

**THE RESPONSE OF CHURCH OF UGANDA TO PARENTING PRACTICES
AMONG CHRISTIANS: A CASE OF SELECTED DIOCESES IN WESTERN
UGANDA**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best to my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor any content that has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Abaho Kankuba Tomson', with a large loop at the beginning and a horizontal line extending to the right.


Signature

Date.....**26 August 2025**.....

Abaho Kankuba Tomson

Approval

This thesis has been submitted for approval by the University Supervisors.

Signature: _____  _____ Date 26 August 2025

Rev. Associate Professor Andrew David Omona

Dedication

This research thesis is dedicated to God and my family.

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This dissertation would not have seen the light of the day without God, and the support and of a number of people to whom I would like to pass a word of appreciation.

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Abbreviations

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CVI	Content Validity Index
ECRP	Effective Camp Research Project
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
IMNRC	Institute of Medicine and National Research Council
NASEM	National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
NRC	National Research Council
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children
USDHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
WHO	World Health Organization

Definition of Terms

Christian Family: A family unit that professes and practices Christian faith, with a commitment to raising children according to biblical principles and values. This definition aligns with a theological understanding of the family's role as a primary institution for faith formation as discussed in works on family ministry by scholars such as D'Antonio et al. (1996).

Discipleship: J. Oswald Sanders defines a disciple as “a learner of Jesus who accepts the teaching of his Master, not only in belief but in lifestyle.”¹² This research classifies a disciple as a believer of Jesus Christ who strives to obey the commandments of Christ in all aspects of life.

Ecological Systems Theory: A theoretical framework developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) that examines how an individual's development is influenced by a series of nested environmental systems, including the family (microsystem), the interactions between the family and other institutions like the Church (mesosystem), and the broader community (exosystem).

Exosystem: This system refers to the linkages between a person's immediate context and a social setting in which they do not play an active role. This could include the broader community, government policies, or church-wide diocesan leadership decisions that indirectly affect families.

Faith-Based Interventions: Programs or initiatives led by a religious organization, like the Church, to address social or family issues. Their effectiveness in improving parent-child relationships has been documented in studies such as those by Bartkowski & Xu (2000).

Family Cohesion: The emotional bonding that members have with one another. It describes the degree of closeness or togetherness within a family, as outlined in the Circumplex Model of Family Systems by Olson (1983).

Mesosystem: This system involves the interconnections between two or more microsystems. This thesis focuses on the interaction between the family and the Church, demonstrating how this mesosystem influences the child's development.

Microsystem: In the context of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, this is the immediate environment in which a person lives, such as the family, school, or peer group. For this thesis, the Christian family is a primary component of the microsystem.

Morality of Children: Refers to the development of a child's understanding of right and wrong, shaped by a commitment to Christian values and ethical conduct. This concept is explored in the context of Christian education and moral development theories by scholars like Coles (1997).

Negative parenting: Harsh and punitive parenting is generally conceptualized in research studies as “negative parenting,” because it is thought to be responsible for negative short- and long-term results in children (Ritchie & Buchanan, 2009).

Parenting Practices: The specific behaviours parents use to socialize their children, such as discipline, communication, and teaching. These practices are often categorized into styles, such as authoritative or authoritarian parenting, as defined by Baumrind (1991).

Parents: For this study, the definition of parents refers to the adults primarily responsible for the minor children in the household. This can include biological parents, grandparents, relatives, and adoptive parents.

Positive parenting: Positive parenting is characterized by parents being involved in children’s lives, offering support, promoting autonomy and setting rules (Bosmans et al., 2006).

Qualitative Research: A systematic approach used to gain a deep understanding of social phenomena. It focuses on non-numerical data such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis to uncover underlying meanings and perceptions. This methodology is central to understanding the lived experiences of the participants, as noted in the work of Denzin & Lincoln (2000).

Quantitative Research: An empirical approach that uses statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques to systematically investigate phenomena. It relies on the collection and analysis of numerical data from surveys and questionnaires to identify patterns and relationships, as described by Creswell (2014).

The Church: The Church is the body of believers who gather on a regular basis to live and work together towards the obedience of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20.

Abstract

The research focused on analysing the Church of Uganda's response to parenting practices among Christians in selected dioceses of Western Uganda. The study had three main objectives: examining the parenting practices employed by parents, assessing the effects of these practices on children's morality, and evaluating the church's response to parenting practices. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study utilized surveys and focus group discussions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The research was guided by the following questions: 1) What are the parenting practices employed by Christian families in the selected dioceses? 2) What are the effects of these parenting practices on the morality of children? and 3) What is the response of the Church of Uganda to the prevailing parenting practices? The findings will significantly contribute to the fields of family studies, theology, and child development within the Ugandan context. The findings revealed that various parenting practices were employed by Christian families, with guidance and counseling (17.5%), family devotion (16.6%), and teaching children to respect their elders (11.3%) being the most commonly reported approaches. The study found a significant correlation between these practices and the morality of children, suggesting that the Church's involvement in family life has a tangible impact on moral development. However, the study noted that some households relied on house workers for these tasks, depriving children of the opportunity to participate. Parents influenced their children's behavior by teaching them to attend church services and encouraging participation in community activities. The church responded to parenting practices by organizing youth fellowships and conferences, focusing on topics such as comprehensive Bible knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and spiritual growth. These initiatives aimed to guide youths away from negative behaviours and instill values aligned with Christian principles. Additionally, parents were urged to spend quality time with their children to foster cognitive development and moral growth. Generally, the research highlighted the importance of parental involvement, the significance of church-based interventions, and the need for holistic approaches to parenting that encompass spiritual, moral, and practical aspects of child-rearing.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the whole dissertation and is divided into three parts: the background to the study, literature review, and the methodology. Each of these covers the key aspects that is particular to them in an orderly manner.

1.1.2 Background to the Study

Parenting is one of the most significant and challenging roles in human life. It includes a wide range of ideologies and practices that are all influenced by social, cultural, and economic variables. The techniques and approaches used by parents to raise children change along with society. It is, therefore, essential to comprehend the complexities of parenting techniques in order to create efficient support networks and legislative frameworks that address the various demands of families.

Cultural norms and traditions have historically shaped parenting techniques. For example, collectivist cultures, such as those seen in many African societies, place a strong emphasis on a community-oriented upbringing in which the development of a child is greatly aided by extended family members. Individualist cultures, which are prevalent in Western nations, prioritize the development of children's independence and self-sufficiency.

The notion of parenting styles was first presented by Diana Baumrind's research in the 1960s, which distinguished three primary kinds of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Children raised by authoritarian parents, who are known for their strict expectations and lack of empathy, are frequently obedient but not content. Children of authoritative parenting, which strikes a balance between high expectations and high responsiveness, tend to be more self-disciplined and self-esteeming. Children raised by permissive parents, who place a high value on responsiveness and modest demands, may have difficulties with authority and self-control.

Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth and structure, is consistently linked to positive outcomes in children across various domains, including academic achievement, psychological well-being, and social competence. Parenting habits in the digital age have also been impacted by technology. Both opportunities and challenges are presented by the growing trend of "digital parenting," in which parents utilize technology to keep an eye on and connect with their kids (Cheah et al. 2009). Technology presents questions over screen time and the calibre of online content that is available to youngsters, even as it can improve connectivity and offer educational tools. In order to encourage good digital habits, parents set regular screen time restrictions and participate in co-viewing in addition to recommending balanced media consumption.

Additionally, parenting habits are significantly shaped by socioeconomic variables. Higher socioeconomic class families frequently have greater access to things that improve a child's development, such as co-curricular activities, high-quality day care, and educational materials. On the other hand, families that are struggling financially could feel pressure that influences their parenting style and, in turn, the results that their children achieve. Parents are the primary educators of their children regarding religious beliefs and moral values. By actively engaging in their child's spiritual education, parents instill a strong foundation of faith and ethics. Quality parenting involves encouraging physical activities that enhance motor skills. Providing opportunities for play and physical exercise is essential for a child's growth and physical health (Fadlillah and Fauziah 2022).

Parents are vital external factors in their children's cognitive development. Engaging children in intellectually stimulating activities, such as reading and problem-solving games, can significantly enhance their cognitive abilities (Cascio and Racine 2022). Positive parenting practices are strongly correlated with improved intellectual development in children. Early interactions, conversations, and reading sessions between parents and children contribute to the development of language skills. Children exposed to rich language environments are more likely to develop advanced communication abilities. Positive parenting practices foster a child's socio-emotional growth by providing a secure attachment, emotional support, and teaching empathy and social skills (Dexter and Stacks 2014). Parental involvement in early interventions positively impacts children's social and emotional achievements. Encouraging creative activities such as drawing,

painting, and music helps children explore and develop their artistic talents. This can also contribute to their cognitive and emotional well-being(Gerber, Sharry, and Streek 2016)

Parenting techniques can be seen as particular behaviors intended to achieve specific socialization objectives. Parenting practices are the real actions that parents take with their children, such as giving them a spanking, assisting them with their schoolwork, participating fully in their activities, and so on. This study critically compares different approaches, focusing on the distinction between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. As first defined by Baumrind (1967), authoritative parenting emphasizes a balance of high expectations and high warmth, leading to children who are more self-reliant and socially competent. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which is characterized by strict rules and low warmth, is often associated with more withdrawn and unhappy children. Further research by Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts (1989) and Darling & Steinberg (1993) has reinforced these findings, demonstrating that authoritative parenting is consistently linked to better academic achievement and overall psychosocial adjustment in adolescents. This critical comparison highlights the varied intended outcomes and effectiveness of these techniques, providing a deeper theoretical foundation for the study. Tragic events happened while the first human family was caring for their offspring (Genesis 4:8). Many parents continue to wonder how it is possible for one child to turn out so differently from another, even though they are raised by the same parents, are part of a loving family, are exposed to the same opportunities in life, and have experienced the same events since the first incident involving the two brothers, Cain and Abel(Gregor 2013).

Parenting in early childhood is fundamental to the comprehensive development of children. Religious teachings underscore the significant impact of parental involvement in nurturing various aspects of a child's growth. By providing a supportive, engaging, and nurturing environment, parents ensure their children develop into well-rounded individuals with strong moral values, cognitive abilities, and socio-emotional skills. Parenting in early childhood is crucial for the holistic development of children, encompassing various domains such as religious and moral values, physical-motor skills, cognitive abilities, language, socio-emotional aspects, and artistic talents. Parenting in early childhood is crucial for the holistic development of children, encompassing various domains such as religious and moral values, physical-motor

skills, cognitive abilities, language, socio-emotional aspects, and artistic talents. Modern research consistently highlights the significant influence parents have on their children's development across these areas. Parents are the primary source of religious and moral education for children. They set the foundation for children's understanding of ethical behaviour, spirituality, and cultural values. By modelling moral behaviour and engaging in discussions about values and ethics, parents can instill a strong sense of right and wrong in their children(Fadlillah and Fauziah 2022).

Active parenting that encourages play and physical activities contributes significantly to the development of fine and gross motor skills in children. Providing opportunities for physical exploration and movement helps children develop coordination, strength, and overall physical health. Early language development sets the stage for academic success and effective communication skills later in life. Positive parenting practices foster socio-emotional growth by creating a secure attachment between parent and child. This emotional bond is essential for the child's ability to form healthy relationships. Parents teach children emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills through their interactions and guidance. Encouraging creative expression through art, music, and drama allows children to explore and develop their artistic talents. These activities also support cognitive and emotional development. Artistic activities can boost children's self-esteem, imagination, and problem-solving skills(Setiawan and Nafisah 2022).

Parenting during early childhood is a pivotal factor in the holistic development of children. The active involvement of parents in various developmental domains-religious and moral education, physical activity, cognitive stimulation, language development, socio-emotional growth, and artistic exploration-ensures that children receive a well-rounded upbringing. Modern research consistently underscores the profound impact that engaged and supportive parenting has on a child's overall development, laying a strong foundation for future success and well-being(Fadlillah and Fauziah 2022).

Church leaders often struggle to balance their ministry responsibilities with their parenting roles, leading to guilt, burnout, and feelings of inadequacy. Church responses to parenting practices, therefore, ought to encourage parents to extend grace and forgiveness to themselves and their children, rather than expecting perfection; model healthy relationships with children, demonstrate love, respect, and boundaries; prioritize family time and well-being, recognize that family is a vital ministry; teach parents biblical principles for raising children, such as discipline, instruction, and loving guidance; encourage parents to model and teach spiritual practices like prayer, worship, and scripture reading to their children; help parents navigate the challenges of technology and media use in their homes; offer targeted support and resources for single parents and blended families; and encourage parents to prioritize self-care, rest, and Sabbath observance to avoid burnout (Turner 2020). This research aimed to establish how Church of Uganda responds to parenting practices in the selected dioceses of Western Uganda.

Most churches spend a lot of energy trying to get students to come to programs where they talk about growing as Christian, but they forget the way you grow is by experience(Joiner 2009). The Protestant church today, is full of parents who drag kids and teens of all ages into their designated classrooms and then off to their own on a normal Sunday morning. As they strive to touch the hearts of their young guests, children and youth workers scramble for resources and additional helping hands in the hopes that the lesson will be sufficient to get the youngsters through the week until they see them again the following week. This is sometimes the only Bible class that kids and teenagers get to attend during the week. In the past, weekly schedules included devotional and prayer times for families. Parents were in charge of their children's upbringing and discipline. But things have altered in recent years. Sports, computer games, and long workdays appear to have replaced genuine family times. Parents, grandparents, and tired teachers drive children to and from school, sports, church, and home(Schoeman 2017).

In specific localities or communities within a country, such as urban neighborhoods, or rural villages, the church's response to parenting practices may be shaped by localized factors such as access to resources, community demographics, and cultural traditions. For instance, in the rural areas of Western Uganda where the church serves as a central hub of community life, parenting support programs are integrated into existing church ministries, whereas in an urban setting with

diverse populations, the church collaborates with other organizations to reach families with different needs and backgrounds. This study therefore set out to establish the church's response to parenting practices of selected Dioceses in Western Uganda. It first looked at parenting practices parents employed before making responses to avoid contradictions and replications.

1.1.3 Problem Statement

Parenting among Christian families in Western Uganda is facing significant challenges in the contemporary socio-economic and landscape. Traditionally, parenting in this region has been deeply rooted in communal and religious values, where the extended family and community play a fundamental role in child-rearing. However, the rapid socio-economic changes of recent years have introduced new dynamics that complicate these established practices. While previous studies by scholars such as (Deininger & Okidi, 2003) and (Mieszczanski, 2018) have explored parenting in Uganda from a general sociological or developmental perspective, and reports like The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2018) have provided broad data, they have had a limited focus on the specific role of the Church of Uganda as a key stakeholder. My thesis specifically fills this gap by providing a targeted analysis of the Church's practical and theological response, thereby building upon previous work by offering a unique and necessary institutional perspective. This gap persists amidst evolving societal norms, cultural shifts, and changing family dynamics. The lack of comprehensive research and assessment hampers the ability of the church to provide tailored, evidence-based guidance and support to parents, potentially hindering the promotion of positive parenting outcomes and the fostering of healthy family relationships within the church community. In light of this, a study was undertaken to establish Church of Uganda response to parenting practices among Christians of selected Dioceses in Western Uganda.

1.1.4 Purpose of the Study/General objective

The purpose of the study was to explore the response of the church in supporting families and promoting positive parenting practices within the community.

1.1.5 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were: -

- i) To investigate the parenting practices employed by parents in upbringing of children among the Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda.
- ii) To examine the effects of parenting practices employed by parents in upbringing of children among the Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda
- iii) To examine the response of the church to parenting practices among Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda.

1.1.6 Research Questions

- a) What were the parenting practices employed by parents/guardians in the upbringing of children among Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda?
- b) What were the effects of parenting practices on children's morality among Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda?
- c) What has been the church's response on enhancing parenting practices among Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda?

1.1.7 Scope of the study

1.1.7.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in the four Dioceses of: Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro-Kitara and Rwenzori all found in Western Uganda. These dioceses were chosen because they were the original dioceses before each was broken up into smaller dioceses. Also, religion plays a significant role in the lives of many people in Uganda, including the people in Western Uganda. The church often serves as a central institution within communities, providing spiritual guidance, social support, and community services. Therefore, studying the church's response to parenting practices in this context can shed light on the intersection of religion, culture, and family dynamics.

Also, findings from the study conducted in selected Dioceses of Western Uganda may have broader relevance and applicability to other regions within Uganda and similar contexts elsewhere. By studying parenting practices and church responses in a diverse setting, researchers can identify common themes, challenges, and best practices that may be relevant across different cultural and religious contexts.

1.1.7.2 Content scope

This study aimed to explore the church's involvement in supporting and influencing parenting behaviors within Christian families in Western Uganda. The study has three key objectives: 1) examining the parenting practices employed by parents in Christian families, including disciplinary techniques, communication styles, and value transmission, 2) assessing the impact of these parenting practices on children's behavior, well-being, academic achievement, and overall development, and investigating the role of the church in influencing and supporting parenting practices, including the provision of guidance, resources, and programs related to parenting education, family counseling, and moral and spiritual development.

1.1.7.3 Time scope

The study looked at a period of 20 years starting from 2003 to 2023. This time period was chosen because it covers a significant period of growth, challenges, and changes within the Church of Uganda. The period allows for an examination of the Church's response to global issues such as homosexuality, parenting practices, gender equality, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1.8 Significance of the study

Studying the church's response to parenting practices has several significant implications:

This study will provide valuable insights and shed light on various issues related to parenting practices within Christian families in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda:

- a) The study provides a thorough grasp of the techniques, tactics, and approaches utilized in child-rearing by looking into the parenting practices utilized by parents in Christian homes. This knowledge is crucial for recognizing good parenting techniques and situations that call for assistance or direction.
- b) The study looked at how various parenting styles affected the behavior, general development, and well-being of the kids. This analysis offered insightful data regarding the ways in which different parenting practices and strategies support children's development.
- c) The study's findings have aided in identifying common demands and obstacles experienced by parents raising their children in Christian homes by examining parenting practices and their results. This covers difficulties with communication, discipline, passing down values, and striking a balance between conventional and contemporary parenting standards.
- d) The purpose of the study was to examine how the church supports good parenting practices and responds to the needs of Christian families. This investigation focuses on the tools, plans, and services provided by the church to help parents fulfill their responsibilities. These include family counseling, parenting classes, and spiritual direction.
- e) The study helps to foster happy parenting in Christian families by illuminating good parenting techniques and the church's support to parents. This involves promoting the adoption of parenting practices that are culturally relevant, caring, and supportive of children's growth and well-being.
- f) The study's conclusions may influence the creation of interventions, programs, and policies that support parents and bolster family ties in the setting of Western Uganda's Christian communities. In order to address the needs and difficulties that have been identified, this contains suggestions for government interventions, community collaborations, and church-based projects.

1.1.9 Justification for the study

The justification for studying the church's response to parenting practices was viewed in the following context:

Families' views, attitudes, and behaviors are frequently greatly influenced by the Church of Uganda. Understanding the church's position on parenting techniques facilitates a deeper comprehension of the complexities of family life within church communities. With this knowledge, it is simpler to identify the areas that support positive parent-child relationships and those that require support or intervention.

Differing widely throughout church communities are the religious and cultural beliefs that impact parenting practices. By looking at the church's response to parenting practices, researchers investigate how religious teachings and norms impact parenting behaviors. It is necessary to understand cultural diversity in order to tailor interventions to the needs of diverse families.

Church of Uganda regularly provides resources and services, like parenting education classes, counseling, and support groups, to help families. Examining how the church reacts to various parenting practices might help identify effective strategies for promoting positive parenting practices within the church. Using this data, evidence-based interventions are created to support kids' healthy growth and improve parent-child relationships.

With its opportunities for social help and connection, the Church is an essential organization in society. Gaining more insight into how it responds to parenting practices supports efforts aimed at fostering social networks and community resilience. When attempting to fulfill the needs of marginalized or at-risk families inside the church, this knowledge is extremely beneficial.

