.

The study may help policy makers offer evidence-based recommendations for educational policies that can better cater to the challenges faced by those students.

The study may help equip educators with a deeper understanding of the issues these adolescents face, enabling them to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

The study may help students from dysfunctional families by acknowledging their struggles and advocating for resources and support tailored to their circumstances.

The study may help fill existing research gaps regarding the intersection of family dysfunction and education, particularly within the context of Kira Municipality.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study covers the following scope: content scope; content scope, geographical scope, and time scope.

1.6.1 Content scope

The study will mainly focus on the various challenges that adolescents from dysfunctional families face such as poverty, child abuse, alcoholism, single parenthood, and domestic violence and how these affect the academic performance of adolescents from dysfunctional families.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study is to be conducted in Kira Municipality. It will specifically be carried out in St. John's secondary school. This school has one of the largest secondary school populations in the Municipality and provides both universal secondary Education and Non -universal secondary education.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study will be carried out between the time period of February to June 2024.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

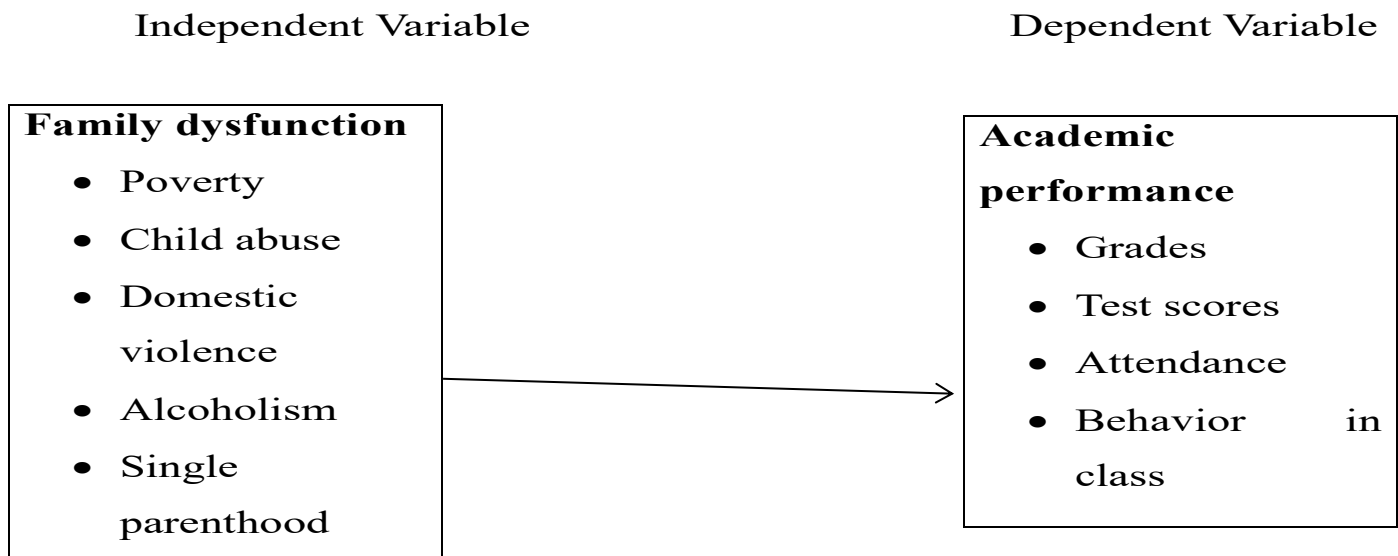


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above outlines the key variables being examined. The independent variable, family dysfunction, is the factor being studied to understand its impact on the dependent variable, which is the academic performance of adolescent students from dysfunctional families. The arrows in the framework represent the direction of influence between the variables.

Intervening variables, such as family therapy, peer-adolescent relationships, building teacher-student relations, crisis intervention, and school social work, play a crucial role in

influencing the relationship between family dysfunction and academic challenges.

