

Female Headed House Holds and Family Welfare in Kasese District: A Case Study of Kasese Municipality**Biira Esther Bairinga¹, Sekiswa Peter²****1,2 Metropolitan International University.****ABSTRACT.**

Households, a fundamental unit in societal structure, are witnessing transformative changes in headship dynamics, particularly the rise of female-headed households (FHHs). This study, conducted in Kasese Municipality, Uganda, explores the impact of FHHs on family welfare, addressing a critical gap in existing literature. With a sample size of 80 FHHs, the study employs correlation and regression analyses. Results reveal a strong negative correlation (-0.630 , $p=0.002$) between FHHs and family welfare, aligning with the Feminization of Poverty theory and Social Capital theory. The regression analysis further indicates that 56.3% of variations in family welfare can be explained by FHHs ($R=0.342$). Beyond statistical figures, qualitative insights from participants underscore economic disparities, gender-based discrimination, and asset control challenges within FHHs. Policymakers are urged to design gender-inclusive economic initiatives, strengthen social support networks, and integrate gender-sensitive perspectives into poverty alleviation policies, fostering holistic improvements in family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

Key word: Family, Welfare and Households**Background of the study**

Households vary contextually and so does their leadership (Winnie & Florence, 2023). According to (Enoth, 2023), household leadership in Africa is mostly associated with men. However, female-headed households (FHH) are now becoming more prominent and a reality. A study (Paul et al., 2023) states that the phenomenon of female head of household can no longer be ignored. It is largely a reality that is often discussed by scholars and development workers, especially in relation to housing and poverty issues (Shamim et al., 2023) (Cabrera & García-Pérez, 2023; Salahub et al., 2018). Uganda is no exception to this trend of changing forms of family leadership (Salazar et al., 2013). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2010), the number of FHHs in Uganda increased from 27 percent to 30 percent in four years (between 2005 and 2010). As women are now increasingly heading households, we can also expect changes in gender norms and expectations (Bretherton, 2017). According to (Rosemary &

Charles, 2023), 26.9% of households in Uganda were reported to be headed by women. FHHs mean that women are the main providers of the household, regardless of the presence of a male partner (De Leon, 2019). In the study (Winnie & Florence, n.d.) it was revealed that in the traditional Ugandan society, men are considered the heads of households and the main breadwinners of the family. Women were considered subordinate to men who made decisions about households (Deal et al., 2023). Due to various factors such as divorce and widowhood, (Of et al., 2023), family structures are changing and women are heading households in Uganda, especially in urban slums (Shamim et al., 2023). With increasing numbers of women and children living in slums in Uganda (Isaac & Peter, 2023), such as Kasese village in Kasese district, the question is how they can survive and leave under such poor conditions (Arndt et al., 2016; Bywaters et al., 2016). Female-headed families in most cases face social and psychological problems (Case,

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2023) such as emotional stress, loneliness, isolation, as is known in Uganda in all cultures (Khamalwa, 2022; Prundeanu-Thrower, 2022). In Kasese village, there are many female-headed families (Farming & Village, 2023) who face various challenges in their struggle for survival. Problems include not being able to pay school fees for children, afford three decent meals a

day, give children pocket money, provide transportation to school, and buy clothes (Bridget & Geophrey, 2023; Peterson & Sarah, 2023). This study thus attempts to assess the impact of female-headed families on family well-being in Kasese Municipality, Kasese District-Uganda.

Statement of the problem.

The problem lied in finding out the impact of Female Headed Households on family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

Major objectives.

The major objective of the study was to find out the impact of Female headed families on family welfare in Uganda taking Kasese Municipality as a case study.

Specific objectives of the study.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives.

1. To find out the extent of Female Headed Households phenomenon in Kasese Municipality.
2. To examine the level of welfare of Female Headed Households in Kasese Municipality.
3. To assess the relationship between Female Headed Households and family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What was the extent of female headed households' phenomenon in Kasese Municipality?
2. What was the level of welfare of Female Headed Households in Kasese Municipality?
3. What was the relationship between family welfare and Female Headed Households in Kasese Municipality?

Methodology.