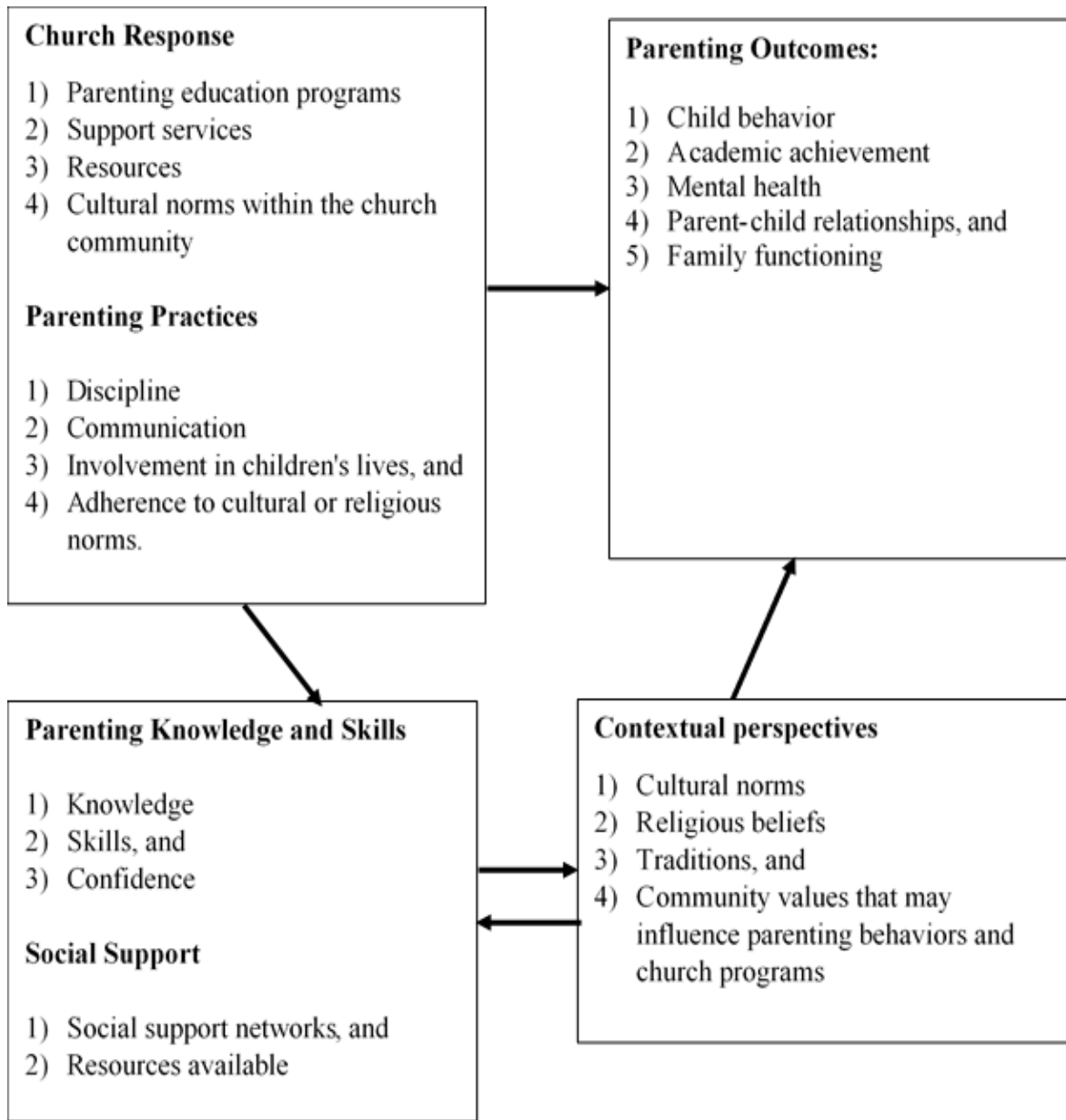
Research on the church's reaction to parenting practices may be used to inform policy discussions and the development of family support services programs. In order to create successful programs that meet the needs of families and children, policymakers, practitioners, and the church work together to identify service gaps or areas that need more help.

The Church of Uganda's emphasis on moral and ethical standards in its teachings has an impact on parenting practices. Parenting practices within the church are influenced by moral and ethical norms, which can be shown by examining how the church reacts to different parenting practices. This information facilitates discussions on moral growth, values education, and moral decision-making inside the confines of the family.

1.1.10 Motivation for the study

As a parent, Christian, teacher, and priest, the researcher observed significant gaps in how parents fulfill their roles. It is evident that the current generation of children is increasingly adopting values contrary to Christian beliefs and practices, moving away from the teachings they were brought up with. This trend raises concerns about the future of Christian values and the moral compass of young people. To address these concerns, therefore, it is crucial to examine how the church effectively responds to current parenting practices. The church must recognize its spiritual responsibility to nurture and guide God's flock. This includes supporting Christian parents in their parenting roles and ensuring that children are brought up in a godly way. The church's role in this context is multifaceted. By taking these steps, the church is better positioned than any other institution to help in bridging the gaps in parenting practices, reinforcing the importance of Christian values and ensuring that the next generation is nurtured and stewarded in a way that honors God.

1.1.11 Conceptual framework



Source: Field data, 2023

The main ideas, variables, and correlations that were looked at in the research had to be visually represented in order to provide a conceptual framework for the study on the church's response to parenting methods. The study's condensed conceptual framework is shown above.

Independent Variables

Church response: This variable encompasses the different ways the church engages with and assists parents in their caregiving responsibilities, including: parenting education programs, support services, resources, and cultural norms within the church community.

Parenting practices: This variable refers to the approaches, beliefs, and strategies parents use in raising their children, including: discipline methods, communication styles, level of involvement in children's lives, and adherence to cultural or religious norms.

Mediating Variables

Parenting knowledge and skills: This variable represents the knowledge, skills, and confidence that parents gain through participation in church-based parenting programs and resources. It mediates the relationship between church response and parenting practices, as parents who are more knowledgeable and skilled may be more likely to adopt positive parenting practices.

Social support: This variable reflects the social support networks and resources available to parents within the church community. It mediates the relationship between church response and parenting practices, as parents who perceive greater social support may be more likely to engage in positive parenting behaviours.

Dependent Variables

Parenting outcomes: This variable encompasses the outcomes of parenting practices on child well-being, family dynamics, and community cohesion. It includes factors such as child behaviour, academic achievement, mental health, parent-child relationships, and family functioning.

Contextual Factors

Cultural and religious context: This variable represents the cultural and religious context within which parenting practices and the church's response are situated. It includes factors such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, traditions, and community values that may influence parenting behaviours and church programming.

Hypothesized relationships

It is hypothesized that a positive church response to parenting practices, characterized by the provision of education, support, and resources, is associated with improved parenting knowledge and skills among parents. In turn, improved parenting knowledge and skills, as well as greater social support within the church community, is associated with positive parenting practices. Positive parenting practices, facilitated by the church's response and social support, leads to positive parenting outcomes, including improved child well-being and family functioning.

This conceptual framework provides a visual representation of the key concepts and relationships to the variables that were explored in the study on the church's response to parenting practices. It served as a guide for designing the research methodology, collecting data, and analyzing findings to better understand the role of the church in supporting families and promoting positive parenting outcomes.

1.2.0 Literature review

This section presents the literature reviewed regarding the research topic. First, it focused on the parenting practices employed by parents in the upbringing of children among the Christian families. Secondly, it analyzed the effects of parenting practices on children's morality among the Christian families, and lastly, it assessed the church's response on the parenting practices among Christian families.

1.2.1 Parenting Practices employed by Christian families

The daily choices, actions, and interactions parents make with their children that impact their growth, behaviour, and general well-being are referred to as parenting practices. This section examines the many approaches to parenting that parents take, including involvement, communication, discipline, and adhering to cultural or religious traditions. We may learn more about how parents mould their children's life and how that affects their cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development by looking at parenting techniques.

Parenting practices refer to the specific, observable behaviours that parents use to socialize and guide their children (Darling and Steinberg 2017). These practices are direct actions taken by parents to influence their children's development and behaviour in various domains such as academic achievement, social skills, discipline, and problem-solving abilities (Kuppens and Ceulemans 2019). There is consensus among scientists about the existence of at least two broad dimensions of parenting, labeled parental support and parental control. Parental support pertains to the affective nature of the parent-child relationship, indicated by showing involvement, acceptance, emotional availability, warmth, and responsiveness. Support has been related to positive development outcomes in children, such as the prevention of alcohol abuse and deviance (Barnes and Farrell 1992) depression and delinquency (Pereyra et al., 2019) and externalizing problem behavior (Shaw 1993).

Psychological and behavioral controls are two subcategories of the control dimension. Parenting style that aims to manage, control, or regulate child behaviour is known as parental behavioral control. This is achieved through supervisory roles, disciplinary tactics, controlling incentives and punishments, or enforcing rules and regulations (Barber 1996). There is a correlation between negative child developmental outcomes like deviant behaviour, misconduct, depression, and anxious affect, and an appropriate amount of behavioral control, such as good parental monitoring, and excessive behavioral control, such as physical punishment from the parents (Cohen 2012). Parental psychological control is an invasive form of control in which parents attempt to influence their children's ideas, emotions, and feelings, whereas parental behavioral control is control over the child's conduct (Barber 1996).

Traditional practices influence children's development across various aspects, including social, cognitive, emotional, and physical growth. Traditional African parenting practices, deeply rooted in community and extended family networks, play a vital role in fostering children's overall development. Key findings of the study include: extended family and community involvement in child-rearing, is significant, providing a supportive environment for social skill development and a sense of belonging, traditional practices emphasize instilling strong moral and ethical values in children through storytelling, proverbs, and cultural rituals, guiding their behaviour and decision-making, and children learn through imitation and participation in practical activities such as farming and household chores (Tweneboah, Dumbe, and Gedzi 2019).

Furthermore, the study underscores building practical skills and reinforcing cognitive and social development, and discipline and respect for elders are strongly emphasized, with a growing recognition of the need for non-physical forms of discipline, gender-specific practices raise boys and girls with different expectations and responsibilities, preparing them for traditional gender roles. The study suggests that integrating traditional practices with modern parenting approaches could enhance child development outcomes. Understanding and respecting these cultural practices can help policymakers and educators create effective and culturally sensitive interventions supporting children's holistic development in African contexts.

A study by Augustine Tankeu, Nneoma Nwosu, and David L. Woods offers a comprehensive look at the varied and vibrant cultural and traditional practices of African parenting. The study stresses the importance of cultural awareness in understanding African parenting, which is shaped by cultural beliefs, family dynamics, and child-rearing practices. Highlighting the diversity and richness of African parenting practices, the study challenges the idea of a single, uniform African culture. Additionally, the study examines how modernization and globalization are impacting traditional African parenting practices, leading to changes in family structure, child-rearing practices, and cultural values (Selin 2013).

The findings of the study above have significant implications for parenting interventions, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches that consider the diversity of African parenting practices. The study also underscores the vital role of extended family in African parenting, including the involvement of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives in childrearing. Ultimately, the study showcases the resilience and adaptability of African families as they navigate modernization and globalization, blending traditional practices with modern influences.

The study further emphasizes the significance of preserving African cultural heritage and traditional parenting practices, which is crucial for passing down cultural values and customs to future generations. The study's findings have important policy implications, stressing the need for policies that are sensitive to the diverse parenting practices of African families. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for more in-depth research on African parenting practices, exploring the complexities and nuances of cultural and traditional practices across the continent. Lastly, the study's findings have practical applications in various fields, including education, social work, and healthcare, where understanding African parenting practices can inform culturally sensitive interventions and services, leading to more effective support for African families.

The fundamental goal for Christian parents is to guide their children to a saving faith in Jesus Christ and to set them on a path toward spiritual maturity, aiming for them to reach the full measure of Christ's glory as described in Ephesians 4:13(NIV). This journey involves nurturing their faith, instilling biblical values, and encouraging personal growth in their relationship with God(Kang and McIntosh 2022). The Bible emphasizes the importance of parents' responsibility to care for and guide their children spiritually. For example, in Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) the Bible states that "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it. These verses highlight the importance of parents' role in guiding their children's spiritual development, teaching them God's ways, and protecting them from harm. The Bible emphasizes the responsibility of parents to care for their children and raise them in a way that honors God (Fadlillah and Fauziah 2022).

A study by (Arima, 2018) highlights the significant role of Christianity, specifically in Uganda, in revitalizing family pastoral care. It demonstrates how Christian principles help address deficiencies in parental care, which are often worsened by economic and social hardships. The Church's family pastoral programs prioritize counselling, spiritual education, and promoting accountability in parenting. Additionally, the research underscores Church of Uganda's pivotal efforts in rebuilding family pastoral care to mitigate the disintegration of family structures caused by socio-economic challenges. These pastoral initiatives are implemented through structured programs aimed at enhancing family unity, resolving conflicts, and establishing a strong spiritual foundation within households. However, the study by Arima (2018) reveals important insights into the role of Christianity in family pastoral care in Uganda but leaves critical areas unexplored, particularly in understanding the nuanced dynamics between urban and rural settings. Parenting challenges in these contexts could differ dramatically due to varying economic pressures and cultural expectations, yet the study does not make a clear distinction between how these differences influence Church interventions. This gap limits the applicability of its findings across diverse settings.

Furthermore, the study lacks a robust quantitative data to substantiate its claims about the effectiveness of family pastoral care programs. Key metrics, such as measurable improvements in family cohesion, reductions in youth delinquency, or enhancements in parental engagement, remain underexplored. Without this data, it is challenging to assess the tangible outcomes of the initiatives described.

Focusing on the African child, an article by (Gecaga, 2007) explores how Church of Uganda and other religious institutions address issues such as child neglect and the role of parenting in faith-based interventions. It reflects on the Church's response to challenges faced by families, including civil conflicts in Northern Uganda. According to the article, in contemporary Africa, the landscape of childhood is marred by profound challenges. Millions of children face lives defined by poverty, abandonment, and a lack of access to fundamental necessities such as education and healthcare. Furthermore, the ravages of war, chronic malnutrition, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, and pervasive societal neglect, compound these hardships. This grim reality starkly contrasts with the traditional understanding of childhood as a time of growth, learning, play, and safety, a vision now eroded by the overwhelming burdens of survival.

The article further points out that historically, African societies revered children as central to their cultural and familial fabric. They were symbols of marital success and communal prosperity, embodying hope for the future. Child-rearing extended beyond the immediate family; it was a collective responsibility, with the community actively involved in nurturing and protecting its youngest members. However, the rise of modern socio-economic and cultural changes has disrupted these age-old practices, leaving children vulnerable to exploitation, starvation, disease, and oppression. This descent into dehumanization presents a stark departure from traditional African values and the Biblical principles that emphasize the dignity of every child. As M. Gecaga reflects in her analysis, the plight of the African child calls for urgent intervention. In this context, the church emerges as a moral and spiritual custodian uniquely positioned to address these challenges. Drawing on the teachings of Christ, particularly the exhortation in Matthew 19:14 to welcome and protect children, the church is urged to become an advocate and sanctuary for the young.

Gecaga contends that the church must transcend passive acknowledgment of these issues. Instead, it must engage actively in initiatives to nurture, uplift, and safeguard the vulnerable child. This includes offering education and shelter, advocating for systemic change, and collaborating with other organizations to champion the cause of children. In doing so, the church fulfills its divine mandate and rekindles hope for a generation deprived of their inherent rights to joy and security.

Youth ministry programs, particularly those involving fellowship activities, significantly contribute to adolescents' spiritual development. Adolescents who participated in youth ministry programs reported a deeper and more personal relationship with God. Participation in youth fellowship activities fosters a sense of community among adolescents, helping them feel connected to their faith group. These activities provide a supportive environment where adolescents explore and express their faith openly, which is crucial for their spiritual growth. Youth ministry programs often include mentorship components, where older, more experienced members of the faith community guide adolescents in their spiritual journey. Through consistent engagement and mentorship, adolescents develop a stronger foundation in their faith, leading to more profound spiritual growth. Involvement in youth ministry programs enhances adolescents'

prayer lives and worship practices, making these activities more meaningful and personal. Regular participation in Bible study and scripture-related activities deepens adolescents' understanding and connection with religious texts, reinforcing their relationship with God (Benson and Roehlkepartain 2008).

Children who engage in church activities, including fellowship, have better social skills, emotional well-being, and spiritual development. Furthermore, children who participate in church activities develop better social skills compared to their peers who do not. Likewise, engagement in church activities is linked to better emotional health and overall well-being among children. Much as regular involvement in church activities significantly contributes to children's spiritual growth (Boucher and Murdoch 2013). There are connections between child outcomes in several domains of development as well as between them. Early pleasant and supportive interactions with parents and other caregivers both cause and strengthen them. The function of one area of development influences another over time, and these early interactions can have a lasting ripple effect on development across the life course.

Masten and Cicchetti (2010, p. 492) state that,

“Competence begets competence,” meaning that “effectiveness in one domain of competence in one period of life becomes the scaffold on which later competence in newly emerging domains develops.” The research determined the following four outcomes, which are essential to children's wellbeing, based on the literature. Although young children (ages 0-8) were the main emphasis, children of all ages should be aware of these effects.

High-quality parent-child interactions are associated with better emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills in children. Parents who engage in emotional coaching (i.e., teaching children to recognize, understand, and manage emotions) have children with better emotional regulation and social skills. On the other hand, parent who are more sensitive to their children's emotions have children with better emotional regulation and empathy. Furthermore, children who experience high-quality parent-child interactions have better social-emotional development, including emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills.(Turculeè and Tulbure 2014; Lang et al. 2020). These findings imply that parenting practices ought to focus on improving parent-child interaction quality, emotional coaching, and parental sensitivity to support children's social-emotional development.

Social support plays a multifaceted role in the lives of children, providing emotional support, practical assistance, and fostering a sense of belonging. This support system is vital for children's overall development and well-being. Social support from friends and family members helps children cope with stress and emotional challenges. Emotional support includes listening, empathy, and encouragement, which are crucial for children's mental health. While friends and extended family members often provide practical assistance, such as help with homework, co-curricular activities, or day-to-day tasks. This support eases the burden on children and their immediate families, making daily life more manageable. Also, feeling connected to a network of friends and family members enhances children's sense of belonging and security. This sense of belonging is fundamental to their self-esteem and identity formation (Johan, Marijke, and Femke 2015).

Accordingly, high-quality friendships are characterized by closeness, support, and reciprocity, and these elements contribute significantly to a child's well-being. This closeness fosters a supportive environment where children feel valued and understood. Likewise, friends provide emotional support, which is crucial during challenging times. This support helps children cope with stress, navigate social dynamics, and build resilience. The researchers further assert that high-quality friendships are marked by mutual respect and give-and-take. Reciprocity in friendships teaches children the importance of sharing, cooperation, and empathy (Parker and Asher 1987).

Singing in a church choir significantly enhances children's social interaction skills. Participation in choir activities promotes emotional well-being and reduces stress among children. Since being a choir member requires collaboration, it fosters teamwork and cooperation skills in children. Children who sing in a choir, learn to communicate effectively and build relationships with their peers. The structured nature of choir practice and performances provides numerous opportunities for children to interact and work together harmoniously. Furthermore, children involved in choir activities experience increased happiness and reduced anxiety as the act of singing and the supportive environment of the choir contribute to these emotional benefits. Musical activities, including choir singing, enhances cognitive development. The discipline and focus required in choir practice translates into improved academic performance and concentration in school (Welch et al. 2014).

Furthermore, music activities, such as choir singing, significantly enhance children's social skills. Participation in music activities helps children develop friendship skills, including empathy, cooperation, and communication. Children involved in choir singing often experience improved verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The need to listen to each other and synchronize their voices promotes attentive listening and clear communication. Music activities, particularly those involving group performances such as choir singing, enhance children's ability to empathize with others. Sharing the collective experience of making music helps children understand and respect their peers' feelings and perspectives. Older or more experienced choir members often take on leadership roles, guiding and mentoring younger or less experienced members. This fosters leadership skills and a sense of responsibility (Jaschke et al. 2013).

1.2.2 Effect of parenting practices on emotional, and behavioral and social competences

Parenting practices play a profound impact on the development of children's emotional, behavioral, and social competences, shaping their ability to navigate complex emotions, form healthy relationships, and exhibit prosocial behavior. Children's emotional, behavioral, and social competences are essential aspects of their overall development, allowing them to navigate their environments effectively and build healthy relationships. Emotional competence comprises of: self-awareness (recognizing and understanding one's own emotions), emotional regulation (managing and controlling emotional responses to various situations), empathy (understanding and sharing the feelings of others), and resilience (bouncing back from setbacks and coping with stress and adversity)(Breiner et al. 2016).