The intervening variables act as mediators or moderators that can affect the strength or direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is defined by poverty, child abuse, domestic violence, alcoholism, single parenthood, and the dependent variable is defined by good grades, average grades, and poor grades (Onyemah & Omoponle, 2022).

Carr, (2019) highlighted the impact of family therapy on improving academic outcomes for students from dysfunctional families. Chen et al., (2020) explored the role of peer-adolescent relationships in mitigating the negative effects of family dysfunction on academic performance. Additionally, research by Dietrich et al., (2021) Has emphasized the importance of strong teacher-student relationships in supporting students facing familial challenges.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The study will focus only on adolescents attending St. John Secondary Schools in Kira Municipality, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations.

The research will rely on self-reported data from adolescents, which may introduce bias and affect the validity of the results.

The study may be limited by the availability of resources, time constraints, and access to participants from dysfunctional families.

The research may be limited by the willingness of adolescents to disclose their challenges and experiences related to their dysfunctional families.

Delimitations

The study will specifically focus on academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families, excluding other aspects of their lives.

The research will be conducted within St. John Secondary Schools in Kira Municipality, providing a specific and localized perspective on the topic.

The study will only include adolescents between a certain age range, excluding younger or older individuals from the research.

The research will primarily focus on qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, to explore the experiences of adolescents in depth.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review aims to identify the specific academic difficulties faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families; examine how the identified academic challenges are affecting children from dysfunctional families in school, and examine how the identified academic challenges affecting children from dysfunctional families are being addressed.

2.1 Specific academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families

Adolescents from dysfunctional families face a myriad of academic challenges that can significantly impact their educational outcomes. Cross et al., (2018) suggests that these challenges often manifest as lower academic performance, increased absenteeism, and reduced motivation compared to their peers from more stable family backgrounds. Gerard & Booth, (2015) also highlighted the prevalence of academic struggles, such as difficulty concentrating in class, poor study habits, and lack of academic support at home, among adolescents from dysfunctional families.

Despite the existing research, there remain gaps in understanding the intricate ways in which specific family dynamics contribute to these academic challenges. For instance, Nansubuga, (2019) found that the type of family dysfunction, such as parental substance abuse or domestic violence, can have varying impacts on students' academic outcomes. Further exploration is necessary to uncover the underlying mechanisms that link these family dynamics to

academic achievement, absenteeism patterns, and motivation levels among adolescents.

Moreover, Pingley, (2017) emphasized the importance of considering the socio-emotional impact of family dysfunction on academic performance. Factors such as stress, anxiety, and trauma stemming from dysfunctional family environments can significantly affect students' ability to focus, engage in learning, and seek academic help when needed. Understanding the interplay of these emotional factors with academic challenges is crucial for developing targeted interventions that address the holistic needs of students from dysfunctional families.

Gerard & Booth, (2015) revealed that adolescents from dysfunctional families may lack consistent support systems, both academically and emotionally, which further exacerbates their academic struggles. The absence of stable relationships with caring adults, limited access to resources for academic assistance, and a sense of disconnection from the school community can contribute to a cycle of underachievement and disengagement from learning. Exploring how these external factors interact with family dynamics to shape students' academic experiences is vital for designing effective interventions that address their unique needs.

A comprehensive investigation into the ways in which specific family dynamics influence academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families is essential for developing targeted support strategies that promote academic success and well-being among this vulnerable population. More research is needed to delve deeper into the complex interplay of factors contributing to low academic achievement, absenteeism patterns, and motivation levels, ultimately enhancing our understanding of

how to effectively support these students in their academic journey.

2.2 How the identified academic challenges are affecting children in schools

The impact of academic challenges on children from dysfunctional families extends far beyond just their academic performance, influencing various aspects of their overall well-being in the school environment. Existing research has demonstrated the wide-reaching effects of academic struggles on children's self-esteem, peer relationships, and their overall school experience. Tiwari, (2022) highlighted how low grades and academic difficulties can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem among children from dysfunctional families, impacting their confidence and sense of worth in the school setting.