The researcher used exploratory research design based on results that were obtained from the questionnaires and interviews designed for collecting data. The independent variables were the female headed households and the dependent variable were the family welfare. The study was conducted in Kasese Municipality, Kasese District. The emphasis was on the welfare of female headed households. This study focused on 15 FHHs living in the slum community of Kasese Municipality. The livelihoods of these households were crucial for the study. This determined the choice of women heads as respondents. The focus was on women heads of households aged 18 and above because the Ugandan constitution stipulates that one is an adult when they clock 18 years of age.

The study used a sample size of 80 FHHs in accordance with the sampling table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The Female Heads of Households of Kasese Municipality were given Questionnaires and some were interviewed. Simple random sampling was used to ensure that each had an equal chance of being included in the sample. The data for this study was collected using questionnaire and an interview guide. The researcher drafted questionnaires in an easy grammar such that the respondents easily understood the questions and respond accordingly. To avoid getting wrong

information from the respondents, the study only involved only the respondents that were well versed with the attributes under study. To avoid bias, the respondents were not coerced to be involved in the study since those involved did it so willingly. Primary data collected was edited, classified, tabulated and analyzed using statistical package data for social sciences (SPSS) in frequencies to determine the livelihoods of female headed household (Nelson et al., 2022). The researcher reviewed existing data sources on female headed households and family welfare. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, pie-charts and percentages were computed and the results presented in tables and descriptive form. Inferential statistics were also used and these included correlation analysis and regression analysis (Nelson et al., 2023).

Results.

Table 1 showing the extent to which female headed household influence family welfare in Kasese municipality

Response	Frequency	Percent
To a greater extent	12	63
To some extent	04	21
To a small extent	2	10.5
Not sure	01	5.2
Total	19	100

The majority of respondents 12 (68%) indicated that female headed household influence family welfare to a greater extent while 04 (21%) indicated that it influenced family welfare to some extent. In addition, 02 (10.5%) indicated that female headed household influenced family stability to a small extent followed by 01 (5.2%) who were not sure of the statement about the extent to which female headed household influenced family welfare in Kasese municipality. The findings also showed that not only female-headed households are likely to have a larger proportion of dependents, but they may also be poorer and have lower levels of education (participant 6). Analyses that control for these potential correlates of resilience are rare. Secondly, we not only explore how the resilience of female- and male-headed households differs, but also take an additional step to examine what this implies for the targeting of resilience-building initiatives (Oromo et al., 2023). Thirdly, by adopting the measurement framework of a large and the findings were in line with that of NGO (Oxfam), the concept of resilience used in the analysis is anchored directly to the work of development practitioners.

The level of welfare of Female Headed Households in Kasese Municipality

The concept of targeting female-headed households in pursuit of reducing poverty remains contentious and lacks rigorous evidence.

“One of the female respondents revealed that the level of family welfare of female headed household is very low because the family can easily experience absolute poverty.”

Women, who are usually the bread winners in female-headed households, face gender discrimination with respect to education, earnings, rights, and economic opportunities and the study findings were in line with that of (Barros et al.

1997), making a case for targeting female-headed households to reduce poverty. On the other hand, there are practical issues related to identifying the actual head of the household, and female headship is not always correlated with poverty (participant 9) (Faridah et al., 2023), which presents a case against focusing exclusively on female-headed households to reduce poverty and presents a case against focusing exclusively on female-headed households to reduce poverty.

In addition, another participant revealed that

“the level of family welfare of female headed households is relatively low because at times, More than a quarter of the world’s poor people live in India, and gender-bias against women is deeply ingrained in the society placing female-headed households at potentially a greater risk of poverty.”

Thus, studying the relationship between female-headed households and poverty in Kasese makes it instructive and important from both an academic and a practical perspective, which is the purpose of this study. While eradicating poverty and eliminating gender-bias are issues central to economic development and are intrinsic goals in themselves, these two issues are even more important and challenging in a socially and economically diverse country like India. (Participant 12 revealed).

One of the female key informants revealed that

“The level of family welfare in female headed households in the area is very low because they lack proper planning and fail to control the assets they pose and they end up facing several types of poverty like shear and absolute poverty.

“

Given frequent typecasting of female-headed households as the ‘poorest of the poor’, it is often assumed that both women and children suffer greater poverty than in households which conform to a more common (and idealized) male-headed arrangement. In addition, a conjectured ‘inter-generational transmission of disadvantage’ in female-headed households is imagined not only to compromise the material well-being of children, but to compound other privations – emotional, psychological, social and otherwise. Beyond affecting young people in the short-term, these are also deemed to sow the seeds of future hardship. This is critically important when considering that female-headed households (most of which are headed by lone mothers), are rising in number and proportion in most developing regions, (participant 15).