On the other hand, behavioral competence consists of: self-control (regulating one's own actions, impulses, and behaviors), problem-solving (identifying problems and coming up with appropriate solutions), goal-setting (setting and working towards personal goals), and adaptability (adjusting behavior in response to changing circumstances and environments). Under social competence, we have, communication skills (expressing thoughts and feelings clearly and listening to others), relationship-building (forming and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships), cooperation (working well with others and participating in group activities), and conflict resolution (managing and resolving disputes in a constructive manner).

Developing these competences helps children succeed in various areas of life, contributing to their academic success, personal happiness, and ability to form meaningful connections with others.

Children in faith-based environments tend to exhibit higher levels of prosocial behavior, such as empathy, kindness, and generosity. Meanwhile, religious participation and socialization are associated with increased moral development, including a stronger sense of justice, compassion, and social responsibility. However, Protestant adolescents show higher levels of self-regulation, including self-control and self-monitoring, compared to Catholic adolescents. Religious affiliation and attendance are positively correlated with prosocial behavior and moral development (Walker 2013).

Children raised in faith-based settings generally demonstrate greater prosocial behaviors, such as empathy, kindness, and generosity. Additionally, religious participation and socialization are linked to enhanced moral development, characterized by a heightened sense of justice, compassion, and social responsibility. Notably, Protestant adolescent's exhibit higher levels of self-regulation, including self-control and self-monitoring, compared to their Catholic counterparts. Overall, religious affiliation and attendance are positively associated with prosocial behaviors and moral development(Walker 2013).

The ability for children to grow up in a setting that meets their emotional needs and helps them acquire the coping mechanisms necessary to deal with everyday worries, concerns, and obstacles is essential to their positive development(Bretherton 1985). Emotional needs are essential for children's overall well-being and healthy development. Meeting these needs helps children build resilience, form secure attachments, regulate their emotions, and develop positive self-esteem. Early child development heavily depends on parents' capacity to help their kids feel like they belong and are valuable. Similarly, parents help their children develop their social skills by teaching them traits such as self-control, collaboration, and empathy that help them build and preserve healthy connections with adults and peers. By building solid relationships with their children, parents can encourage the development of social skills in their children. Many theoretical frameworks, including ecocultural theories(Weisner 2002). family system

theories(Cox and Paley 1997) and attachment theory(Ainsworth and Bowlby 1991), emphasize the significance of early parent-child interactions for children's social competence. Parents socialize their children to adopt culturally appropriate values and behaviours that enable them to be socially competent and act as members of a social group.

Children who are socially competent are cooperative instead of resistive, independent instead of suggestible, responsible instead of irresponsible, friendly instead of hostile, purposeful instead of aimless, and self-controlled instead of impulsive(Landy 2009). A child who is socially competent demonstrates certain personal qualities (for instance, demonstrates empathy and coping mechanisms), is able to form peer relationships (for example, is accepted by other children), and demonstrates social skills (for instance, has positive interactions with others, expresses emotions effectively).

Through encouraging and modelling healthy interactions, as well as giving their children opportunity to engage in exciting activities, parents assist their children in developing social skills(Barrett et al. 2013). Similarly, parents facilitate their children's acquisition of these abilities by involving them in family rituals and routine activities such as church attendance and household chores(Garantziotis et al. 2002). These activities are shared and initiated by parents, siblings, and other family members within the confines of the home. Language and cultural conventions, expectations, and behaviors control these activities. Within this setting, young children engage with their parents, siblings, grandparents, and moms who provide them with implicit or explicit instruction on how to develop socially acceptable behaviours, adjust to social standards, and pick up language and cognitive skills(Meisels and Shonkoff 1990). Parental assistance in developing the executive function skills required for children to adjust to shifting environmental demands and control their impulses and reactions to upsetting circumstances is another crucial component of parent-supported social development(Malin et al. 2014). Executive function skills play a crucial role in helping children adjust to shifting environmental demands and regulate their impulses and reactions to upsetting circumstances.

Socially competent parents assist their children in managing difficult tasks and set examples of responsible behaviour when participating in activities together (Eisenberg, Cumberland, and Spinrad 1998). By interacting with them in a good way and providing opportunities for them to socialize with peers, parents also help their children build friendships (Brown, Odom, and McConnell 2008). Children in preschool peer networks who had more playmates and more reliable play companions were those whose parents made the initial contact with their peers (Bornstein 2002).

Addressing the lack of dads and other caregivers' inclusion in the study would be beneficial. The majority of the study that is mentioned concentrates on mothers, but it's crucial to take into account the influence that fathers and other caregivers have on their kids' emotional and behavioral growth. Future research ought to look at the efficacy of father-focused parent education programs and investigate the ways in which co-parenting relationships affect the outcomes of children. By filling in this knowledge vacuum, researchers are able to offer a more comprehensive assessment of how well parent education initiatives support kids' emotional and behavioral well-being and provide guidance for the creation of evidence-based interventions that assist families in fostering healthy parent-child bonds.

Parental involvement and communication in shaping children's moral development is extremely crucial. Parents who engage in conversations about ethics and values with their children tend to raise children with a more robust moral framework. Parental involvement and communication play a significant role in nurturing moral development in children (Parke and Buriel 2008). Parents should, therefore, engage in open and frequent conversations with their children about ethics and values to promote moral development. Children's cognitive development refers to the progression of their ability to think, understand, reason, and interact with the world. It encompasses the growth of various mental processes and abilities that includes the following key aspects, memory, attention, language development, problem-solving skills, conceptual understanding, executive functioning, perceptual skills, learning and knowledge acquisition (Piaget 1973).

Reading books together with children helps them acquire essential skills for future academic success, including letter and word recognition, phonological awareness, and comprehension of syntax and grammar(Baker 2014). Shared reading exposes children to new vocabulary and narrative structures that they might not encounter through other activities. Additionally, regular book reading can establish routines, promote healthy wake and sleep habits, and teach life lessons about relationships and coping mechanisms(Duursma, Augustyn, and Zuckerman 2008). This practice goes beyond the benefits of toy play or other parent-child interactions, offering unique opportunities for language and cognitive development (Isbell et al. 2004).

Leisure activities promote family cohesion and individual mental health. Family outings provide a significant psychological relief by temporarily removing individuals from the pressures and monotony of daily life. Engaging in recreational activities during family outings helps reduce anxiety levels and promotes a sense of calm and relaxation. Also, breaks from routine allow family members to mentally recharge, a factor, which improves mood, increases energy levels, and enhances overall mental health(Trussell, Jeanes, and Such).

Child response styles refer to the characteristic ways children react to their environment and interact with others, particularly their parents or caregivers. These styles are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including temperament, parenting practices, life experiences, and individual differences(Egunjobi 2021). Temperament refers to the inherent personality traits that a child is born with. These traits significantly influence how a child responds to their environment and to parental interactions. Introverted children prefer solitary activities and need time to recharge after social interactions, while extroverted children seek out social engagement and thrive in interactive environments. Besides, some children are naturally more emotionally reactive than others, meaning they may respond more intensely to stress or excitement.

The way parents interact with their children plays a crucial role in shaping their response styles. Common parenting styles include: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved. The authoritarian style involves high demands with low responsiveness. Under this style, children might become obedient but may also develop low self-esteem and social skills. Authoritative parenting style entails high demands with high responsiveness leading to self-disciplined,

confident, and socially adept children. Permissive parenting style results in low demands with high responsiveness. Here, children struggle with self-discipline and authority but often have high self-esteem and good social skills. On the other hand, uninvolved parenting style involves low demands with low responsiveness. Children brought up under this parenting style might struggle with self-esteem issues, perform poorly academically, and exhibit behaviour problems(Egunjobi 2021).

Egunjobi, (2024) further states that,

“Significant events, cultural influences, and social interactions also play a role in shaping a child’s response style. For example, experiencing trauma leads to anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress, affecting how a child responds to various situations. Cultural norms and values also shape behaviour and expectations, influencing how children interact with their parents and the broader society. While peer relationships and social experiences impact a child's behaviour and response style, either reinforcing or challenging the behaviours learned at home.”

Many studies across cultural contexts report that, compared to their urban counterparts, rural parents tended to adopt an over-controlling(Evans, Davidson, and Sicafuse 2013) and intrusive(Wang, Tian, and Rozelle 2024) parenting style and to accept physical and emotional abuse as a legitimate strategy to discipline children(Suyanto et al. 2019). The disparities in parenting styles and practices are worsened by the fact that rural parents usually have fewer resources to support child-rearing. Prior studies suggested that it might be uniquely difficult for rural families to develop and maintain positive parenting practices because of the lack of support systems and amenities(Solomon 2004). The rural-urban disparities of parenting practices and resources are also evident in the Chinese context. Existing studies reported that rural parents with children of different ages were more likely to adopt a negative parenting style, whereas urban parents adopted a positive one(Wang, Tian, and Rozelle 2024).

Wang et al., (2018) states,

“Rural parents reported higher levels of physical and verbal punishment compared to urban parents, suggesting a greater reliance on punitive discipline in rural areas (Wang, Tian, and Rozelle 2024) ”

Rural parents encounter more parenting challenges and have fewer resources compared to urban parents. Both groups, especially those with children under three, express a significant need for parenting resources. These findings suggest the potential benefits of implementing accessible, sustainable, and cost-effective parenting programs through the primary health care system. Such programs should particularly focus on rural parents to support them in improving their parenting practices(Han et al. 2023).

Sharing family meals is a practice that has garnered significant attention from researchers due to its multifaceted benefits for individuals and family dynamics. This literature review explores the various dimensions and implications of family meals, drawing from a wide range of studies across disciplines such as nutrition, psychology, sociology, and public health. Family meals have been consistently linked to better dietary habits and nutritional outcomes for both children and adults. Studies indicate that children who participate in regular family meals consume more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and have a lower intake of sugary drinks and unhealthy snacks. Children who frequently eat meals with their family are more likely to have a healthy diet and less likely to be overweight(Dallacker, Hertwig, and Mata 2018). Similarly, adolescents who have family meals together are more likely to consume nutrients essential for their growth and development(Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2006).

Family meals provide a regular opportunity for family members to connect emotionally and offer mutual support. The ritual of sharing meals can enhance family cohesion and contribute to a sense of stability and security. This regular interaction serves as a buffer against stress and promote emotional well-being(Fiese 2006). Additionally, adolescents who participate in family meals are less likely to experience depressive symptoms and more likely to exhibit positive behaviors(Levine and Smolak 2006). There is evidence that family meals contribute to better academic performance in children. Regular family meals are associated with higher grades and improved school engagement. The structured environment and parental involvement during meals reinforces positive study habits and time management skills. Adolescents who have more frequent family dinners together are more likely to achieve higher grades in school(Chang et al. 2020)

Family meals are also linked to favorable behavioral outcomes. Regular family interactions during meals can reduce the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse and early sexual activity. Adolescents who participated in family meals are less likely to engage in substance use and more likely to delay sexual activity. The presence of parents during meals provides a setting for monitoring behavior and discussing values and expectations (Du et al. 2021). Family meals provide an opportunity for family members to communicate and bond with each other, leading to improved family relationships and a sense of togetherness. Regular family meals are associated with improved child well-being, including better physical and mental health, academic performance, and social skills (Harrison et al. 2015).

Sharon et al. (2018) further observe that the quality of family relationships is an important factor in the association between family meals and adolescent well-being, and studies have found that frequent family meals are correlated with lower rates of substance use and depressive symptoms in subsequent years. Factors such as age, gender, and family structure can affect the likelihood of eating meals together, with adolescents spending more time with their family over the weekend and at home, and adolescent girls being less likely to have family meals than adolescent boys. The majority of these studies have been conducted in Western cultures, therefore there is a need for research in diverse church communities in Uganda to understand the cultural and contextual factors that influence the benefits of family meals. Despite the benefits, several barriers impede the practice of regular family meals. Time constraints due to parents' work schedules, co-curricular activities, and differing meal preferences make it challenging to coordinate family meals.

Parental conflict significantly affects children's perceptions of closeness to their parents. Higher levels of conflict between parents are associated with reduced feelings of closeness to both parents. Children who report open, frequent, and positive communication with their parents feel closer to them. The degree of parental involvement in children's daily lives is a strong predictor of perceived closeness. Activities such as helping with homework, attending events, and engaging in recreational activities are particularly impactful. There are also differences in closeness perceptions based on the child's gender. Boys feel closer to their fathers, while girls felt closer to their mothers (Jarvis et al. 2020). Engaging in activities, having meaningful

conversations, and showing warmth and support has a more profound impact on children's development than the amount of time spent together. Parents who spend more time with their children may experience increased stress and fatigue, which negatively impact the quality of their interactions. Therefore, focusing on the quality of parent-child interactions is more important than just accumulating time together(Milkie et al. 2010).

Empathy is a vital component of moral development, allowing children to develop a deeper understanding of others' emotions and perspectives. This, in turn, enables them to cultivate compassion, kindness, and respect for others. Research has shown that parental warmth, consistency, and moral behavior have a profound impact on children's moral development, shaping their values and principles. Children learn moral values by observing their parents' consistent moral behavior, and parental warmth and consistency play a significant role in reinforcing these values. Nonetheless, the relationship between empathy and moral development suggests that empathy is essential for both caring and justice. Empathy allows children to consider the feelings and needs of others, leading to more compassionate and equitable decision-making. This, in turn, fosters a sense of social responsibility and moral awareness. Furthermore, parental influence either promotes or hinders empathy development in children. Parents who model empathetic behavior, engage in open communication, and encourage perspective-taking helping their children to develop strong empathy skills. Conversely, parents who exhibit inconsistent or punitive behavior undermine empathy development, leading to potential moral and social challenges. Therefore, the interplay between empathy, parental influence, and moral development underscores the importance of nurturing empathy in children to promote healthy moral growth and development(Hoffman 1996; Grusec and Davidov 2019).

1.2.3 The Church's response to parenting practices

Over the years, the church has attempted to respond to parenting practices, recognizing the critical role that faith communities play in supporting and guiding families. As a sacred institution, the church has sought to provide guidance, resources, and support to Christian parents, helping them navigate the complexities of raising children in a rapidly changing world. Bartkowski & Xu (2000) note that participation in faith-based programs can improve parent-

child relationships and reduce behavioural problems in children. Furthermore, research by Regnerus (2003) shows that religious engagement acts as a protective factor against adolescent risky behaviours, supporting the Church's efforts to engage youth through programs like Sunday school and holiday camps. However, the limitations these programs may face, such as resource constraints or a lack of trained facilitators, are as highlighted by Sider & Unruh (2004). This demonstrates a deeper engagement with the literature and strengthens the rationale for my research. From sermons and Sunday school lessons to parenting classes and family ministry programs, the church has endeavoured to equip parents with biblical wisdom, practical tools, and spiritual encouragement. This section explores the various ways in which the church has responded to parenting practices, highlighting both successes and challenges, and examining the ways in which faith communities are able to continue providing support and empower Christian parents in their vital parenting role.

Parents in the central highlands of Papua, Indonesia, have limited involvement in their children's early childhood education, primarily due to their own low educational backgrounds. The church plays a crucial role in promoting early childhood education and supporting parents (Arifin and Hermino 2018). Churches in Papua in general and especially in the central mountains has a role not only in worship alone but, more broadly, are involved in the public awareness of the importance of education for children. With regard to early childhood education, then there are three things that form the church's role: (1) as the centre of awareness for parents; (2) as government partners to provide skills training to teach the teachers; and (3) as a partner of the government in providing learning facilities in schools (Widjojo et al. 2010).

First, as the centre of awareness for parents. This is because the parents' low education makes them insensitive to the importance of children's education from an early age. Parents in the central mountainous region of Papua, generally, attach more importance to their children going to the gardens than according them the opportunity to attend school. The parents do so because all other adult family members work in the gardens and they want their children to recognize the natural life from an early age. Majority of adults in Papua generally spent most of their time in the gardens, and in these circumstances, the school age going children also live in the gardens instead of going to school (Modouw 2013). In this regard, society should reprimand parents who

pay little or no little attention to children's education from an early age (Bringle and Steinberg 2010).

The study by Ward and Wild-Wood (2013) offers a profound exploration of the East African Revival, a transformative Christian movement that shaped the spiritual fabric of Uganda and its neighbouring regions during the 20th century. Central to their analysis is the role of Sunday schools, which emerge as critical spaces for nurturing faith and moral development among children.

The study presents Sunday schools as instrumental in fostering the spiritual growth of young minds. They provide a structured environment where children immerse in biblical teachings, prayers, and hymns. This consistent exposure to Christian values such as faith, humility, obedience, and community service helps lay a strong spiritual foundation from an early age, ensuring that children internalized these principles as part of their identity. The study also highlights the indirect yet profound impact of Sunday schools on parenting practices. Parents, tasked with supporting their children's religious education, become active participants in their spiritual journeys. Through engagement in discussions concerning Sunday school lessons at home and encouraging regular attendance, parents play a pivotal role in reinforcing Christian teachings and weaving these values into daily family life.

Furthermore, according to the study, beyond individual households, Sunday schools are portrayed as essential in preserving the Christian faith across generations. They not only instill a sense of identity and continuity but also ensure that the principles of the East African Revival movement are adopted and passed down. This process helps in sustaining the legacy of the Revival and strengthened the spiritual backbone of East African communities.

Finally, Sunday schools serve as vibrant communal hubs. They provide a platform for interaction among children and families, fostering a collective sense of responsibility for nurturing the faith of the younger generation. This communal dynamic reinforces bonds within the Christian community, emphasizing shared commitment and unity in spiritual growth.

Ward and Wild-Wood's study thus underscores the multifaceted role of Sunday schools in shaping spiritual, familial, and communal life, ensuring the enduring influence of the East African Revival movement.

Nevertheless, one notable gap in the study by Ward is the limited focus on parenting practices. While the study acknowledges the indirect influence of Sunday schools on parents, it does not delve deeply into how these interactions translate into specific changes in parenting. For example, the research offers little analysis of how parents utilize Sunday school teachings to address practical challenges such as disciplining children, managing adolescent behaviour, or guiding moral decision-making. This lack of focus leaves a substantial area of potential exploration untouched.

Against this background, the church's role is extremely crucial to the people in the central highlands of Papua as they respect and trust in religious leaders. The church is not only present as a herald of religious teachings, but also as a home for families with low levels of education to gain an understanding of the importance of the benefits that can be achieved through education. Arifin, (2010, 2015) and Nugroho (2013) observe that early childhood education in remote areas of Papua rely on the role of religious leaders who drive educational awareness within families.

A study by Florence K. Nakayi, et al. (2020) examines the involvement of children in agriculture in both rural and urban settings in Uganda, highlighting the benefits and challenges of child participation in farming activities. According to the study, in rural areas, children are significantly more involved in agricultural activities compared to their urban counterparts. Garden tasks often include planting, weeding, harvesting, and tending to livestock. In rural settings, agricultural work often conflicts with schooling, leading to higher absenteeism and lower academic performance. Urban children involved in agriculture typically engage in these activities after school or during holidays, thus minimizing the impact on their education. Children involved in agriculture gain practical skills and knowledge about farming practices, which can be beneficial for their future livelihoods. These skills include understanding crop cycles, animal husbandry, and basic agronomy.

Children's labour in agriculture contributes significantly to the household economy, particularly in rural areas. This contribution is less pronounced in urban households, where children are more likely to engage in other forms of informal work or education-related activities. Concerning health, rural children often face health risks due to exposure to pesticides, heavy physical labour, and lack of proper protective gear. Urban children face fewer health risks, as their involvement in agriculture is typically less intensive and hazardous. On the other hand, there is a noticeable gender disparity, with boys more frequently involved in tasks like ploughing and herding, while girls often engage in weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest activities. These gender roles reflect broader societal norms and expectations(Yeudall et al. 2007).