Lee, (2022) has shown that absenteeism, a common consequence of academic challenges, not only affects students' academic progress but also hinders their ability to form positive relationships with peers and teachers. Children who are frequently absent from school may experience social isolation, struggle to integrate into social groups, and face challenges in building meaningful connections within the school community. This lack of social support can further exacerbate their academic difficulties and emotional well-being.

Barmaki et al., (2023) emphasized the detrimental effects of a lack of motivation on children's overall school experience. Children who lack intrinsic motivation to succeed academically may exhibit disengagement from learning, apathy towards school activities, and a diminished sense of purpose within the educational setting. These motivational struggles can not only impair their academic

performance but also impact their sense of belonging and connection to the school environment.

While existing studies have shed light on the immediate consequences of academic challenges on children from dysfunctional families, more in-depth research is needed to understand the long-term effects of these struggles and identify effective interventions to mitigate their impacts. For instance, Altawian, (2016) emphasized the importance of exploring the intersectionality of academic challenges with social and emotional development to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the educational experiences of these children. Understanding how academic struggles intersect with broader developmental factors can inform the design of holistic support strategies that address the multifaceted needs of children from dysfunctional families in the school setting.

Therefore, further research is essential to explore the multifaceted impacts of academic challenges on children's self-esteem, peer relationships, and overall school experience, ultimately guiding the development of tailored interventions that promote academic success and holistic well-being among this vulnerable population.

2.3 How the identified academic challenges affecting children from dysfunctional families are being addressed

Efforts to address academic challenges among children from dysfunctional families have seen significant advancements in recent years, with a focus on implementing collaborative partnerships, counseling services, academic support programs, and trauma-informed practices. These strategies aim to provide comprehensive support to students, addressing both their academic struggles and the underlying emotional issues that may be contributing to their difficulties. While these approaches have

shown promise in enhancing students' academic and emotional well-being, ongoing research is necessary to evaluate their effectiveness and scalability in diverse educational settings.

Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, (2015) emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships between schools, families, community organizations, and mental health professionals in addressing the complex needs of students from dysfunctional families. By fostering strong collaborations and coordination among these stakeholders, schools can provide a network of support that ensures students receive holistic assistance tailored to their individual circumstances.

Furthermore, Downey & Crummy, (2022) highlighted the pivotal role of counseling services in supporting children's mental health and academic success. School counselors play a crucial role in providing emotional guidance, crisis intervention, and academic planning to students experiencing academic challenges due to family dysfunction. By incorporating mental health support into academic interventions, schools can address the emotional well-being of students and create a supportive environment conducive to learning.

Moreover, the implementation of trauma-informed practices, as emphasized in the work of Lu et al., (2021), is crucial in addressing the underlying emotional trauma experienced by children from dysfunctional families. By creating a school environment that is sensitive to students' past experiences and responsive to their emotional needs, educators can help create a safe and supportive space for learning, fostering resilience and academic progress.

While these interventions hold promise in supporting children from dysfunctional families, gaps exist in evaluating their

sustainability, cultural relevance, and long-term impact on students' academic success and resilience. Further research is needed to assess the effectiveness of these strategies across diverse settings, ensure their alignment with cultural contexts, and explore their lasting impact on students' well-being and academic outcomes. Understanding the nuances of implementing these interventions in real-world educational settings is essential for improving their efficacy and promoting the academic success of children from dysfunctional families.

Chapter summary

This literature review delves into the intricate interplay between family dysfunction and academic challenges faced by children, shedding light on the complexity of these issues. Key knowledge gaps identified in the literature encompass the necessity for a deeper exploration of family-specific factors that impact academic outcomes, a holistic understanding of the multi-dimensional consequences of academic challenges, and an assessment of the effectiveness of existing interventions. Debates within the literature revolve around the diverse approaches taken to address academic challenges and the inconsistencies in implementing these strategies across different educational contexts.