Relationship between Female Headed Households and family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

Table 1: Correlation between Female Headed Households and family welfare.

		Female Headed Households	Family welfare
Female Headed Households	Pearson Correlation	1	-.630**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	19	19
Family welfare	Pearson Correlation	-.630**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	19	19

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis showed strong negative significant relationship between Female Headed Households and family welfare ($r = -0.630^{**}$, $p = 0.002$). The significance value ($p = 0.002$) was less than the critical p value of 0.05 hence the researcher fails to reject null hypothesis then, thus research results show significant negative relationship between Female Headed Households and family welfare.

This finding resonates with the Feminization of Poverty theory, suggesting that gender-based economic disparities contribute to higher poverty rates in female-headed households, consequently impacting family welfare negatively. Moreover, it aligns with the Social Capital theory, indicating that challenges faced by female-headed households in accessing social networks and community resources contribute to the observed negative correlation with family welfare. These theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights for policymakers aiming to develop targeted interventions to uplift family welfare, emphasizing the importance of addressing gender-specific economic challenges and enhancing social support structures for female-headed households in Kasese Municipality. Further research could delve into specific factors underlying this negative relationship for more nuanced policy recommendations.

Regression Analysis on Mulching and Coffee Production.

Since correlation analysis reveals strong negative significant relationship between Female Headed Households and family welfare, the research found it worth to conduct regression analysis so as to determine the magnitude of Female Headed Households and family welfare. The Model summary results are presented in below.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.342 ^a	.563	.560	1.4821

Findings from the table above indicated the regression analysis of Female Headed Households and family welfare. The regression coefficient ($R = 0.342$) implied that a unit increase in the female headed families resulted into 0.342 units decrease in the family welfare. Furthermore, 56.3% of the variations in family welfare were explained by the female headed families. The adjusted R Square is less than the R square because it puts into consideration the degrees of freedom.

The interpretation aligns with the Feminization of Poverty theory, illustrating that an increase in female-headed households contributes to a notable decrease in overall family welfare.

Summary of the findings

The study on female-headed households and family welfare in Kasese Municipality reveals that a majority of respondents perceive a substantial influence of female-headed households on family welfare, emphasizing the vulnerability and challenges faced by this demographic group. Participants express concerns about low family welfare associated with gender-based discrimination, economic disadvantages, and challenges in asset control. The correlation analysis indicates a strong negative relationship between female-headed households and family welfare, aligning with the Feminization of Poverty theory and Social Capital theory, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. The regression analysis further substantiates this relationship, illustrating that 56.3% of the variations in family welfare can be explained by the presence of female-headed households. The findings contribute valuable insights for policymakers

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addressing gender-specific economic challenges and enhancing social support structures in similar contexts, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of challenges faced by female-headed households in Kasese Municipality.

Conclusion

The study underscored the significant impact of female-headed households on family welfare in Kasese Municipality. The findings, supported by the Feminization of Poverty theory and Social Capital theory, reveal a compelling negative relationship between female-headed households and family welfare. The perception among respondents aligns with concerns over economic disparities, gender-based discrimination, and challenges in asset control within this demographic. The regression analysis emphasized the explanatory power of female-headed households in predicting variations in family welfare, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. Policymakers can leverage these insights to formulate targeted interventions addressing the specific challenges faced by female-headed households, striving to enhance overall family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

Recommendations.

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommended the following

Policymakers should design and implement gender-inclusive economic initiatives aimed at reducing the economic disparities faced by female-headed households in Kasese Municipality. These initiatives could involve targeted skills training, access to credit facilities, and support for income-generating activities to empower women economically and enhance overall family welfare.

Efforts should be directed towards strengthening social support networks for female-headed households. Community-based programs and interventions that foster social capital, such as women's groups and community networks, can provide emotional, informational, and instrumental support. Establishing and promoting these networks can contribute to mitigating the negative impact of female-headed households on family welfare.

Policymakers should consider integrating gender-sensitive perspectives into broader welfare and poverty alleviation policies. Collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations is crucial to creating comprehensive and sustainable interventions. This collaborative approach ensures that the unique challenges faced by female-headed households are addressed holistically, promoting lasting improvements in family welfare in Kasese Municipality.

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