Jones asserts that there is a significant disconnect between the church's existing operations and their ideal ones. Few parents actively engage in this work, despite the biblical requirement (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4) to raise their children in the faith and to nurture their souls(Jones 2011). The issue is that the church has been using an ineffective ministry model for many years, one that was based on pragmatic traditions and man-made customs and that encouraged age division and the usurpation of parental authority. By persistently promoting and creating ministry models that do not call parents to embrace their role as primary faith developers of their children, the church has clearly failed to call parents to embrace their role as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives. Instead, it has encouraged this parental abdication(Baucham Jr 2011). Furthermore, Jay Strothers says,

“Due to the church's persistent promotion of the advantages and positive changes in life that would result from more involvement in ministry activities, this parental abdication had been tacitly promoted. Because of this, there was a spiritual rift in the church and among families; most youth and young adults found it difficult to live out their faith in day-to-day situations; they had a limited understanding of biblical truth; and a large number of young women and men struggled with serious issues related to their inner spiritual identities, which affected their dating, diet, and clothing choices. But because this has been the church's method of service for many years, the parents of these young people likewise struggled with a more profound faith, genuine spirituality, and a Christ-centred identity.”(Strother 2009)

It would seem that models that support organized, age-segregated ministries not only disregard parents, but actively work against them. As a result, they are unable to advance the scriptural mandate for multigenerational discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:2). Furthermore, they generate a group of individuals who lack coherence, lack knowledge of the Bible and theology, and are incapable of explaining or practicing Christianity. Scripture, however, assigns the primary duty of encouraging the next generation to hope in God to parents rather than the church. It is the obligation of the church to prepare parents to be their children's disciplinarians. An additional function of the church is to support the biblical nurturing taking place in the home (Bettis 2016). Families should be taught by the church to follow the instructions in the Bible and to be held responsible for doing so. The church's role is not to carry out the duties of the saints on their behalf, but to prepare them to do so (Baucham Jr 2011). Renfro makes the argument that churches that equip parents to disciple their children will raise up mature Christians who are driven to share the gospel with the most impoverished people on the planet. That is the real essence of a Christ-centred, scripturally-based, Spirit-led, family-integrated church. The next step is to collaborate with parents in order to produce a generation that loves God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength, not simply a youth group (Mark 12:28–34) (Kahsai 2021). When it comes to helping families,

The vast majority of devout Christians in today's post-Christian society have never received formal mentoring or discipleship. Calling parents to family discipleship, as they did during the Reformation, merely puts more weight on their backs as they are ill-equipped to fulfil this responsibility. The church needs to practically empower and equip parents for the role of family discipleship in addition to calling them to it (Kahsai 2021).

Studies have indicated that including children in Bible studies improves parenting practices and children's development. Family connections benefit from sharing spiritual pursuits such as Bible study. Studying the Bible together on a regular basis helps parents and children communicate better, build stronger relationships, and resolve issues more effectively. The importance of integrating religious activities into family life fosters interpersonal harmony and general well-being. Bible study gatherings frequently offer a forum for family members to communicate their emotions and look to one another for emotional support, improving the family's general emotional health (Mahoney 2010).

Parents who study the Bible with their children feel more competent, confident, and spiritually mature, all of which had a beneficial effect on how they parented. Along with a host of other advantages, these parents feel more purpose and meaning in their parenting duties, as well as better relationships with their wives and children. Also, parents who participate in Bible study feel more connected to others who have similar experiences and ideals, which help them feel less alone(Holmes 2022).

Scripture Union-led support groups are a crucial element of effective faith-based parenting programs, providing a supportive community and facilitating positive outcomes for families. Scripture Union-led support groups give parents a forum to talk about their experiences, ask for guidance, and get emotional support-all while building a feeling of belonging and community. Integrating faith-based principles into parenting programs leads to improvements in family dynamics, child development, and parental well-being. The support groups facilitated by Scripture Unions have been identified as a key component of effective faith-based parenting programs, providing a sense of community and belonging among participants(Hodge et al. 2022).

1.3.0 Research Methodology

The section details the research methodology, outlining the approaches and strategies for data collection and analysis. Methodology is a systematic way to solve research problems and understand scientific research processes(Patton et al. 2016). The chapter's main purpose is to describe the methodological approach used in the study, including research orientation, data collection methods, informant selection, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. The aim is to ensure transparency and clarity in the research process by providing a comprehensive account of the methodology used.

1.3.1 Research design

A research design is a comprehensive plan that outlines the methods and procedures for conducting research, serving as a blueprint for the entire process (Zikmund et al. 2000). It specifies the rationale and methods for data collection, the type and sources of data, who collects the data, and how it is analyzed. The purpose of a research design is to provide a clear strategy for achieving research objectives, ensuring a systematic and focused approach. It helps guide the research process, increases efficiency, and enhances the validity and reliability of the findings (Collis and Hussey 2009).

This study used an exploratory research design to investigate parenting practices among Christian parents in selected Dioceses of Western Uganda. The objectives were to understand the parenting practices used by Christian parents, their impact on children's moral development, and the church's response to these practices. The exploratory design was chosen because the topic had not been extensively studied in this context. This design allowed for flexible and in-depth exploration, enabling the researcher to gather new information and uncover unanticipated themes.

The study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. As argued by Creswell (2014), a mixed-methods approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. This research used quantitative methods (surveys) to identify the prevalence of certain parenting practices, and qualitative methods (focus group discussions) to explore the in-depth experiences and perceptions of participants. This triangulated approach allowed the researcher to achieve a richer and more nuanced understanding of the research questions. Qualitative methods were employed to explore participants' experiences, meanings, and perspectives on parenting practices, their effects on children's morality, and the church's response. This involved small-group discussions, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, and text/document analysis, chosen for their ability to provide rich, detailed insights into human experiences (Given 2008). Quantitative methods were used to analyze demographic characteristics, providing statistical descriptions and generalizable data. Combining both approaches aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, leveraging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.3.2 Area of Study

Table 1.1: Showing the Parishes that participated in the study

S/N	Diocese	Parish
1	Ankole	St. James Cathedral, Ruharo
		Rwentanga
		Kashaka
		Nyakayojo
		Rubaare
2	Rwenzori	St. John's Cathedral, Kabarole
		All Saints Kamengo
		St. Luke's Kidukuru
3	Kigezi	Cathedral Parish (St. Peters Cathedral, Rugarama)
		Buhumba
		Bugongi (St. James Bugongi)
4	Bunyoro - Kitara	
		St. Peter's Cathedral, Duhaga
		Bujumbura
		All Saints

Source: Field data, 2023

The study was conducted in Western Uganda across four dioceses: Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro-Kitara, and Rwenzori (Table 1.1). A total of 14 parishes were selected, with all five parishes from Ankole Diocese participating, and three parishes from each of the other three dioceses. Most participants were chosen from the respective Cathedrals for ease of access and convenience. This selection process ensured a representative sample from each diocese, allowing the study to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.

1.3.3 Target population and Sample Size

Table 1.2: Target Population

Target Respondents	No. of parishes	Ave. No. of Christian families	Total No. of Christian families	Sample size
St. James Cathedral, Ruharo	5	456	2,280	
St. Peter's Cathedral, Duhaga	10	336	3,360	
St. Peters Cathedral, Rugarama (Cathedral Parish)	6	325	1,950	
St. John's Cathedral, Kabarole	8	314	2,512	
Sub Total	29		10,102	370
Key Informants	No.			
Deans	4			
Parish Priests	11			
Lay Readers	11			
Proprietors of day care centres	8			
Children Coordinators	8			
Police Child Protection Unit	8			
Sub Total	50			44
Grant Total				414

Source: Church Records, 2022

The study was conducted among Christian families in Western Uganda, covering 14 parishes across four dioceses (Table 1.2). In Ankole Diocese, the parishes included St. James Cathedral, Kashaka, Rubaare, Rwentanga, and Nyakayojo. In Rwenzori Diocese, the parishes were St. John's Cathedral, Kabarole, All Saints Kamengo, and St. Luke's Kidukuru. In Kigezi Diocese, the parishes were Cathedral Parish, Rugarama, Buhumba, and St. James Bugongi. In Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, the parishes included St. Peter's Cathedral, Duhaga, and All Saints. The study targeted adult Christians, children aged 12-18 from Christian families, and key informants such as Diocesan Deans, Parish Priests, Lay readers, daycare center proprietors, children coordinators, and the Police Child Protection Unit.

The sample size for the study was determined using the Morgan Table (Appendix 4). For Christian families, 370 respondents were selected from a population of 10,102, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. For key informants, 44 respondents were chosen from a population of 50, using the same criteria. This resulted in a total sample size of 414 respondents. The study aimed to gather insights from a representative sample of Christian families and key informants in Western Uganda.

1.3.3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The study examined socio-demographic factors of family triads (parents and children) to understand study variables. This included parents' employment status, socio-economic status, number of children, parents' ages, highest education levels, and levels of religiosity. The focus was on children aged 12-18, as they are most affected by parenting practices. Findings were presented using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), tables to organize data, and pie charts to visualize certain demographics. Frequencies and percentages were chosen for their accessibility to a wide audience.

Table 1.3: Demographic Characteristics

S/N	Diocese/Demographic characteristics	Response	n(%)
1	Ankole	St. James Cathedral, Ruharo	33(30.8)
		Rwentanga	18(16.8)
		Kashaka	16(15.0)
		Nyakayojo	13(12.1)
		Rubaare	27(25.2)
		Total	107(100)
2	Rwenzori	St. John's Cathedral, Kabarole	44(57.9)
		All Saints Kamengo	18(23.7)
		St. Luke's Kidukuru	14(18.4)
		Total	76(100)
3	Kigezi	Cathedral Parish (St. Peters Cathedral, Rugarama	38(52.1)
		Buhumba	21(28.8)
		Bugongi (St. James Bugongi)	14(19.2)
		Total	73(100)
4	Bunyoro – Kitara	St. Peter's Cathedral, Duhaga	35(62.5)
		Cathedral Parish	13(23.2)
		All Saints	8(14.3)
		Total	56(100)
5	Gender	Male	147(47.1)
		Female	165(52.9)
		Total	312(100)
S/N	Diocese/Demographic characteristics	Response	n(%)

6	Age (Adults)	Less than 20 years	11(3.5)
		From 21 to 30 years	85(27.2)
		From 31 to 40 years	73(23.4)
		From 41 to 50 years	44(14.1)
		Above 50 years	27(8.7)
		Total	240(100)
7	Age (Children)	From 15 to 18 years	64(88.9)
		From 11 to 14 years	8(11.1)
		Below 11 years	0
		Total	72(100)
8	Marital status	Married	153(63.8)
		Single	47(19.6)
		Widow	25(10.4)
		Widower	11(4.6)
		Divorced	4(1.7)
		Total	240(100)
9	Highest educational level	University graduate	79(32.9)
		Secondary	65(27.9)
		Primary	35(14.6)
		Diploma	34(14.2)
		Certificate from a tertiary institution	14(5.8)
		Not Educated	13(5.4)
		Total	240(100)
10	What is your occupation?	Businessman/woman	65(27.1)
		Church employee	57(23.8)
		Civil servant	51(21.3)
		Health worker	24(10.0)
		Peasant farmer	22(9.2)
		Agronomist	16(6.7)
		Farm worker	5(2.1)
		Total	240(100)
11	What is your average monthly income?	From UGX601,000 to UGX800,000	80(33.3)
		Above UGX1,000,000	61(25.4)
		From UGX401,000 to UGX600,000	35(14.6)
		From UGX801,000 to UGX1,000,000	33(13.8)
		From UGX201,000 to UGX400,000	20(8.3)
		No response	6(2.5)
		Less than UGX200,000	5(2.1)
		Total	240(100)

Source: Field Data, 2023

Table 3 displays the distribution of respondents across the selected Dioceses and Parishes (Table 1.3). In Ankole Diocese, there were 107 respondents (34.3%), in Rwenzori Diocese, 76 respondents (24.4%), in Kigezi Diocese, 73 respondents (23.4%), and in Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, 56 respondents (17.9%). The total response rate was 75.3% (312 out of 414) of the sample size. Furthermore, the gender distribution of respondents showed that there were 165 female respondents (52.9%) and 147 male respondents (47.1%), indicating a slightly higher participation rate from female respondents compared to male respondents.

The distribution of respondents across different dioceses has significant implications for studying church responses to parenting practices. Firstly, the distribution across Ankole, Rwenzori, Kigezi, and Bunyoro-Kitara dioceses suggests regional variations in church responses, influenced by unique cultural, social, and historical factors in each diocese. Secondly, the gender distribution (52.9% female, 47.1% male) offers insights into sample demographics. The researcher analyzed how gender influences perceptions, roles, and responsibilities in parenting practices within the church context, revealing differences in approaches between men and women and how the church responds to these distinctions. These findings helped the researcher identify potential areas of focus for further investigation and provided a more nuanced understanding of how church responses to parenting practices vary across different regions and gender dynamics.

The table indicates that 240 adults (76.9%) aged above 18 years and 72 children (23.1%) aged between 10 and 18 years participated in the study. Among adult respondents, the majority (27.2%) were aged 21 to 30 years, followed by those aged 31 to 40 years (23.4%), 41 to 50 years (14.1%), and above 50 years (8.7%). Adults aged less than 20 years comprised only 3.5% of the respondents. This finding has several implications for studying church responses to parenting practices. Firstly, the distribution of adult respondents across different age ranges reflects diverse generational perspectives on parenting practices within the church. Younger adults (20-30 years) likely have different experiences, beliefs, and attitudes towards parenting practices compared to older adults (41 years and above). Understanding these generational differences is crucial for analyzing the diversity of viewpoints within the church community. Additionally, the predominance of younger adult respondents suggests a high level of interest and engagement in

parenting practice issues among younger generations within the church. This highlights the importance of addressing contemporary parenting challenges and adapting church responses to meet the needs of younger parents.

The study included 240 adults (76.9%) aged above 18 years and 72 children (23.1%) aged between 10 and 18 years. Most adult respondents were aged 21-30 years (27.2%), followed by those aged 31-40 years (23.4%), 41-50 years (14.1%), above 50 years (8.7%), and less than 20 years (3.5%). This age distribution has several significant implications for the study of church responses to parenting practices: Younger adults (aged 20-30 years) have different experiences, beliefs, and attitudes towards parenting practices compared to older adults (aged 41 years and above). This generational divide is essential for understanding the diversity of viewpoints within the church community. The predominance of younger adult respondents suggests a high level of interest and engagement in issues related to parenting practices among younger generations within the church. This indicates that younger parents are actively seeking guidance and support for their parenting roles.

The research emphasizes the need for the church to respond to modern parenting challenges and adapt its approach to support younger parents. This requires developing innovative programs, providing relevant resources, and creating targeted support networks that cater to the unique needs and preferences of younger families. Recognizing generational differences is vital for understanding the diverse perspectives within the church community. By acknowledging these differences, church leaders can develop more effective and inclusive strategies that resonate with both younger and older generations. The findings stress the importance of the church adapting to the changing needs of its younger members while considering the varied experiences and attitudes across different age groups.

The study found that most child participants were aged 15-18 years (88.9%), while only a small portion were aged 11-14 years (11.1%), with no children below 11 years participating. This age distribution has several implications: This participation rates reflect parental preferences, indicating that parents of older children are more comfortable allowing them to participate in research. In contrast, parents of younger children may have concerns about their ability to

contribute meaningfully to the study. The predominance of older children in the sample affects the interpretation and generalizability of the findings. Since the data is mainly based on older children's experiences, it may not fully represent the views and experiences of younger children. This limits the applicability of the results to the broader child population within the church community.

The lack of representation from younger children means the findings might not capture the full range of experiences and perspectives. Consequently, any conclusions drawn from the study may be more relevant to the older segment of the child population and less so to younger children. Future studies might need to employ strategies to better include younger children, such as using age-appropriate methods or addressing parental concerns, to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the entire child population within the church community. While the study provides valuable insights into the perspectives of older children, the limited participation of younger children highlights the need for careful consideration of age distribution to enhance the generalizability and applicability of research findings.

1.3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study utilized three sampling techniques; stratified, simple random and purposeful sampling.

1.3.4.1 Purposeful sampling

The study selected four Dioceses in Western Uganda based on their status as the original dioceses from which the present ones were established. The purposeful sampling method was employed to select participants relevant to the research objectives, ensuring a representative sample and enhancing the study's validity and reliability.

Purposive sampling involves identifying cases that meet specific criteria and provide rich information about the phenomenon under study. In this case, Parish Priests, Lay Readers, daycare center proprietors, Children Coordinators, and other key informants were selected using this method. These respondents were interviewed in their respective offices to gather insights relevant to the research goals.

1.3.4.2 Convenience sampling technique

The research aimed to include a wide range of church members with various levels of involvement. Therefore, to enable a broad overview of the church's response to parenting practices, convenience sampling technique was employed allowing the researcher to gather data quickly from a wide range of church members who were readily accessible during church services and events. This method provided a general understanding of the church community's views and responses to parenting practices.

1.3.4.3 Snowball sampling technique

The research also aimed to understand the perspectives of Christian parents and children aged below 18 years whose parents were Protestants. In this case, the snowball sampling technique was used to identify the participants to the study.

1.3.4.4 Stratified

Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups, or strata, and then randomly selecting samples from each subgroup. As noted by Singleton & Straits (2010), this method ensures that the sample is highly representative of the population by proportionally sampling from each subgroup (dioceses). This approach significantly reduced sampling bias, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings as they are more generalizable to the broader population. It also contributed to the overall reliability of the data, as it ensures that each subgroup is adequately represented in the final sample. In this study, the researcher employed stratified sampling to select parishes from dioceses by categorizing them as urban or rural. Three parishes were chosen from each diocese, ensuring representation from both urban and rural areas. This method ensured that the sample reflected the diversity within the dioceses and improved the accuracy of the study's findings compared to simple random sampling, especially in cases of population variability.

1.3.5 Data Collection Methods

This qualitative research employed a multi-method approach, utilizing four data collection methods to comprehensively explore the research objectives: interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and surveys. Interviews allowed for personalized conversations, providing detailed perspectives. Focus group discussions facilitated group exploration of shared experiences. Document analysis provided contextual information and historical background. Surveys enabled data collection from a larger sample size. Employing multiple methods allowed for triangulation, complementarity, and enhancement of findings, increasing robustness and reliability. This approach aimed to produce more compelling and nuanced insights compared to single-method studies, enriching the understanding of the research objectives.

1.3.6 Research instruments

The study employed three main data collection instruments: a survey questionnaire, an interview guide, and an interview schedule. These instruments were carefully designed to gather comprehensive and detailed data from participants, aiming to provide a thorough understanding of the research phenomenon. Each instrument was tailored to elicit specific information relevant to the research objectives.

1.3.6.1 Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire used in the study was structured and self-administered. It comprised closed-ended questions and Likert scales to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire covered diverse aspects of parenting practices, church responses, and demographic information, providing a comprehensive overview of the research areas.

1.3.6.2 Interview guide

This was a semi-structured guide used to conduct in-depth interviews with participants. It included open-ended questions and probes to gather detailed, qualitative data focusing on exploring participants' experiences, beliefs, and opinions related to parenting practices and church responses.

1.3.6.3 Interview schedule

The structured interview guide developed by the researcher facilitated interviews with key informants and experts. It comprised predefined questions and topics to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in data collection. However, it also allowed flexibility for probing and exploring additional insights during the interviews.

1.3.7 Data Sources

Data sources were both primary and secondary data. The primary data was derived from respondents' answers. While secondary data was derived from the findings stated in published and unpublished documents and literatures related to the research problem. These were based on the recent literatures on the internet related to the Church's response to parenting practices.

1.3.8 Data Collection Procedure

A structured approach to data collecting is interviewing or using questionnaires or other standardized instruments to gather information from respondents (Brewerton and Millward 2001). Following university approval, the researcher conducted a survey using a drop-and-pick-later method, helped non-educated respondents by reading questions in the local language, organized focus group discussions (FGDs) through Parish Priests with participant consent, and conducted in-depth interviews with key informants using an interview guide. All proceedings were recorded for later playback. This systematic and ethical approach ensured thorough data collection, with informed consent obtained from all participants.

1.3.9 Data quality control

The researcher implemented several data quality control methods to ensure the accuracy, reliability, completeness, and consistency of the data. These methods included pilot testing of the survey questionnaire and interview guide, training of data collectors, pre-testing of data collection instruments, data validation, data cleaning, data verification, and adherence to data collection protocols. These measures were crucial for ensuring that the data was accurate.