The primary research gaps highlighted in existing studies pertain to the lack of in-depth investigations into the unique dynamics of individual families, limited longitudinal research on the outcomes of intervention efforts, and a paucity of studies examining the intersectionality of academic challenges with broader developmental domains. The proposed study aims to bridge these gaps by meticulously examining the distinct influences of family dysfunction on academic performance, assessing the efficacy of intervention strategies, and offering valuable insights for the

design of personalized support mechanisms that optimize students' educational experiences and outcomes within the school milieu.

By addressing these research gaps and building upon the existing body of literature, this study endeavors to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interconnections between family dysfunction and academic challenges, ultimately paving the way for more effective and tailored interventions to support the academic success and well-being of children from dysfunctional families.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the study research design, population, study area, sample size determination, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data quality control, data collection procedure, and data management and analysis that were used in the study.

3.2 Study area

The study was conducted at St. John Secondary School in Kira Municipality.

3.3 Study design

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional study design, aiming to assess the academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in St. John Secondary Schools, Kira Municipality. Through qualitative methods such as interviews, the study gathered information on academic performance, behavior, and other factors related to the impact of family dysfunction on students' educational experiences academic performance. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods offered a more comprehensive understanding of the academic challenges faced by these adolescents, providing valuable insights for developing targeted interventions and support programs.

3.4 Population of study

The population of study consisted of adolescents attending St. John Secondary Schools in Kira Municipality who come from dysfunctional families. Specially, the study targeted students in s.1 to S.6, aged 12 to 18 years who were enrolled in the selected school. Adolescents from dysfunctional families were identified based on predetermined criteria, such as family structure, parental

conflict, substance abuse, domestic violence, neglect, or other indicators of family dysfunction was determined based on a holistic and multidimensional assessment approach that considers various factors contributing to family dysfunction. A holistic and multi-dimensional assessment approach involves considering a person's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and environmental aspects to gain a comprehensive understanding of their well-being and needs. This approach valued the interconnectedness of different aspects of an individual's life and recognizes that issues in one area can affect other areas as well.

3.5 Sample Size Determination

The exact number of students from dysfunctional families was unknown, the study adopted a sample size of 45 students with which the researcher fully exhausted the study objectives

3.6 Sampling techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation from different classes in St. John Secondary School, Kira Municipality. This method involved dividing the student population into a distinct strata based on class levels (S.1, S.2, S.3, S.4, S.5, and S.6) to ensure proportional representations. Samples will then be drawn according to strata such that the students be drawn from each stratum.

To identify students from dysfunctional families, a screening questionnaire was administered to all selected participants. The questionnaire included items related to family structure, parental conflict, substance abuse, domestic violence, neglect, or other indicators of family dysfunction. Students meeting predetermined

criteria for family dysfunction were categorized as coming from dysfunctional families and included in the study.

Class	Total number of students	Number of students sampled
S.1	161	8
S.2	150	8
S.3	113	8
S.4	147	8
S.5	95	7
S.6	70	6
Total	735	45

Table 1: Showing sample size distribution

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data was collected through individual interviews primarily conducted with students selected from higher classes, specifically S.4, S.5, and S.6. These students were chosen for individual interviews as they were deemed capable of offering more detailed and nuanced responses due to their maturity and advanced cognitive abilities. An average of 7 students was sampled from each of these classes, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

Additionally, focus group discussions were organized with students predominantly from lower classes, namely S.1, S.2, and S.3. These lower-class students were selected for focus group discussions to encourage peer interaction and collaboration in sharing their perspectives on the study's focus areas. The objective of conducting focus group discussions with lower-class students

was to foster group dynamics, encourage collective insights, and capture a range of viewpoints. The number of focus groups and participants in each group was structured to promote effective communication and meaningful dialogue. The researcher formed 2 focus groups with 4 students in each class from the lower classes. Furthermore, to ensure gender representation and inclusivity in data collection, efforts were made to maintain a balanced representation of male and female students across both the individual interviews and focus group discussions.

Key informant interviews with senior female and male teachers who play a significant role in the academic and social environment of the school. These key informants provide unique perspectives on the experiences and challenges faced by students, offer insights into the school's dynamics, and contribute valuable information pertaining to the study's focus on academic performance and well-being.

This mixed-methods approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families, combining quantitative data from the questionnaires with qualitative insights from interviews and focus group discussions.

3.8 Data Quality Control

To ensure data quality, the researcher conducted pre-test for the questionnaires to be used in the study, data entry was double-checked for accuracy, and data cleaning performed.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure involved obtaining permission from the university, identifying the school and classes to be included in the study, obtaining consent from the school administration,

teachers, and students of the school, administering questionnaire, conducting interviews. Collecting data on academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families while ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

3.10 Data management and analysis

The data collected will be entered into statistical software, specifically SPSS, for analysis. The researcher will be responsible for data coding and cleaning to ensure accuracy and consistency in the dataset.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews will undergo thematic analysis to uncover key themes and patterns related to the academic challenges experienced by students from dysfunctional families. Similarly, data from focus group discussions will also be subjected to thematic analysis to explore in-depth the shared experiences and perspectives of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Demographic statistics

Variable	Variable category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	12 – 14 years	12	26.67
	15 – 17 years	19	42.22
	18 and above	14	31.11
Gender	Male	21	46.67
	Female	24	53.33
Class	S.1	8	17.8
	S.2	8	17.8
	S.3	8	17.8
	S.4	8	17.8
	S.5	7	15.5
	S.6	6	13.3
Religious denomination	Catholic	10	22.22%
	Anglican	15	33.33%
	Muslim	12	26.67%
	Others	8	17.78%

Table 2: Demographic characteristics

From the study, 26.67% of the participants were in the age group of 12-14 years, 42.22% in the age group of 15-17 years, 31.11% of the participants are 18 years old and above. Based on gender,

56.67% of the participants were male as compared to 53.33% female. Each class (S.1 to S.6) had an equal representation of 17.8% of the participants, except for S.5 which had 15.5% and S.6 which had 13.3%. 22.22% of the participants were Catholic, 33.33% of Anglican, 26.67% Muslim, and 17.78% of the participants belong to other religious denominations.