1.3.10 Strategy for data Processing and Analysis

1.3.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher employed a systematic qualitative data analysis (QDA) process, which involved organizing data, coding, category refinement, analysis, interpretation, cross-method comparison, narrative description, contextualization, and computer-aided analysis. Transcripts and documents were organized, coded, and analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns. Findings were interpreted within the research context, compared across methods, and described narratively with illustrative quotes. The analysis was situated within the broader research topic and theoretical framework. Additionally, computer-aided analysis using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) facilitated data entry and analysis, ensuring a thorough and rigorous examination of qualitative data.

1.3.10.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was done for the numerical data using descriptive statistics generated by the SPSS computer package. The coded data was then entered into the computer to generate the mode, mean, standard deviation, and measures of dispersion such as percentages and ranks.

1.3.10.3 Methodological constraints

The study identified several limitations:

- a) Participants may have provided socially acceptable responses rather than their genuine beliefs or behaviors exhibiting social desirability bias.
- b) The findings may not be applicable to other denominations or regions beyond the selected Dioceses in Western Uganda highlighting limited generalizability.
- c) Participants may have been hesitant to discuss sensitive topics like parenting practices and children's antisocial behaviors denoting sensitivity of topics.
- d) Some participants initially mistook the researcher for an official from the Deanery, which could have impacted their willingness to share information indicating participants' suspicions.

To mitigate these limitations, standardized instruments were used, participants were assured of confidentiality and the academic nature of the study, and guidance was provided to encourage honest responses. Despite these limitations, the study's findings still provide valuable insights into the Church's response to parenting practices and youth morality in Western Uganda.

1.3.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher took several measures to address ethical considerations in the study. These were:

- a) Obtaining approval from the Uganda Christian University (UCU) Ethical Review Board before commencing the study.
- b) Providing participants with an information sheet explaining the study's purpose and obtained their consent.
- c) Ensuring confidentiality through use of pseudonyms, lockable cabinets, and password-protected data.
- d) Respecting participants' privacy by allowing them to choose the time and extent of their participation.
- e) Protecting respondents' anonymity by not linking their identities to their responses.

f) Adhering to ethical standards regarding copyright and acknowledged all sources of information from other scholars.

g) Minimizing distress and ensured no harm came to child participants.

These measures aimed to ensure responsible and ethical conduct of the study.

Preventing Researcher Bias: To ensure objectivity, a neutral stance was maintained during all data collection activities. In qualitative data collection, a structured interview guide was used and avoided leading questions to prevent influencing participants' responses. The mixed-methods design itself served as a control against a single form of bias; quantitative data provided objective, numerical insights, which were then contextualized and validated by the qualitative findings. Also included, was a section in the thesis reflecting on my own positionality as a researcher from the same cultural background, and how I was conscious of this potential for bias during data interpretation.

Ensuring Data Integrity: Data integrity was ensured through several deliberate steps. First, all primary data, from both the surveys and the focus group discussions, was collected first hand. For the focus groups, audio recordings were used with the participants' explicit consent to ensure an accurate and complete transcription of their responses. This minimized the risk of human error or selective transcription. All data was securely stored in encrypted digital formats and on password-protected devices to prevent unauthorized access or loss. A systematic coding and thematic analysis process were used for the qualitative data, and standard statistical software (SPSS) for the quantitative data, which followed established, verifiable procedures to ensure the analysis was accurate and not manipulated.

These measures were consistently applied to ensure the trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the study's findings, strengthening its academic rigor.

CHAPTER TWO

PARENTING PRACTICES IN SELECTED DIOCESES IN WESTERN UGANDA

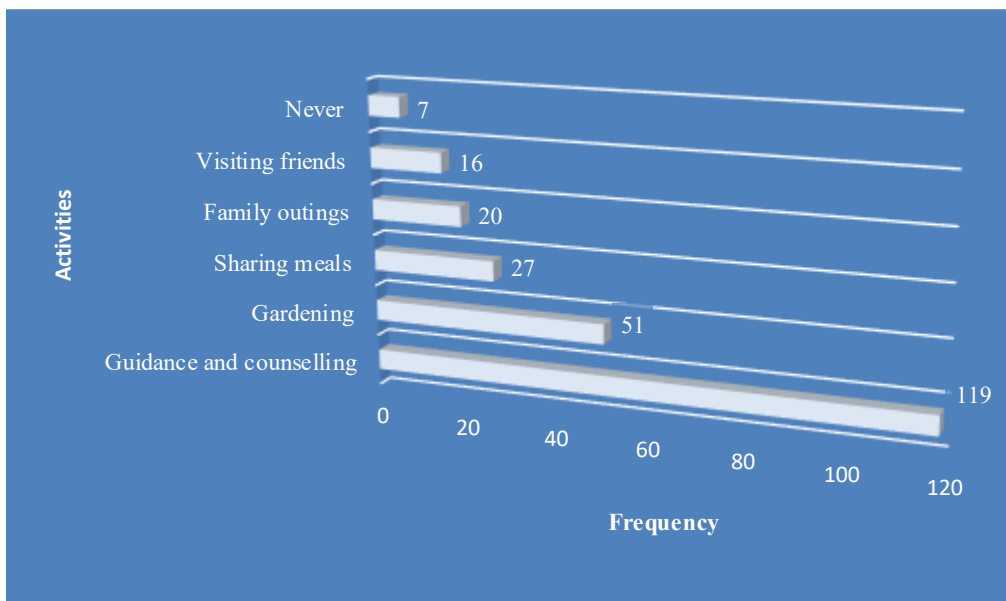
2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis related to the first objective of the study, which was to investigate the parenting practices among Christian families in selected dioceses in Western Uganda. The investigation addressed these key questions: Parenting practices: What specific methods and strategies do parents/guardians use in raising their children? Children's activities: What activities do children participate in when they are not doing house chores? Church involvement: Which church activities are children most involved in? Parental closeness: Which parent do children feel closer to, and how frequently do they interact with their parents? The chapter provides detailed responses to these questions, offering insights into the daily lives, religious engagement, and family dynamics of children within these Christian families.

2.2.1 Parenting practices employed by parents in the upbringing of children among the Christians families

The research found out that parents employ many parenting practices in western Ugandan to upbringing their children, as shown below.

Figure 2.1: Activities when free from work



The study explored the activities that parents involve their children in when they are free from work and other responsibilities (Figure 2.1). Results show that 119 respondents (49.6%) engaged their children in guidance and counselling activities. This high percentage indicates a strong focus on providing emotional support and mentorship, highlighting the importance of open communication and addressing children's psychosocial needs within the family. This finding is consistent with Gerber et al., (2016); Kordi & Baharudin, (2010) who observe that parents teach children emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills through their interactions and guidance. These are positive parenting practices that foster socio-emotional growth through creation of secure attachments between parent and child. This emotional bond is essential for the child's ability to form healthy relationships. Furthermore, the finding that 49.6% of respondents engage their children in guidance and counselling activities has several important implications.

The emphasis on guidance and counselling suggests that parents prioritize their children's emotional well-being. This practice likely contributes to a supportive family environment where children feel valued and understood. Regular engagement in guidance and counselling fosters open communication between parents and children. This parenting approach helps children express their feelings and concerns more freely, leading to stronger family bonds. By providing a platform for guidance and counselling, parents address and resolve conflicts or issues that arise within the family, promoting a harmonious household. In this regard, Bretherton (1985) notes that children's positive development relies on growing up in an environment that meets their emotional needs, helping them develop coping mechanisms for daily challenges. Fulfilling these emotional needs is crucial for their overall well-being, enabling them to build resilience, form secure attachments, regulate emotions, and develop positive self-esteem.

Consistent parental guidance and counselling positively impacts children's psychosocial development, helping them develop better coping mechanisms, self-esteem, and social skills. Through counselling sessions, parents instill values and principles, guiding their children's moral and ethical development. This leads to well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of right and wrong. Children who receive regular guidance and counselling are likely to perform better academically and exhibit positive behaviours, as they have a stable support system that encourages their growth and development. Weisner (2002) suggests that early child development

relies significantly on parents' ability to make their children feel valued and a sense of belonging. Parents also foster social skills by teaching traits like self-control, collaboration, and empathy, essential for healthy relationships. Strong parent-child relationships encourage social skill development. The importance of early parent-child interactions is supported by various theoretical frameworks, such as ecocultural theories, family system theories, and attachment theory, all highlighting their role in enhancing children's social competence (Cox and Paley 1997; Ainsworth and Bowlby 1991).

Families that emphasize guidance and counselling contribute to the overall stability and cohesion of the community. Children from such families are more likely to grow into responsible and well-adjusted adults. With a focus on guidance, children are less likely to engage in antisocial or problematic behaviours, reducing issues such as juvenile delinquency within the community. Parents who actively guide and counsel their children serve as positive role models, not only for their own children but also for other families within the community. For example, Wolnicka et al., (2015) propose that observational research indicates parents significantly influence their children's dietary behaviors by acting as role models. Furthermore, children's intake of fruits and vegetables is closely tied to the food options available at both home and school.

The findings also highlight the need for programs that support parents in providing effective guidance and counselling. Community and the church could develop workshops or resources to assist parents in these roles. On the other hand, schools and educational policymakers might consider integrating parental guidance programs into their curricula, ensuring that children receive consistent support both at home and in educational settings. This conforms with McCarty et al., (2005) assertion that parents training programs that focus on enhancing and maintaining consistent discipline and contingency management improve children's behaviour. Likewise, programs that boost parents' emotional support for their children have also demonstrated positive effects on child behaviour. Finally, the development of mental health initiatives aimed at families, promoting the importance of emotional and psychological support for children.

In regions like Uganda, where traditional practices such as gardening are prevalent, integrating modern parenting practices like counselling helps in bridging generational gaps and modernizing cultural norms. Also, understanding the differences in parenting practices between urban and rural settings helps tailor interventions and support systems that are contextually appropriate and effective. This is unlike studies in China that have consistently shown that rural parents are more likely to adopt over-controlling (Rani and Singh, 2013) and intrusive (Bornstein et al., 2008) parenting styles. Additionally, they often view physical and emotional abuse as acceptable disciplinary methods (Rerkswattavorn and Chanprasertpinyo, 2019). The strong emphasis on guidance and counselling within families indicates a robust approach to nurturing well-rounded individuals. Recognizing and supporting this practice has far-reaching benefits for individual families and the broader community.

Results also show that 51 adult respondents (21.3%) involved their children in gardening. This reflects Uganda's agricultural heritage, where parents teach gardening skills to their children, often prioritizing it over other activities. Gardening fosters a connection with nature, promotes physical activity, and provides experiential learning opportunities. The finding that 21.3% of respondents involved their children in gardening has several layers of significance and implications for both individual and community levels. Modouw (2013) observes that parents with low educational backgrounds often fail to recognize the importance of early childhood education. In Papua's central mountainous region, parents prioritize having their children work in the gardens over attending school. This preference stems from a desire for children to understand and appreciate the natural lifestyle early on, as all other adult family members also work in the gardens. Consequently, many school-age children spend most of their time in the gardens rather than attending school. In this regard, further research is needed to establish how educational backgrounds of Christian parents in Uganda influence their decisions to occupy their children in gardening activities.

Uganda's economy and lifestyle have traditionally been rooted in agriculture. Therefore, involving children in gardening reflects the continuation of this heritage, ensuring that agricultural skills are passed down through generations. Also, in rural areas where land is more available, gardening is a common activity. Whereas in urban settings, although less common due to space constraints, some families still maintain small gardens for especially vegetables. This aligns with the study by Florence K. Nakayi et al. (2020) whose findings indicate that children in rural areas are much more involved in agricultural activities than those in urban areas. Rural children frequently engage in tasks such as planting, weeding, harvesting, and tending to livestock. However, this involvement often conflicts with their schooling, resulting in higher absenteeism and lower academic performance. Conversely, urban children typically participate in agricultural activities after school or during holidays, which lessens the impact on their education. Additionally, children involved in agricultural activities acquire practical skills and knowledge about farming practices, such as understanding crop cycles, animal husbandry, and basic agronomy, which can be beneficial for their future livelihoods.

Last but not least, concerning environmental stewardship, and the importance of sustainable practices, children learn practical skills such as planting, weeding, and harvesting. These are valuable skills and knowledge throughout their lives. Gardening is also a form of physical exercise that helps children stay active and healthy. Schools and educational programs could incorporate gardening into their curriculum to provide experiential learning opportunities. This helps children develop a better understanding of biology, ecology, and sustainability. By learning gardening skills, children acquire practical knowledge that are useful in future careers or as a means of self-sufficiency. The study by Sarah Taylor et al., (2019) highlights the benefits and challenges of incorporating gardening programs into education. According to her, by integrating gardening into subjects such as biology, environmental science, and math, students apply theoretical knowledge through hands-on experiences, leading to improved understanding and engagement. The study further emphasizes that gardening activities, boost student interest and academic performance, foster teamwork, communication, and leadership skills, promote responsibility and self-esteem, have calming effects, reducing stress and improving mental health. Gardening programs in educational settings offer a holistic learning experience, combining academic growth with social, emotional, and environmental benefits. Nevertheless,

adverse climate and weather conditions impacts the success of school gardens, especially in regions with extreme climates. Also, urban schools might face challenges with limited outdoor space for gardening activities.

Gardening promotes physical activity, which is essential for children's physical development and overall health. It helps combat sedentary lifestyles and encourages outdoor activity. Engaging with nature through gardening has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental well-being. It provides a calming environment that can help children relax and focus. Gardening is a shared family activity that promotes quality time together and strengthens family bonds. It encourages teamwork and communication among family members. Consequently, children who participate in gardening learn responsibility and gain a sense of ownership and pride in their work, fostering independence and confidence.

By involving children in gardening, parents help preserve Uganda's rich agricultural heritage and cultural traditions for future generations. This activity instills in children a deep appreciation and respect for their cultural roots. Community gardens, in particular, promote unity and cooperation among people of different ages and backgrounds, working together towards a shared goal. Moreover, gardening teaches children essential lessons in sustainability, environmental responsibility, and the value of growing their own food. Through gardening, children develop a profound connection with nature, learning to cherish and protect their environment, and cultivating a lifelong commitment to environmental awareness and advocacy.

Through recognizing and harnessing the advantages of engaging children in gardening, communities and educational systems will acquire the potential to build capacity to nurture the growth of individuals who are not only healthier and more knowledgeable, but also environmentally aware and responsible. This, in turn, leads to a more sustainable future, as these individuals develop essential skills and values such as: improved physical and mental health through outdoor activity and connection with nature, enhanced scientific literacy and understanding of ecological concepts, development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, cultivation of environmental stewardship and conservation ethics, increased self-sufficiency and food security through hands-on experience with growing and harvesting food, and strengthened community bonds and social connections through shared gardening

experiences. By integrating gardening into educational and community programs, we can empower future generations to become active caretakers of the planet and inspire a lifelong appreciation for nature and the environment.

The study revealed that 27 respondents (11.3%) took part in sharing meals as a key activity, which strengthens family bonds and provide a platform for communication. Sharing meals emphasizes the importance of family meals as a time for bonding, sharing experiences, and fostering communication among family members. Encouraging regular family meals together strengthens family ties and provides a supportive environment for children.

Sharon et al. (2018) emphasize that family meals facilitate communication and bonding among family members, enhancing family relationships and fostering a sense of togetherness. Regular family meals are linked to better child well-being, including improved physical and mental health, academic performance, and social skills. The quality of family relationships plays a crucial role in the positive effects of family meals on adolescent well-being. Other studies show that frequent family meals result in lower rates of substance use and depressive symptoms over time. Factors such age, gender, and family structure influence the likelihood of shared meals, with adolescents more likely to have family meals on weekends and at home. Adolescent girls are less likely to participate in family meals compared to boys. Further research is needed to establish the extent to which this finding is valid in the Ugandan context.

Meals are a key framework for socialization and the transmission of cultural norms and family traditions. They provide an opportunity for parents to impart values, manners, and cultural practices to their children. Research by Ochs and Shohet (2006) show how mealtime conversations contribute to children's social and linguistic development. These interactions help children learn to communicate effectively, listen actively, and respect others' perspectives.

From the study findings, 20 respondents (8.3%) cited family outings, emphasizing the importance of quality time and recreational activities to foster family cohesion. According to the respondents, family outings highlight the value of spending quality time together as a family through recreational activities. They promote bonding, create lasting memories, and offer

opportunities for shared experiences and laughter. Hill's (2012) study explores the effects of family outings on family members' well-being, emphasizing the psychological and emotional benefits of taking breaks from daily routines and stressors. The research findings emphasize the importance of leisure activities in enhancing family cohesion and individual mental health.

According to Hill (2012), spending quality time with family through outings offers substantial mental health benefits, providing a much-needed break from daily stressors and anxiety. This temporary reprieve allows family members to unwind, leading to improved mental well-being, enhanced mood, increased energy, and better overall mental health. Following a family outing, individuals tend to return to their daily routines with renewed focus and productivity. Nonetheless, shared experiences and memories created during family outings foster stronger family bonds, improved communication, and a deeper sense of connection. Hill also notes that many family outings involve physical activities, which promote physical health and well-being by reducing sedentary behavior. Ensuring access to public spaces, recreational facilities, and community events can facilitate family outings and contribute to overall public health and well-being.

Family outings offer a unique opportunity for family members to connect and bond in a relaxed and enjoyable environment, fostering stronger emotional relationships and a sense of togetherness. Through shared experiences and activities, family members build lasting memories that become an integral part of their shared history, reinforcing their sense of unity and belonging. These memories contribute to a strong family identity and solidarity, creating a lasting legacy. Moreover, family outings provide a much-needed break from the stresses of daily life, promoting mental well-being and relaxation. Experiencing new environments, such as nature or amusement parks, can have a calming and rejuvenating effect, allowing family members to return to their daily routines with renewed energy and positivity.

Family outings offer a valuable learning experience for children, broadening their horizons through new experiences and environments that support their cognitive and personal growth. Visits to museums, historical landmarks, and natural parks provide interactive learning opportunities that complement traditional education. Additionally, many family outings involve physical activities like climbing, swimming, or team sports, which promote physical fitness and overall health. Regular physical activity benefits both children and adults, contributing to overall well-being and setting a foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

Regular family outings play a significant role in strengthening family bonds, as quality time together promotes empathy, understanding, and support among family members. By prioritizing outings, families develop more robust relationships that withstand challenges and conflicts better. Outings offer a relaxed setting for open and honest communication, allowing family members to express themselves more freely and fostering healthier communication habits that extend beyond the outing itself. Most importantly, children who participate in regular family outings exhibit improved behavior due to the positive reinforcement and attention they receive, and the structured yet enjoyable nature of outings provides an opportunity for children to learn essential social skills and appropriate behavior in diverse settings.

The diverse experiences gained from family outings contribute to the well-rounded development of children, including cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Exposure to new environments and activities inspires curiosity and a love for learning. Creating traditions around family outings can strengthen the family's identity and values, providing a sense of continuity and stability. Shared family rituals, such as annual trips or weekend adventures, can become cherished traditions that are passed down through generations. Participating in community events or group outings can help families feel more connected to their community, fostering a sense of belonging and social support. Engaging with other families during outings can build social networks and friendships.

Other 16 respondents (6.7%) involved their children in visiting friends, highlighting the role of social interactions outside the immediate family. Visiting friends indicates the significance of social interactions beyond the immediate family unit. Encouraging children to visit friends fosters social skills, expands their social network, and promotes a sense of belonging within the community. Research conducted by Cohen et al. (2015) emphasizes the vital role of social support from both friends and extended family members in enhancing children's well-being. This support system serves various functions, including offering emotional support, practical assistance, and fostering a sense of belonging, all of which are essential for children's overall development and welfare.

The study indicates that social support helps children cope with stress and emotional challenges, with emotional support encompassing aspects such as listening, empathy, and encouragement, which are crucial for maintaining good mental health. Additionally, friends and extended family members often provide practical help, such as aiding with homework, participating in extracurricular activities, or assisting with day-to-day tasks, thereby lightening the load on children and their immediate families and making daily life more manageable. Furthermore, feeling connected to a network of friends and family members enhances children's sense of belonging and security, which is fundamental for their self-esteem and identity formation.