4.2 Academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families

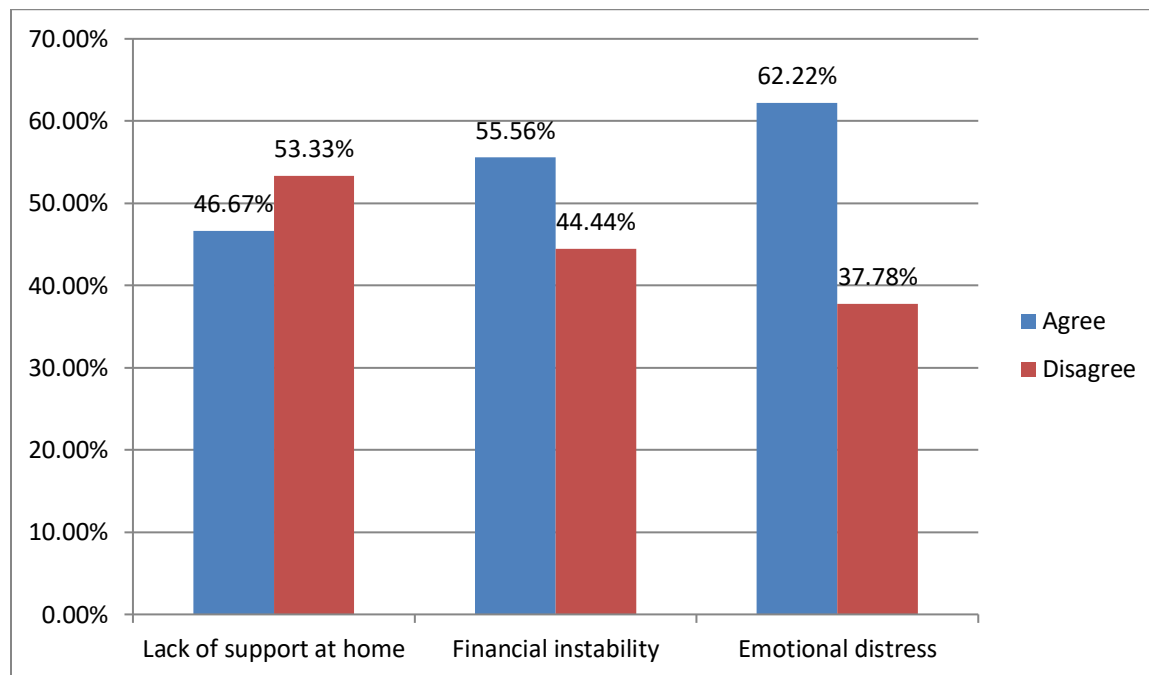


Figure 2: Academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families

From the study, a number of academic challenges faced by students from dysfunctional families were identified and these included lack of support at home due to the family situation, whereby 46.67% of the students admitted to having been affected by lack of family support. 55.55% of the students identified financial instability due to their family situation as an academic challenge they were facing, and finally 62.22% of the students

identified emotional distress as an academic challenge they were facing due to their family situation.

4.3 How the identified academic challenges are affecting the academic performance of children from dysfunctional families at school

Variable	Category	Percentages
How would you rate your current academic performance	Good	26.67%
	Very good	13.33%
	Poor	40%
	Very poor	20%
Do you feel that your family situation has negatively affected your grades?	Yes	60%
	No	40%

Figure 3: How the academic challenges are affecting academic performance of children from dysfunctional families

From the study on how the academic challenges identified were affecting academic performance of children from dysfunctional families, 26.67% of the students rated their then academic performance as being good, whereas 13.33% rated it being very good, 40% rated it poor and 20% rated their academic performance being very poor. Furthermore, 60% of the students said they felt that their family situation had negatively affected their grades, whereas 40% said their family situation had no negative impact on their grades.