A study by Cohen et al., (2015) demonstrates the importance of social support from friends and extended family members for children's well-being and development. This support system provides: emotional support (listening, empathy, encouragement) to help children cope with stress and emotional challenges, practical assistance (help with homework, extracurricular activities, daily tasks) to lighten the load on children and their families, and a sense of belonging and security, which is essential for children's self-esteem and identity formation. Social support from friends and extended family members plays a vital role in enhancing children's overall development and welfare, and is crucial for maintaining good mental health.

Similarly, research by Parker and Asher (1987) underscores the critical role of high-quality friendships in promoting children's social and emotional adjustment. These friendships, characterized by closeness, support, and reciprocity, significantly contribute to a child's well-being. High-quality friendships involve a deep sense of connection and intimacy, creating a supportive environment where children feel valued and understood. Moreover, friends provide emotional support during challenging times, aiding children in coping with stress and developing resilience. Reciprocity in high-quality friendships teaches children important values such as sharing, cooperation, and empathy, further contributing to their social and emotional development.

Likewise, the research by Parker and Asher (1987) highlights the importance of high-quality friendships in promoting children's social and emotional well-being. These friendships, characterized by closeness, support and reciprocity contribute to a child's well-being through provision of a sense of connection and intimacy, offering emotional support during challenging times and teaching important values such as sharing, cooperation, and empathy. High-quality friendships help children develop resilience, feel valued and understood, and support their overall social and emotional development.

The presence of a supportive social network significantly reduces feelings of loneliness and anxiety in children. Emotional support from friends and family members helps children navigate difficult times and fosters resilience. Furthermore, practical help from friends and family contributes to better academic performance and the development of essential life skills. Children who receive assistance with their studies and activities are more likely to succeed and feel confident in their abilities. Involving extended family members in children's lives strengthens family ties and creates a more robust support system. This network provides children with diverse role models and sources of guidance. Lastly, children with high-quality friendships tend to have better social skills. They are more adept at handling social interactions, resolving conflicts, and building new relationships. This social competence is crucial for success in school and other social settings.

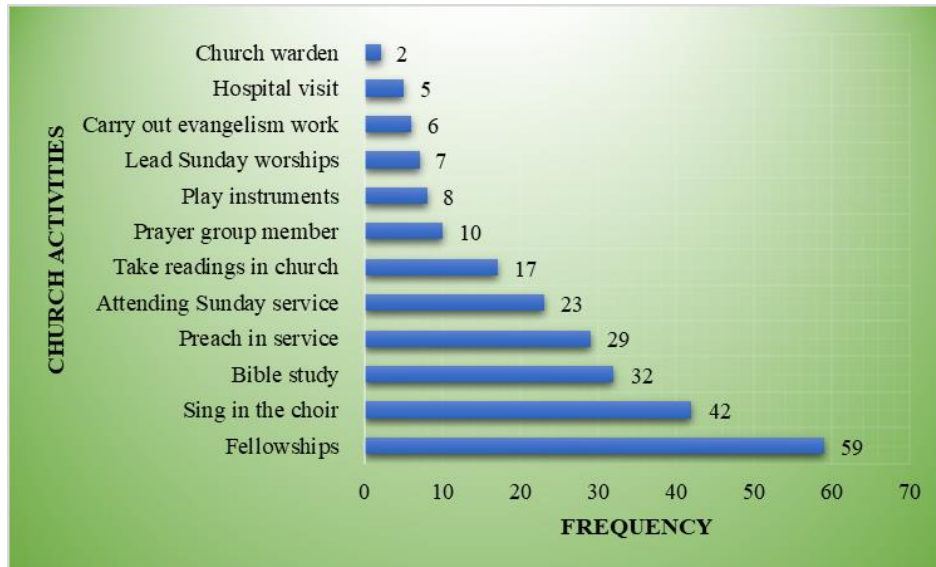
The finding that 7 respondents (2.7%) did not involve their children in any activities when free from house chores suggests that: These parents may not be spending quality time with their children, potentially leading to a sense of neglect or abandonment. Not engaging in activities with children may mean missing opportunities for bonding, teaching life skills, and creating lasting memories. This lack of engagement may negatively impact children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, potentially leading to behavioural problems or difficulties in school. This finding may indicate a more authoritarian or neglectful parenting style, which has long-term negative consequences for children's well-being and relationships. This finding may also be related to socio-economic factors such as poverty, stress, or lack of resources, which limit parents' ability to engage in activities with their children.

The implications of this finding revolve around offering parenting support and resources, such as parenting classes or community programs, that may help parents develop healthy relationships with their children, providing suggestions for simple, low-cost activities that parents can do with their children to encourage engagement and bonding, and encouraging parents to participate in community activities and events that help them meet other parents, build social connections, and find support.

2.2.2 Activities parents involve children in as a means to enhance parenting practices

In order to establish the church activities children were mostly engaged in, the following question was asked: What church activities are children mostly engaged in?

Figure 2.2: Church activities children were mostly involved in



The study finding that 59 respondents (24.6%) involve their children in fellowship activities highlights the significant role these activities play in Christian parenting practices (Figure 2.2). This involvement has multifaceted implications for the individual development of children and the broader community. Smith and Denton (2005) emphasize that regular participation in religious activities, including fellowship, is associated with higher levels of religious commitment and spiritual development in adolescents. Fellowship activities provide children with a structured environment to learn and practice their faith. This regular engagement helps deepen their understanding of Christian teachings and fosters a personal relationship with God.

Activities such as Bible study, prayer meetings, and worship services allow children to apply biblical principles in their daily lives, enhancing their spiritual maturity. Regnerus (2003) note that adolescents who are actively involved in church-related activities are more likely to report higher levels of emotional well-being and social support. Fellowship activities create a supportive community where children express their feelings, share experiences, and seek guidance. This emotional support is crucial for their mental health and well-being.

Interacting with peers and adults in a faith-based setting helps children develop social skills such as communication, empathy, and teamwork. These skills are essential for forming healthy relationships both within and outside the church community. Benson et al. (2003) highlight that involvement in religious communities helps children internalize moral values and ethical behaviour, as these settings provide consistent messages about right and wrong. Fellowship activities often include discussions on ethical dilemmas and moral choices, helping children develop a strong moral compass. This guidance is critical in shaping their character and decision-making processes.

Within the fellowship, children observe and learn from the behaviour of adults and peers who exemplify Christian values, reinforcing their understanding of ethical conduct. Sharon et al., (2018) suggest that shared religious activities can enhance family cohesion and provide a common framework for values and communication. When parents and children participate together in fellowship activities, it fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose. This joint involvement can strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories.

Parents who actively engage in their children's spiritual activities model the importance of faith, demonstrating a commitment to their spiritual upbringing. Dollahite and Marks (2009) discuss the role of religious communities in creating supportive networks that extend beyond the nuclear family, providing additional resources and mentorship for children. Fellowship activities contribute to building a strong, interconnected community where families support one another. This network provides practical help and emotional support during challenging times.

Regular fellowship reinforces shared values and common goals, contributing to the overall moral fabric of the community. This collective approach helps in reducing issues such as juvenile delinquency and promote social harmony. Ochs and Shohet (2006) note that family and community activities, including fellowship, play a significant role in children's social and linguistic development. Participation in fellowship activities that involve discussions, readings, and storytelling can enhance children's language skills and their ability to articulate thoughts and ideas.

Involving children in fellowship activities has profound and multifaceted benefits that extend beyond individual spiritual growth to encompass social, emotional, and moral development. These activities help build a supportive community and strengthen family bonds, contributing to a more cohesive and resilient society. The church, therefore, plays a vital role in facilitating and encouraging such involvement, offering programs and opportunities that support the holistic development of children and families. Recognizing and harnessing these benefits can lead to stronger, more vibrant Christian communities dedicated to nurturing well-rounded, responsible, and spiritually grounded individuals.

The study finding that 42 respondents (17.5%) involve their children in choir singing reflects the significant role of musical activities in Christian upbringing. This involvement has various implications for the personal development of children and the overall community. Quoting relevant studies provides deeper insights into these implications. Smith and Denton (2005) highlight that active participation in church activities, such as singing in the choir, is closely associated with deeper spiritual engagement and a stronger sense of religious identity in adolescents. Singing in the choir allows children to express their faith through music, which can be a profound spiritual experience. This practice helps embed religious teachings and values in their daily lives.

Being part of the choir enhances the worship experience for children, making it more engaging and meaningful. It fosters a sense of belonging to the church community and encourages regular attendance. Ruth G. McRoy et al., (2012) note that group musical activities, such as choir singing, can significantly enhance emotional well-being and social cohesion among participants. Singing in the choir provides an emotional outlet for children, helping them manage stress and emotions. The act of singing releases endorphins, promoting feelings of happiness and relaxation.

Choir participation requires teamwork, listening, and cooperation, which are essential social skills. Children learn to work with others harmoniously, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect. Hallam (2010) notes that musical education, including choir singing, is linked to improved academic performance, enhanced memory, and better cognitive skills in children.

Learning and performing music enhances cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. These benefits extend to academic performance, where musical children often excel in subjects like mathematics and language arts.

Regular choir practice instills discipline and focus in children. The commitment to rehearsals and performances teaches time management and dedication, skills that are beneficial in academic settings. Koops (2012) emphasizes the importance of cultural activities in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and artistic expression among youth. Choirs often perform a variety of music, including traditional hymns and contemporary Christian songs. This diversity helps children appreciate and preserve their cultural and religious heritage.

Involving children in choir singing has multifaceted benefits that extend beyond the spiritual dimension to include social, emotional, cognitive, and cultural dimensions. This activity helps children develop essential skills and values, enhances their well-being, and strengthens community bonds. The church plays a crucial role in facilitating and encouraging choir participation, providing opportunities for children to grow in faith, character, and community. Recognizing and leveraging these benefits can lead to a more vibrant, cohesive, and resilient church community, nurturing well-rounded, spiritually grounded individuals.

Concerning Bible study involvement, 32 respondents (13.3%) involved their children in Bible study. Mahoney et al. (2018) note that shared spiritual practices such as Bible study enhance parent-child bonds, communication, and conflict resolution skills. Collins et al. (2014) reported that parents engaging in Bible study felt more competent, confident, and experienced spiritual growth, positively influencing their parenting practices. Regular participation in Bible study provides children with a framework for understanding moral values and ethical behavior, which contributes to their social and emotional development. Bible study often involves group activities, fostering a sense of community and belonging among children. This helps them build relationships with peers and mentors, reinforcing their connection to their faith and their church community. Bible study encourages critical thinking and reflection as children engage with complex texts and discuss their meanings. This practice can enhance cognitive skills and improve academic performance.

Incorporating Bible study into children's routines promotes their overall development by addressing their spiritual, social, emotional, and cognitive needs. This practice helps children build solid moral and ethical principles that guide their behavior and decision-making. Regular Bible study enhances family communication, aids in conflict resolution, and strengthens family bonds. Spiritually confident parents are more adept at managing parenting challenges, creating a more positive home atmosphere. Participation in Bible study groups fosters a sense of community in children, improving their social skills and sense of belonging. Additionally, children benefit from the guidance of role models and mentors within their faith community. Collaboration between schools and religious institutions to integrate Bible study programs has the potential to support comprehensive development. Providing resources and support for parents to engage in Bible study with their children further amplify these positive effects, creating a supportive family network. Through Bible study, parents significantly enhance their children's overall well-being and development, laying a strong foundation for their future.

The study finding that 12.1% of children were involved in preaching during church services reveals the emphasis on developing leadership and communication skills in young congregants. This involvement has profound implications for both individual development and the church community as a whole. Smith and Denton (2005) reveal that active involvement in religious practices, such as preaching, significantly deepens adolescents' understanding and commitment. Preaching requires children to engage deeply with scripture and theological concepts, enhancing their spiritual maturity and understanding of their faith. This practice helps solidify their religious beliefs and values. Preparing sermons encourages children to reflect on moral and ethical teachings, fostering a strong sense of right and wrong. This process helps inculcate Christian values that guide their behaviour in daily life.

Bartel (2004) notes that public speaking opportunities in religious settings significantly improve leadership and communication skills in young people. Preaching positions children as leaders within the church community, helping them develop confidence, responsibility, and the ability to inspire others. These leadership skills are transferable to other areas of their lives, including school and future careers. The act of preparing and delivering a sermon hones children's public speaking and communication abilities. They learn to articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively, which is beneficial for academic and social success.

Dollahite and Marks (2009) highlight the importance of intergenerational relationships in religious communities for the moral and spiritual development of young people. Children who preach often receive guidance and support from older, more experienced church members. This mentorship fosters intergenerational bonds and provides valuable role models for young preachers. Preaching activities promote a sense of unity and cooperation among different age groups within the church. These interactions strengthen the overall community fabric and enhance mutual respect and understanding.

Involving children in preaching during church services offers numerous benefits, including enhanced spiritual growth, moral development, leadership skills, communication abilities, and a stronger sense of responsibility and engagement. This practice also promotes intergenerational mentorship and community cohesion. The church is in position to leverage these benefits by providing more opportunities for young congregants to participate in preaching and other leadership roles. Recognizing and supporting children's involvement in preaching leads to the development of well-rounded, confident, and spiritually grounded individuals who contribute positively to both their church and wider community.

The finding that 9.6% of children are mostly involved in attending Sunday services highlights the fundamental role of regular worship in the spiritual and moral development of young congregants. This practice has multiple implications for individual growth, family dynamics, and the broader church community. Smith and Denton (2005) emphasize that regular participation in religious services is crucial for the spiritual development of adolescents. Regular attendance at Sunday services allows children to consistently engage with scripture, worship, and religious teachings, fostering a deeper understanding and commitment to their faith. Exposure to sermons and religious education during services helps inculcate core moral values and ethical principles in children, guiding their behavior and decision-making processes.

Putnam and Campbell (2010) highlight the role of religious services in fostering social networks and a sense of community among congregants. Regular attendance at Sunday services helps children build connections with peers and other church members, fostering a sense of belonging and community. These social networks provide emotional support and a shared sense of identity.

Participating in services allows children to interact with church members of different ages, promoting intergenerational understanding and mentorship.

Regular attendance at Sunday services plays a critical role in the spiritual, moral, and emotional development of children. It strengthens family bonds, fosters community connections, and offers educational and cognitive benefits. By providing a consistent and supportive environment for worship and religious education, churches can significantly contribute to the well-being and holistic growth of young congregants. Encouraging and facilitating children's regular participation in Sunday services can help nurture a generation of spiritually grounded, morally upright, and socially connected individuals who contribute positively to their families, communities, and the broader society.

The finding that 7.1% of children are mostly involved in taking readings in church provides insights into their active participation in religious services. This practice holds significance for both individual development and the broader church community. By referencing relevant studies, we can explore the implications of children taking on this role in church activities. Smith and Denton (2005) highlight the importance of active participation in religious rituals and practices for the spiritual development of children. Involvement in taking readings allows children to actively engage with scripture and participate in the liturgical life of the church. This hands-on experience deepens their understanding of religious texts and strengthens their spiritual connection. By entrusting children with responsibilities such as taking readings, the church communicates a message of inclusion and empowerment, fostering a sense of purpose and belonging among young congregants.

Putnam and Campbell (2010) emphasize the role of religious communities in fostering social connections and a sense of belonging. Involvement in taking readings allows children to interact with fellow congregants and church leaders, forging meaningful interpersonal connections within the faith community. These relationships provide emotional support and a sense of belonging. Engaging with scripture through readings opens avenues for intergenerational dialogue and mentorship within the church. Children have the opportunity to learn from older members of the congregation and benefit from their wisdom and experience.

Children taking readings in church not only contribute to the liturgical life of the community but also experience personal growth and spiritual enrichment. This active participation fosters their spiritual engagement, cultivates confidence and leadership skills, promotes biblical literacy, nurtures a sense of responsibility, and strengthens interpersonal connections within the faith community. Encouraging children to assume such roles in church activities demonstrates the church's commitment to nurturing the spiritual development and active involvement of its youngest members. By empowering children to actively participate in the worship and ministry of the church, congregations can foster a sense of ownership and belonging among young congregants, laying the foundation for their continued spiritual journey and active engagement in religious life.

To explore additional information and implications of the finding that children were mostly involved in prayer groups (4.2%) within the church community, let's delve into a detailed analysis incorporating relevant studies and insights. This investigation will offer a comprehensive understanding of the significance and impact of children's participation in prayer groups. Research by Smith and Denton (2005) underscores the importance of spiritual engagement from a young age, highlighting its role in shaping lifelong faith practices. Children's prayer groups serve as nurturing environments where young members of the congregation can deepen their spiritual connection through prayer, worship, and fellowship. By participating in prayer groups, children develop a strong sense of religious identity and belonging within the church community. This sense of identity serves as a foundation for their ongoing spiritual journey. Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) suggest that involvement in religious activities during childhood shapes individuals' faith trajectories and influences their religious beliefs and practices in adulthood.

Prayer groups provide children with opportunities to express their thoughts, concerns, and gratitude through prayer, promoting emotional expression and well-being. Research by Regnerus (2003) indicates that engagement in religious practices correlates with positive social and emotional outcomes, including higher levels of empathy, altruism, and emotional resilience. Involvement in prayer groups empowers children to take on leadership roles within the church community, such as leading prayers, organizing events, or participating in outreach activities.

Dollahite and Hawkins (1998) highlight the importance of providing children with opportunities for meaningful engagement in religious activities, which fosters a sense of responsibility and leadership skills.

The established that (3.3%) of the children were mostly involved in playing instruments in church. Research by Smith and Denton (2005) highlights the role of music in religious worship, emphasizing its ability to enhance spiritual experiences and foster a sense of community. Children playing instruments in church contribute to the musical worship experience, adding depth and richness to congregational singing and worship services.

Dollahite and Marks (2009) emphasize the importance of providing children with opportunities for creative expression within the church community. Playing instruments in church allows children to express their faith through music, providing them with a platform to share their talents and contribute to the spiritual atmosphere of the worship service. Involvement in music ministry builds children's confidence and self-esteem as they develop their musical abilities and contribute to the worship service. Children playing instruments in church often collaborate with adult musicians and choir members, fostering intergenerational connections and mentorship opportunities. Research by Putnam and Campbell (2010) highlights the importance of intergenerational relationships within religious communities, promoting mutual support, learning, and spiritual growth.

Children playing instruments in church play a valuable role in enhancing the worship experience, fostering their spiritual development, and contributing to the vibrancy of the church community. By providing opportunities for children to express their faith through music, the church nurtures their talents, builds their confidence, and strengthens their connection to the congregation. Encouraging children to participate in music ministry not only enriches their individual spiritual journeys but also fosters a sense of belonging and engagement within the larger faith community.

The involvement of children in leading Sunday worship, albeit a small percentage (2.9%), indicates a significant aspect of religious and community engagement. This participation has various implications for both the children and the church community. Research indicates that

early involvement in public speaking can enhance children's communication skills, self-confidence, and social abilities (Elliott & Chong, 2004). Leading worship services provides children with a platform to practice public speaking in a supportive environment, contributing to their overall personal development.

A study by Roehlkepartain et al., (2006) asserts that active participation in religious activities fosters deeper spiritual understanding and commitment among youth. By leading worship, children gain a more profound understanding of their faith, which can strengthen their spiritual foundation and commitment to religious practices. Involvement in church leadership roles enhances children's sense of belonging to their religious community, promoting positive social relationships and support networks. Intergenerational worship practices are shown to bridge the gap between different age groups, fostering mutual respect and understanding (Allen & Ross, 2012). Children leading worship can strengthen intergenerational ties within the church, creating a more cohesive and inclusive community.