4.4 How the identified academic challenges are being addressed

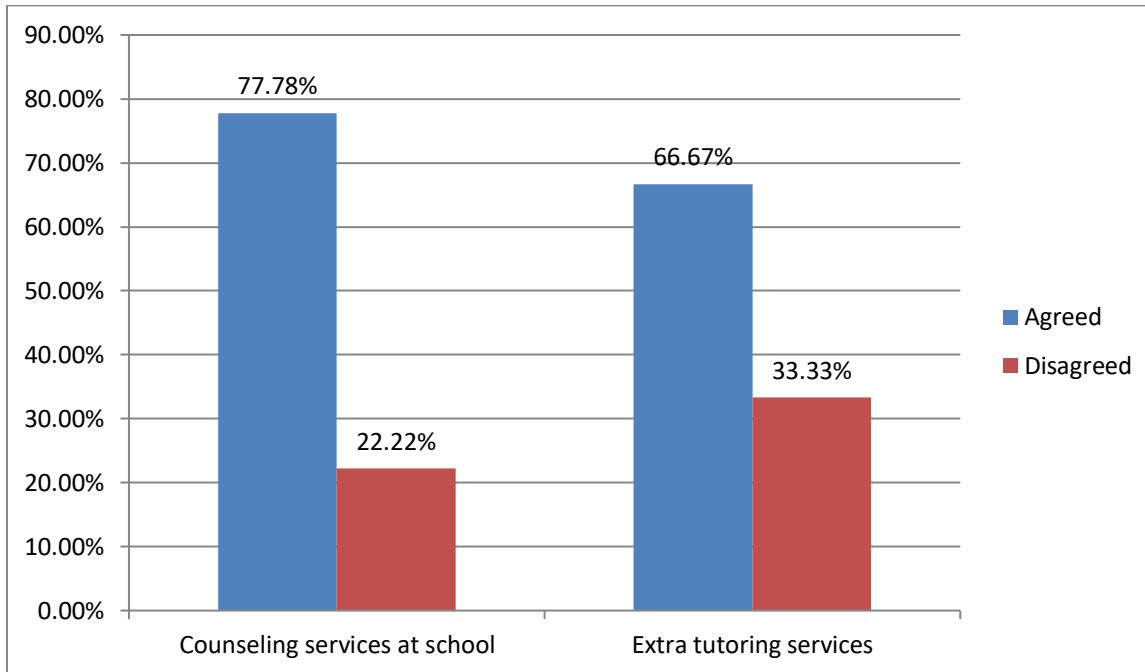


Figure 4: How the identified academic challenges are being addressed

From the study, majority (77.78%) of the students said that there were counseling services at the school to help students that were being academically affected by their family situation, and also a vast majority (66.67%) of the students also said that the school was offering extra tutoring services for students affected by their family situation.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Demographic statistics

The demographic statistics of the participants in this study provide valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample population. The distribution of age groups, gender, class representation, and religious affiliations among the participants offers a comprehensive overview of the diverse backgrounds of the individuals involved in the research. Understanding these demographic factors is crucial for contextualizing the findings and drawing meaningful conclusions about the academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families.

5.1.2 Academic Challenges Faced by Adolescents from Dysfunctional Families

The study identified several significant academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families. Lack of parental support was reported by 46.67% of students, while 55.55% identified financial instability and 62.22% highlighted emotional distress as major academic obstacles. The findings of the study align with that of a study by Roksa & Kinsley, (2019) that highlighted the critical role of parental support in fostering academic success among students. Lack of parental support can lead to decreased motivation, lower self-esteem, and reduced academic engagement, ultimately hindering students' educational outcomes. Similarly, Finegood & Blair, (2017) Underscored the significance of financial stability in shaping students' academic experiences. Financial instability creates barriers to accessing educational resources, participating in extracurricular activities, and maintains a conducive learning environment, all of which impede academic achievement. The findings of the current study

therefore align with existing literatures on the impact of parental support, financial instability, and emotional distress as significant academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions, including counseling support, financial assistance, and mental health services, is essential for promoting academic success and well-being among this vulnerable population.

5.1.3 Impact of academic challenges on the academic performance of children

The study sheds light on the significant impact of academic challenges on the academic performance of children from dysfunctional families. The findings reveal that a substantial proportion of students perceive their family situation as negatively affecting their grades. This sentiment is reflected in the high percentage (60%) of students who reported feeling that their family situation has had a detrimental impact on their academic performance. In terms of self-assessment of academic performance, a noteworthy percentage of students rated their academic performance as poor (40%) or very poor (20%). This suggests that a considerable portion of students from dysfunctional families are struggling academically, which may be attributed to the challenges they face within their family environment.

The study's results echo the findings of previous research conducted by Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, (2015), which have demonstrated the adverse effects of family dysfunction on students' academic performance. These scholars have highlighted the role of family dynamics, lack of parental support, and emotional distress in shaping students' educational outcomes.

Additionally, research by Roksa & Kinsley, (2019) has underscored the negative impact of family-related stressors, such as financial instability, on academic achievement. Financial challenges within dysfunctional families can create barriers to academic success, limiting access to resources and opportunities necessary for thriving academically.

5.1.4 Strategies to Address Academic Challenges

The study delves into how academic challenges faced by children from dysfunctional families are being addressed within the school environment. The findings indicate that a significant number of students have access to support services aimed at mitigating the impact of their family situation on their academic performance. Specifically, 77.78% of students reported the availability of counseling services at the school to assist students dealing with academic challenges stemming from their family circumstances. Moreover, the study reveals that a substantial majority (66.67%) of students mentioned the provision of extra tutoring services at the school for students affected by their family situation. These support mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing the unique needs of students from dysfunctional families and providing them with the necessary tools to overcome academic obstacles.