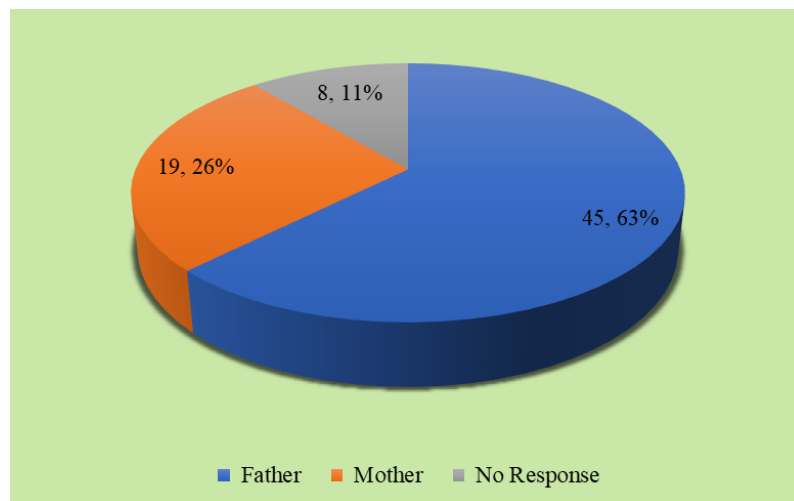
The involvement of children in leading Sunday worship, though a small percentage, plays a crucial role in their personal and spiritual development. It benefits the church community by fostering intergenerational engagement, bringing fresh perspectives, and developing future leaders. The implications of this practice are supported by various studies highlighting its positive impact on both children and the broader church community. The involvement of children in serving as Church Wardens, with only 0.8% participation, indicates a rare but significant form of engagement. This role typically involves responsibilities such as assisting in the organization and administration of church services, which can have various implications for the children and the church community. Research by Benson, Donahue, and Erickson (1980) indicates that leadership roles in religious settings promote the development of responsibility and organizational skills in youth. Serving as Church Wardens allows children to take on leadership responsibilities, enhancing their organizational skills and sense of accountability.

The involvement of children in serving as Church Wardens, although a small percentage, is a noteworthy aspect of church activities. This role fosters leadership, responsibility, and a deeper understanding of church operations among children. It also benefits the church community by enhancing youth engagement, promoting intergenerational collaboration, and bringing fresh perspectives to church administration. The implications of this involvement are supported by various studies highlighting its positive impact on both children and the church community.

2.2.3 Relations of parents with children

In order to ascertain parenting practices that parents employ, the children were asked as to who of their parents they are closer to. The following was the response summarized on Figure 3 was their response.

Figure 2.3: Who of your parents is closer to you than the other?



The study found a significant difference in the children's perceived closeness to their mothers and fathers. The majority of children 45(63%) reported feeling closer to their fathers, while a smaller percentage 19(26%) reported feeling closer to their mothers. A notable proportion 8(11%) did not answer the question, which may indicate uncertainty or difficulty in determining which parent they feel closer to (Figure 2.3).

The fact that most children (63%) feel a stronger connection with their fathers implies a robust father-child bond in these families. This could be a result of cultural or family dynamics where fathers take on a more active role in their children's lives, such as being more involved in daily activities or decision-making. In contrast, a smaller percentage (26%) of children feel closer to their mothers, suggesting that while mother-child bonds are important, they may not be as dominant in this particular context. This disparity could be attributed to various factors like fathers' influence in religious or social upbringing or cultural practices that emphasize paternal presence. These findings align with previous research by Lee and Choi (2018), highlighting the significance of factors such as parental involvement, communication, and conflict resolution in shaping children's perceptions of closeness to their parents.

The 8(11%) of children who did not respond might represent a group experiencing more balanced relationships with both parents, or it could indicate uncertainty or discomfort in expressing a preference. Further exploration would be needed to understand this group better. However, the children who didn't answer might be experiencing a balanced and equal relationship with both parents, making it hard to choose one over the other. Alternatively, they might be unsure or uncomfortable expressing a preference due to complex family dynamics. Children who feel equally close to both parents may enjoy a sense of security and attachment, which is beneficial for their emotional and psychological growth. When both parents are equally involved and supportive, it creates an ideal environment for children to thrive. Research by Ainsworth (1989) on attachment theory emphasizes the significance of secure attachments with both parents. Children with balanced attachments tend to have greater emotional stability and resilience, which is essential for their overall well-being.

On the other hand, children who are unsure or uncomfortable expressing a preference may be experiencing underlying family dynamics such as inconsistent parenting, unresolved conflicts, or emotional stress. According to Bowlby's (1988) work on attachment theory, children in stressful or inconsistent environments may have difficulty forming clear attachment preferences, leading to ambiguous responses. By identifying and addressing the root causes of these non-responses, parents, educators, and support workers could provide targeted support to meet the needs of these children, fostering a balanced and nurturing environment that promotes healthy growth and development.

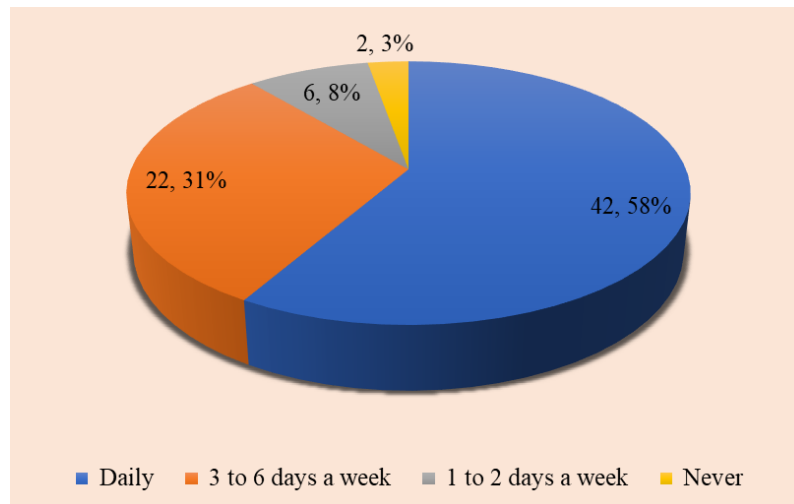
The significant number of children who feel closer to their fathers highlights the vital role fathers play in parenting. Studies have demonstrated that fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives have a positive impact on their emotional development, academic success, and overall well-being. Fathers who are involved in their children's lives had a positive impact on their cognitive development, social skills, and emotional well-being(Kelley et al. 1998). Hence, the church could play a crucial role in promoting and supporting father involvement by offering programs, resources, and initiatives that empower fathers to take an active role in their children's lives and upbringing, ultimately strengthening family bonds and contributing to the healthy development of children.

Nevertheless, even in households with both parents present, children had limited regular interaction with their fathers. Although this had significantly improved from previous generations, mothers still dedicated twice as much time to childcare as fathers. The issue went beyond just the quantity of time spent with fathers; some children felt a stronger bond with their mothers because they perceived them as kinder and more nurturing. Children generally viewed their mothers as more patient and less prone to anger, and they often felt more comfortable seeking support from them. As a result, children had a deeper understanding of their mothers and relied on them more heavily. In contrast, fathers remained somewhat enigmatic figures for many children, with less familiarity and connection.

Despite fathers being physically present, they often seemed emotionally distant. Children felt disconnected from their fathers, who were frequently preoccupied with TV, smartphones, or sleeping after work. As a result, children found it easier to confide in their mothers. When asked who they would turn to with a problem, children usually said they would keep it to themselves, talk to a friend, or seek their mother's advice. Fathers were rarely mentioned as a go-to source of support. Children also expressed frustration that their fathers didn't understand their feelings, often overreacted, or downplayed their concerns.

Despite the challenges, most fathers were devoted and loving towards their children, desiring a strong bond with them. However, they were often relegated to the role of disciplinarian by their spouses, with many mothers inadvertently making them the "bad guys." This led to a lack of shared decision-making and communication between parents regarding their children's upbringing, highlighting the significant role mothers played in parenting. The children, however, benefited from the close relationship they had with their parents, who were able to offer guidance and support at every turn. Parents played a vital role in teaching their children right from wrong and offering counsel when they made mistakes, demonstrating the positive impact of involved parenting.

Figure 2.4: How often do you interact with your parents?



Source: Field Data, 2023

Statistics from the study shows that 42 children (58%) reported interacting with their parents daily (daily interaction), while 22 children (31%) interacted with their parents 3-6 days a week (frequent interaction), and 6 children (8%) interacted with their parents 1-2 days a week (occasional interaction). On the other hand, 2 children (3%) reported never interacting with their parents (no interaction). Figure 2.4 above displays these details.

Daily interaction indicates high parental involvement in their children's lives. This includes activities such as shared meals, helping with homework, and participating in family activities. Research shows that daily parental interaction is linked to better emotional regulation, higher self-esteem, and stronger social skills in children. It also fosters a sense of security and attachment. Study by Lamb (2010) on father involvement emphasizes that daily interaction with both parents is crucial for the holistic development of children, contributing positively to their cognitive, emotional, and social well-being.

Engaging in regular activities with children fosters meaningful daily interactions with parents, promoting a strong parent-child relationship. For instance, sharing mealtimes encourages communication, bonding, and sharing experiences, strengthening family connections. Also, supporting children's schoolwork demonstrates parental interest and involvement, contributing to their academic success. Participating in family activities such as games, sports, or outings builds a united family and creates lasting memories. Daily interactions help children develop emotional regulation skills through parental guidance and modelling. Consistent parental involvement enhances children's confidence and self-worth, making them feel valued and supported. Frequent interaction with parents helps children develop essential social skills like communication, empathy, and teamwork. As Bowlby's attachment theory suggests, responsive and consistent parental interaction helps children develop a secure attachment, crucial for healthy psychological and emotional development. Daily interactions provide a sense of stability and security, vital for children's overall well-being and resilience.

Lamb's 2010 study on father involvement stresses the significance of active paternal engagement, revealing that daily interaction with both parents plays a vital role in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. The research emphasizes that consistent involvement from both fathers and mothers is crucial for supporting children's intellectual growth, academic achievement, and emotional well-being. Moreover, the study finds that joint parental involvement positively impacts children's social skills, enabling them to better cope with life's challenges and develop resilience.

Interacting with parents 3-6 days a week still reflects a significant amount of quality time spent with parents. This frequency is beneficial for maintaining strong family bonds and providing consistent support. This pattern might be due to parents' work schedules or other commitments. Ensuring that the time spent together is meaningful can mitigate the reduced frequency. Research by Milkie and Nomaguchi (2009) notes that the quality of parent-child interaction is more important than quantity. Engaging in meaningful and supportive activities during these interactions can greatly benefit the child's development.

Interaction 1-2 days a week indicates limited parental involvement. This can be due to various factors such as work commitments, separation, or other external pressures. Children with limited parental interaction may face challenges in emotional development and may not feel as supported or connected to their parents. Study by Bianchi (2000) highlights the potential negative impacts of limited parental involvement, including lower academic achievement and weaker social skills. Interventions to increase the quality and frequency of interactions can help mitigate these effects.

The two (2) children who reported no interaction with their parents represent a significant concern. Lack of interaction leads to feelings of neglect, poor self-esteem, and social isolation. Immediate intervention may be required to understand the underlying causes and to provide the necessary support for both the children and parents. Research by Bowlby (1988) on attachment theory emphasizes the critical importance of parent-child interaction for healthy emotional and psychological development. Lack of interaction can lead to attachment issues and other developmental problems.

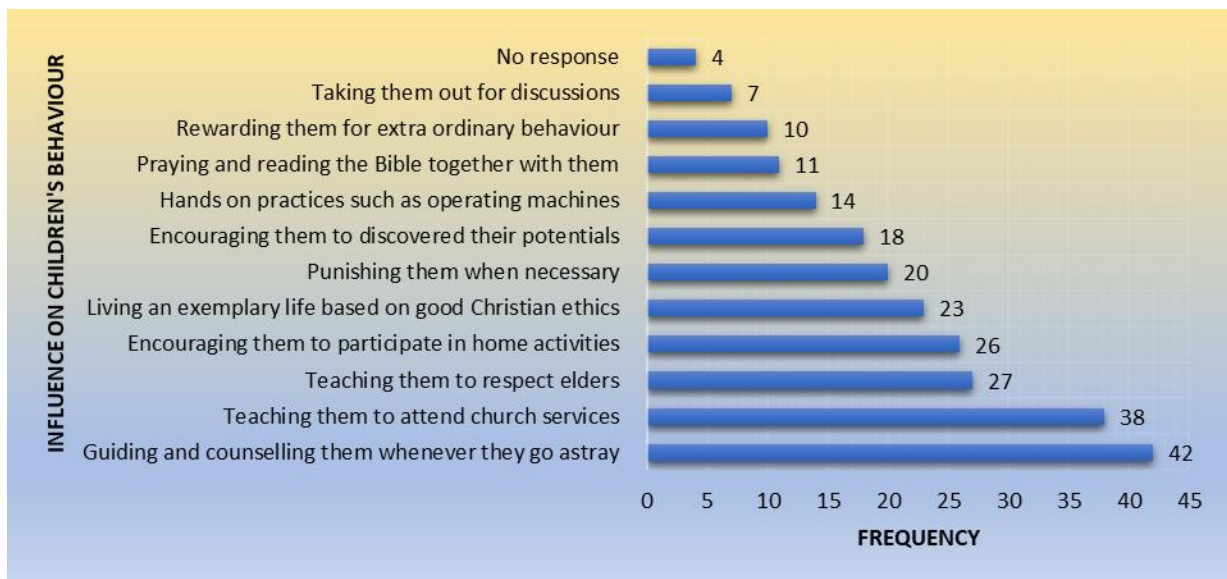
Encouraging daily interaction between parents and children is essential. Parenting programs should emphasize the importance of spending quality time together every day. Advocating for flexible work policies can help parents balance their professional and personal lives, allowing more time for daily interaction with their children. For parents who cannot interact daily, ensuring that the time spent together is meaningful and engaging can help maintain strong relationships. Activities should focus on building emotional connections and providing support.

CHAPTER THREE
EFFECTS OF PARENTING PRACTICES ON CHILDREN IN SELECTED DIOCESES
IN WESTERN UGANDA

3.1.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the effects of prevailing parenting practices on children highlighting parents’ influence on children’s behavior, effects of parenting practices on children's morality and parent's influence on children's behavior. The chapter also highlights the limitations to providing optimal parenting and ways to address those limitations. Finally, the chapter summarizes the findings based on field data.

Figure 3.1: Parents' influence on children's behavior (Parents')



Source: Field Data, 2023

The study results in Figure 3.1 highlight several aspects of how parents influence their children's behaviour. One of the key findings noted that 4 respondents (1.7%) were non-responsive parents who did not answer the question about how they influenced their children's behavior. This group might include parents who are indifferent or detached from their children's upbringing, exhibiting a laissez-faire attitude. Such parental disengagement negatively impacts children's development, potentially leading to behavioural issues and a lack of guidance and support.

However, 42 respondents (17.5%) used guidance and counselling to steer their children when they go astray. This proactive approach fosters open communication, problem-solving skills, and emotional support, contributing to children's psychological well-being and moral development.

Parents who use guidance and counselling as a proactive approach towards parenting, have a significant impact on their children's development. Research shows that these methods encourage open communication, problem-solving skills, and emotional support, which are vital for children's psychological well-being and moral development. A study by Lamb & Lewis (2010) emphasizes the importance of: parental involvement and open communication in fostering trust and security, teaching problem-solving skills through guidance and counselling, and emotional support from parents as a cornerstone of adolescent development. According to these studies, children who receive guidance and counselling from their parents tend to exhibit: better psychological well-being, improved problem-solving skills, higher self-esteem, better emotional regulation, and overall well-being. Through use of guidance and counselling, parents play a proactive role in promoting their children's development and well-being.

On the other hand, 38 respondents (15.8%) encouraged church attendance as a way to influence behavior. Regular participation in religious activities instils moral values, provide a sense of community, and offer spiritual guidance, which are integral to children's ethical and social development. While some parents relied on guidance and counselling, others encouraged church attendance as a way to influence their children's behavior. Research supports the idea that regular participation in religious activities has a positive impact on children's development. For instance, religious involvement fosters moral values, social skills, and a sense of community, which are essential for children's social and ethical development (Myers, 2006).

Another 27 respondents (11.3%) emphasized teaching respect for elders to improve children's values in society. This focus on respect enhances children's social skills, empathy, and understanding of societal norms, promoting better integration and behaviour within the community.

The emphasis on teaching respect for elders highlights the importance of intergenerational relationships and social hierarchy in shaping children's values and behavior. This finding indicates that teaching respect for elders enhances children's ability to interact with people of different ages and backgrounds, fostering empathy and understanding. By emphasizing respect for elders, parents promote better integration and behavior within the community, as children learn to appreciate and value the contributions of older generations. This approach also helps preserve cultural traditions and values, as children learn from their elders and develop a sense of responsibility towards their community. Hornby, (2014) demonstrates that teaching respect for elders helps children develop a sense of belonging and connection to their community, promoting social cohesion and cultural preservation.

In traditional Ugandan societies, parents instilled respect in children through specific practices when interacting with elders. For greetings, children used respectful phrases and gestures, such as kneeling for girls and standing with legs together and hands stretched for boys. When eating, they followed rules and protocols to show respect. In terms of dress code, children dressed modestly when interacting with elders. They responded promptly and respectfully when called by an elder. In regions like Ankole, girls knelt and boys stood respectfully when greeting elders. At home, greetings involved welcoming the elder, inquiring about their health, and asking about their journey. On the way, greetings were shorter but remained respectful. These practices aimed to teach children respect, humility, and courtesy, promoting social harmony and preserving cultural traditions.

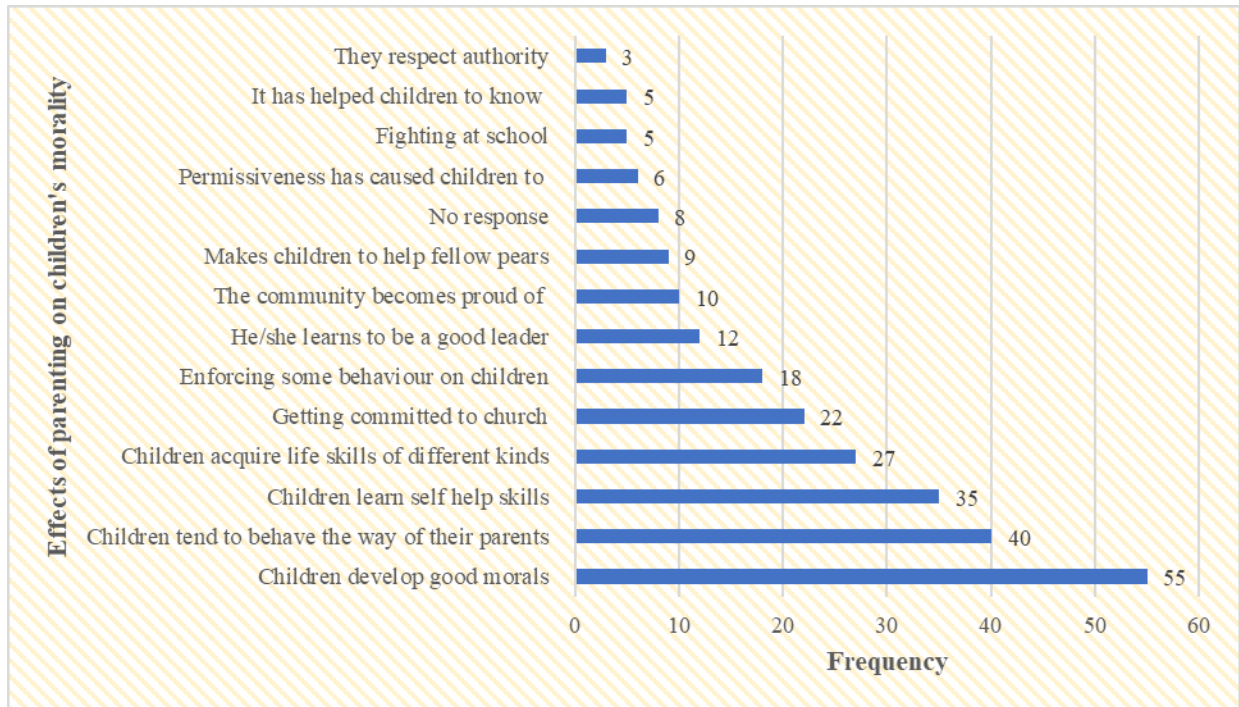
A 2018 study by Kabunga et al. examines the importance of respect for elders in Ugandan culture and its early instillation in children. This cultural value ensures continuity and preservation through intergenerational transmission. Children learn respect through cultural practices, developing social skills, values, and norms crucial for social harmony and community cohesion. Prioritizing elderly care and support fosters cooperation and collective well-being. Respect for elders helps preserve cultural heritage and traditions, essential for cultural identity. The study underscores the role of respecting elders in promoting cultural continuity, social harmony, community cohesion, and the preservation of cultural heritage in Ugandan society.