The utilization of counseling services and extra tutoring programs reflects proactive efforts on the part of the school to support the academic well-being of students facing family-related challenges. These interventions align with recommendations from scholars such as Marino et al., (2020), who emphasize the importance of targeted support strategies in addressing the academic repercussions of family dysfunction. Research by Dettmers et al., (2019) has highlighted the positive impact of counseling services

and academic support programs on students' academic performance and psychosocial well-being. These scholars underscore the role of school-based interventions in fostering resilience and academic success among students facing adversity at home. Similarly, Gueldner et al., (2020) recognized the significance of tailored academic support services, such as tutoring, in addressing the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These interventions can help bridge the academic gap created by family-related challenges and empower students to achieve their full potential.

5.2 Conclusions

A substantial proportion of students perceive their family situation as negatively affecting their grades, with a notable percentage rating their academic performance as poor or very poor. These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to address the academic needs of students from dysfunctional families.

The study also reveals that school-based interventions, such as counseling services and extra tutoring programs, play a crucial role in addressing the academic challenges faced by students affected by their family situation. The availability of these support services reflects proactive efforts by schools to assist students in overcoming academic obstacles and fostering their academic success.

5.3 Recommendations

Schools should continue to enhance and expand counseling services and tutoring programs to provide comprehensive support for students facing family-related challenges.

Schools should strive to establish partnerships with families to create a supportive environment for students.

Educators should receive training and professional development opportunities to effectively support students from dysfunctional families.

Schools should implement a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions aimed at supporting students from dysfunctional families.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello

My name is Eva Kisiibo, a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing a bachelor's degree in Social Work and Social Administration, and writing a research paper as a requirement for the award of the degree. I am conducting a survey to assess the academic challenges faced by adolescents from dysfunctional families in St. John secondary school, Kira municipality. You have been selected randomly to provide information. This interview will take about 15 minutes. The information provided will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with any other third person. My hope is that you will participate in this survey since your views are really important to the success of this study, and if have any questions you may ask them now.

Otherwise, may I start?

(Respondent either permits or fails to permit)

Section A: Respondent characteristics

Instructions: please tick the most appropriate answer and where necessary fill in the answer in the space provided.

SECTION A. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS			
QN	Description	Responses	Tick
Section A. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS			
Qn. 1	Respondent Age	12 – 14 years	
		15– 17 years	
		18 and above	
Qn. 2	Respondent	Male	

	Gender	Female	
Qn.3	What class are you in?	S.1	
		S.2	
		S.3	
		S.4	
		S.5	
		S.6	
Qn.4	Religious denomination	Catholic	
		Anglican	
		Moslem	
		Others	

Section B: Family Background

5. Have you experienced any form of dysfunction in your family, such as divorce, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc.?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. How have these family issues affected your academic studies?

Section B: Academic Challenges

7. What specific academic challenges do you face as a result of your family situation? (E.g. lack of support at home, financial instability, emotional distress, etc.)

8. How do these challenges impact your ability to focus and perform well in school?

Section C: Academic Performance

9. How would you rate your current academic performance?

- a. Good
- b. Very good
- c. Poor
- d. Very poor

10. Do you feel that your family situation has negatively affected your grades?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section D: Support and Resources

11. Are there any support systems in place at school to help students from dysfunctional families overcome academic challenges? (E.g. counseling services, extra tutoring, etc.)

12. Have you utilized any of these resources? If so, how have they helped you?

Section E: Coping Mechanisms

13. How do you cope with the academic challenges caused by your family situation?

14. Do you feel that these coping mechanisms are effective in helping you succeed academically?

Thank you for your time