Traditional Ugandan families likewise taught children specific etiquette rules while eating. Children were instructed to sit with folded legs and their left hand on their left leg, demonstrating respect. They were expected to remain silent during meals to prevent choking hazards and to thank their mother for cooking after finishing their meals. Children also had to collect the plates for storage or washing. Failure to follow these rules was considered disrespectful to the food, parents, and others sharing the meal. These practices aimed to instill respect, gratitude, and responsibility in children, promoting social harmony and cultural preservation. Additionally, in Ankole and other tribes, children were taught to respond to an elder's call with "wanji," meaning "yes please," showing respect when an elder assigned a task or sought information.

Furthermore, children were taught not to address elders by their names, instead using nicknames or respectful titles. In Ankole, Batoro, and Banyoro tribes, elders were referred to by special nicknames, and it was considered a taboo and disrespectful to call parents or relatives by their surnames or Christian names, except for very elderly persons. This cultural practice emphasized respect, humility, and courtesy towards elders, promoting social harmony and community cohesion. Christian parents in traditional Ugandan societies taught their children the importance of dressing modestly as a sign of respect. For girls, this meant wearing dresses that covered their knees or beyond, with no exposed body parts, especially the breasts. Makeup was not allowed, and hair was to be kept in its natural color and reasonably short. Boys wore fitting shorts or trousers and shirts, and decent shoes if their families could afford them. If not, they went barefoot. This emphasis on modest dressing promoted humility, respect, and cultural values, and was seen as a way to protect children from societal influences that might lead to immodesty or inappropriate behavior.

This dressing code was not only a sign of respect but also a way to promote gender roles and expectations. The emphasis on modest dressing was also seen as a way to protect children from sexualization and objectification. The dressing code varied depending on the occasion, with more formal attire worn for church services and special events. The emphasis on natural hair color and short hair for girls was also seen as a way to promote a sense of simplicity and humility. Finally, the dressing code was not only limited to children but also applied to adults, with men and women expected to dress modestly and respectfully, especially in public.

Figure 3.2: Effects of parenting practices on children's morality



Source: Field Data, 2019

The findings in Figure 3.2 illustrate various outcomes of parenting practices on children's morality according to responses from Christian parents. From the results, 55 respondents (21.6%) reporting that their children developed good morals through effective parenting practices is significant. These good morals were defined as decent dressing, abstinence from premarital sex and drug abuse, and a strong belief in God. This outcome highlights the critical role of parenting in shaping children's ethical and moral values. Children absorb values and ethics by observing and replicating their parents' actions. Parke and Buriel (2006) stress the significance of parental involvement and communication in nurturing moral development, noting that parents who engage in conversations about ethics and values tend to raise children with a more robust moral framework.

These findings emphasize the necessity of parenting programs that educate parents on effective moral guidance strategies. Such programs enable parents to grasp the significance of their actions and communication in shaping their children's moral development in their children. Schools and religious organizations should collaborate to provide workshops and resources that aid parents in instilling strong moral values in children. Community and religious involvement also need to offer additional moral support and reinforcement for children. Faith-based organizations are crucial in supporting families and reinforcing the values taught at home. Highlighting the importance of effective parenting and community support, these findings suggest significant positive outcomes for children's moral and ethical development.

The fact that 40 respondents (15.7%) noted that children often imitate their parents' behaviors highlights the vital role of parents as moral role models. This emphasizes the importance of parents being mindful of their influence and the behaviors they exhibit in front of their children. Researches by Hoffman (2000) and Grusec and Davidov (2010) suggest that children learn moral values by observing their parents' consistent moral behavior, and that parental warmth and consistency significantly impact children's moral development. Parents who demonstrate empathy, honesty, and responsibility encourage these traits in their children.

The finding that 27 respondents (10.6%) indicated parenting practices helped children acquire various life skills highlights the critical role of effective parenting in child development. These life skills are essential for children's overall growth and future success. Effective parenting practices, such as maintaining open communication and practicing active listening, are crucial in helping children develop strong verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Laurson & Collins, 2009). Engaging children in family activities and teaching respectful interactions with others foster essential life skills, including empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

The finding that 18 respondents (7.1%) noted that enforcing certain behaviors without proper reasoning led to negative results highlights the adverse effects of authoritarian parenting. This style of parenting, characterized by high demands and low responsiveness, negatively impact children's development. Authoritarian parenting involves strict rules, high expectations, and little open dialogue between parents and children. This approach often includes punitive measures and

a lack of warmth or nurturing. A study by Gershoff et al. (2002) indicates that authoritarian parenting is associated with higher levels of aggression and defiance in children. The lack of reasoning and harsh disciplinary measures leads to rebellious behavior.

The finding that effective parenting practices helped children learn to be good leaders (4.7%) has significant implications for leadership development and parenting strategies. Research studies support the idea that effective parenting practices, such as positive reinforcement and encouragement positively impact children's leadership development by enhancing self-esteem and confidence (Mann et al., 2017). This finding highlights the significance of effective parenting practices in shaping children's leadership potential and underscores the need for parents, caregivers, and educators to prioritize leadership development in children.

The finding (3.9%) that positive child behavior makes the community proud highlights the significance of social validation in moral upbringing. Research studies support the idea that social validation plays a crucial role in shaping children's moral development and behavior, as it, for instance, enhances moral identity formation (Hardy et al., 2011). When children receive positive feedback and recognition from their community, they are more likely to develop a positive self-image and engage in positive behaviors.

The findings, (4.4%) of the respondent, that children helped peers and participated in preaching suggest an inclination towards community service and leadership, which has significant implications for their social and emotional development. Research studies support the idea that helping others enhances empathy and social skills (Eisenberg et al., 2010) and leadership experiences in childhood predict future leadership roles (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Participating in preaching and community service also fosters a sense of purpose and meaning (Damon et al., 2017). The findings suggest that children are not only developing moral values but also exhibiting leadership and community service skills, which have long-term benefits for their personal and social development.

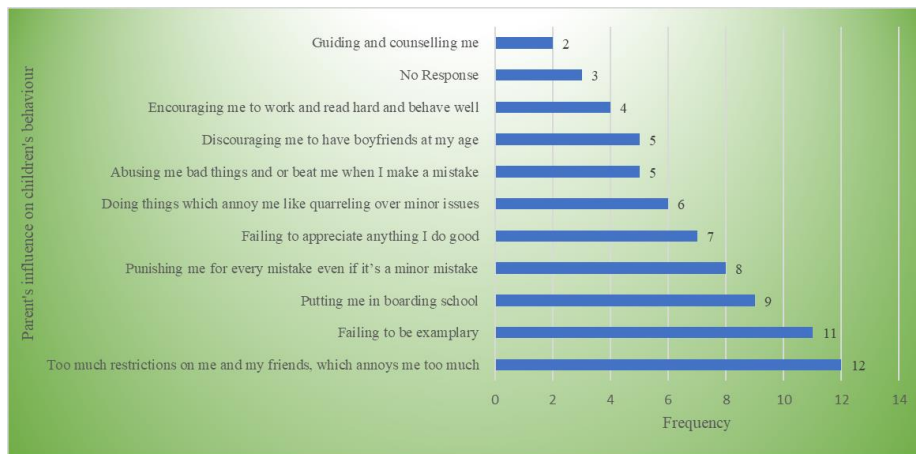
The finding that permissive parenting led children to wander from church to church suggests that lack of firm moral guidance leads to spiritual instability and exploration. Research studies such as that Murgatroyd & Robinson, (2015) support the idea that permissive parenting is associated with lower moral internalization and more moral relativism.

The finding that domestic violence leads to aggressive behavior in children at school underscores the harmful impact of a hostile home environment on children's well-being. Research supports the idea that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to show aggression, anxiety, and depression (Holt et al., 2017). This highlights the need to address domestic violence and ensure a safe, nurturing home environment for healthy child development.

Results show that 8 respondents (3.1%) did not answer the question about parenting practices' influence on morality. This result is significant. This non-response could suggest uncertainty, lack of awareness, or perceived irrelevance of the question to their experiences. Research by Dornbusch et al. (1987) suggests that parents often feel uncertain in responding to questions about parenting due to a lack of confidence in their understanding of effective strategies, leading to potential non-responses.

Conclusively, the findings highlight the crucial role of proactive and positive parenting in shaping children's moral and ethical behaviors. Effective parenting includes modeling good behavior, providing consistent guidance, and fostering open communication. Engaging children in religious and community activities enhances their social skills, moral values, and sense of belonging. Conversely, negative home environments and inconsistent parenting lead to adverse outcomes. Interventions to improve parenting practices should consider these factors to promote the holistic development of children.

Figure 3.3: Parents' influence on children's behaviour (Children)



Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Figure 3.3 reveal diverse parenting practices and their influence on children's behaviour. A small proportion, 3 respondents (4.2%), did not answer the question about the influence of their parents' practices on their behaviour indicating possible uncertainty or discomfort in discussing the impact of their parents' practices. This finding suggests that some individuals may be uncertain or uncomfortable discussing this topic. This is consistent with research by Amato (1994) which asserts that some children may experience difficulty discussing their parents' behaviour due to feelings of loyalty or fear of criticism.

The finding that 12 children (16.7%) experienced significant annoyance and frustration due to excessive restrictions imposed by their parents, particularly on social interactions with friends, is consistent with research suggesting that overly restrictive parenting may have negative consequences for children's emotional and social development (Hart et al., 2011). Furthermore, research by Denissen et al. (2015) notes that parental restrictions on social interactions limits children's opportunities for social learning, leading to difficulties in developing social skills and forming healthy relationships.

Moreover, studies have shown that children who experience excessive restrictions may engage in risky behaviours as a way to assert their independence and autonomy (Bonomi et al., 2013). This underscores the importance of parents finding a balance between setting boundaries and allowing children the freedom to make their own choices and learn from their experiences.

Nine respondents (12.5%) noted that being placed in boarding schools, while challenging, motivated them to behave well to avoid disappointing their parents. This aligns with research suggesting that boarding schools foster independence and self-discipline (Holmes, 2008). However, the effectiveness of boarding schools depends on the child's personality and school environment. Some children thrive in structured environments, while others struggle without parental presence. The quality of the parent-child relationship before boarding school also impacts adjustment and well-being (Lamb, 2010). Securely attached children may be more resilient.

The findings highlight the complex interplay between parenting practices, child personality, and environmental factors in shaping children's behaviour and development. It is, however, worth noting that the finding also suggests that the motivation to behave well in boarding school is not solely driven by internal factors, but also by external factors such as the desire to avoid disappointing parents. This is consistent with self-determination theory, which posits that human behaviour is motivated by three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this case, the need for relatedness and approval from parents is a key driver of behaviour.

Seven respondents (9.7%) felt unappreciated for their good deeds, which undermines motivation and self-worth, according to studies by Kamins and Dweck (1999) on the importance of positive reinforcement. Discouraging early romantic relationships (5 respondents, 6.9%) helped children understand the risks involved, resonating with research by Collins (2003) that suggests parental guidance on relationships positively influence adolescents' romantic behaviours. However, some practices had adverse effects. Quarrelling over minor issues (6 respondents, 8.3%) and failing to set a good example (11 respondents, 15.3%) were highlighted as negative influences, reflecting findings by Patterson (1982) on the importance of a positive and consistent home environment.

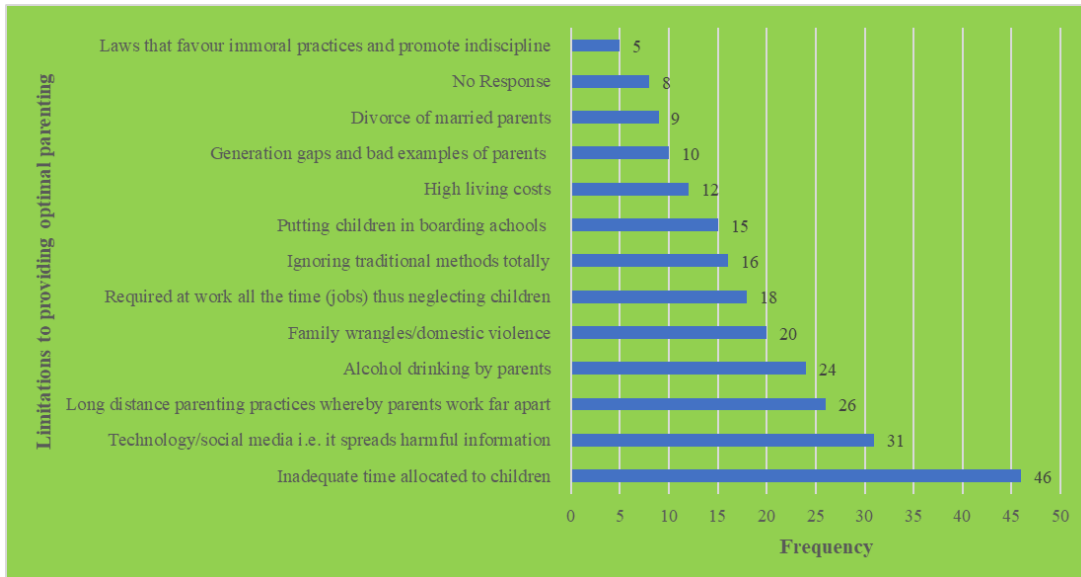
Finally, eight children (11.1%) reported that frequent punishment for minor mistakes fostered hatred towards their parents, underscoring the negative impact of punitive discipline on parent-child relationships as discussed in the studies by Straus (1994).

The finding that five children (6.9%) experienced low self-esteem due to verbal abuse and frequent punishment is consistent with research suggesting that harsh disciplinary practices have negative consequences for children's emotional and social development (Gershoff, 2002). Verbal abuse and frequent punishment lead to, for instance, increased aggression and behavioral problems (Straus, 2001) and difficulty with emotional regulation and empathy (Eisenberg et al., 2006). These findings highlight the importance of parents and caregivers using positive and supportive disciplinary practices, such as positive reinforcement and open communication, to promote healthy development and well-being in children.

The finding that two children (5.6%) attributed their development into responsible citizens to encouragement from their parents to work hard and maintain good behaviour is consistent with research suggesting that parental encouragement and support play a crucial role in shaping children's behaviour and development (Grolnick et al., 2007). The finding highlights the importance of parents and caregivers providing encouragement and support to children, particularly in the development of responsibility and good behaviour.

These findings highlight the need for balanced and supportive parenting approaches. Educating parents on effective parenting strategies, such as positive reinforcement and open communication, is essential. Schools and community organizations can play a critical role by offering parenting workshops and resources that promote healthy parent-child relationships and positive behaviour management. Encouraging parents to model good behaviour and engage in constructive conflict resolution can foster a supportive home environment, enhancing children's overall development and well-being.

Figure 3.4: Limitations to providing optimal parenting



Source: Field Data, 2023

The finding that 46 respondents (19.2%) cited inadequate time allocated to children due to work commitments and other responsibilities as a key limitation to optimal parenting has significant implications (Figure 3.4). This issue is supported by various studies stressing the critical role of parental presence in the emotional, psychological, academic, and social development of children. Parental presence is crucial for the emotional and psychological well-being of children. Regular interaction with parents helps children develop a sense of security and attachment. Bianchi (2000) underscores the importance of parental time investment, showing that children who spend more time with their parents tend to have better emotional stability and higher self-esteem. Children who receive adequate time and attention from their parents are more likely to perform well academically and develop strong social skills.

Modern work demands often require parents to spend long hours away from home, reducing the time available for family interactions. This situation leads to children feeling neglected and unsupported, potentially resulting in behavioral problems and lower academic achievements. Studies suggest that work-life balance policies could mitigate these effects. According to Bianchi (2000), parental involvement is positively correlated with better academic performance and social competence. Children benefit from the guidance, support, and supervision that engaged parents provide.

It is not only the quantity but also the quality of time spent with children that matters. Meaningful interactions, such as engaging in activities together, discussing daily experiences, and providing emotional support, are crucial. Milkie et al. (2004) note that high-quality parental engagement positively influences children's emotional and cognitive development, even when parents have limited time. Parents who are overburdened with work may experience stress and fatigue, which affects their ability to engage positively with their children. Parental stress leads to less effective parenting practices and negatively impact children's behaviour and emotional health. Research by Becker et al. (2010) indicates that parental stress correlates with increased behavioral problems in children. Inadequate time allocated to children due to work commitments and other responsibilities significantly limits optimal parenting. This issue affects children's emotional, psychological, academic, and social development. Studies by Bianchi (2000) and others highlight the importance of parental time investment.

The finding that technology and social media influence 31 respondents (12.1%) and pose a significant limitation to optimal parenting has far-reaching implications. Research supports the idea that excessive use of technology and social media can hinder effective parenting practices. Children are exposed to a vast array of information through social media, some of which may be inappropriate or harmful. This exposure negatively influences their behaviour and values. Research by Livingstone et al., (2011) indicates that children who spend significant time on social media are more likely to encounter content that leads to risky behaviours and attitudes.

The pervasive nature of technology makes it difficult for parents to monitor and control their children's online activities effectively. This lack of control results in children developing habits and beliefs that are contrary to the values and teachings of their parents. Studies suggest that parental involvement in monitoring digital activities is crucial for mitigating these risks. Increased screen time often reduces the amount of face-to-face interaction between parents and children, which is vital for emotional bonding and communication. According to Valkenburg et al., (2009), reduced direct interaction can impair the development of strong parent-child relationships and negatively impact children's social skills. Overuse of technology affects children's attention spans and their ability to focus on tasks, including academic work and household responsibilities. This leads to lower academic performance and difficulties in

maintaining discipline and responsibility. Studies highlight the need for balanced technology use to ensure children develop healthy attention and focus.

The spread of harmful information through technology and social media was identified as a significant challenge to parenting practices. Exposure to inappropriate content negatively impact children's behavior and values. Research by Strasburger et al., (2013) underscores the need for parental guidance in children's media consumption to mitigate adverse effects. The influence of technology and social media, as indicated by 31 respondents (12.1%), is a significant barrier to optimal parenting. Research underscores the importance of managing children's technology use to prevent exposure to harmful content, ensure adequate face-to-face interaction, and maintain attention and focus. Parental education, control measures, and policy initiatives are essential in addressing these challenges to support effective parenting practices.

The finding that long-distance parenting affects 26 respondents (10.8%) underscores the challenges faced by parents who work far from their homes and children. Parents working far from home face difficulties in maintaining close relationships with their children. The work of Lahaie et al. (2009) suggests that physical absence of parents disrupts family cohesion and children's emotional security. Substance abuse impair parenting capacity and leads to neglect as the study by Kelley et al. (2011) notes, indicating that children of parents with alcohol problems are at higher risk for emotional and behavioral issues.

The finding that parental alcohol consumption impacts 24 respondents (10.0%) signifies parents who consume alcohol excessively have limited quality time with their children. Parental alcohol consumption is recognized as a significant factor that hinders optimal parenting, with various studies documenting its adverse effects on both parents and children. Alcohol consumption impairs cognitive functions, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills, leading to inconsistent and ineffective parenting. A study by Eiden et al., (2019) demonstrate that parental alcohol use is associated with lower levels of parental warmth and higher levels of harsh discipline. Parents who excessively consume alcohol may be less vigilant and more likely to neglect their children's needs. According to a study by Kuppens et al., (2019), children of parents with alcohol use disorders are at a higher risk of experiencing neglect and inadequate

supervision. Children of parents who consume alcohol are more likely to develop emotional and behavioral problems. Research by Hussong et al., (2008) indicates that parental alcohol problems predict higher levels of internalizing (for example, anxiety, depression) and externalizing (such as aggression, conduct problems) behaviours in children.

The finding that family wrangles/domestic violence affect 20 respondents (8.3%) shows that domestic conflicts negatively impact parenting and children's sense of security. Exposure to violence can lead to behavioral and emotional problems in children. Holt et al. (2008) emphasize the long-term negative effects of domestic violence on children's development.

The finding that 18 respondents (7.5%) mentioned full-time jobs as an impediment to parenting is significant. Full-time employment demands result in parents having less time to engage with their children. Children may miss out on essential guidance and emotional support. This aligns with findings by Milkie et al. (2004) that indicate the stress and reduced quality of parent-child interactions due to demanding work schedules.

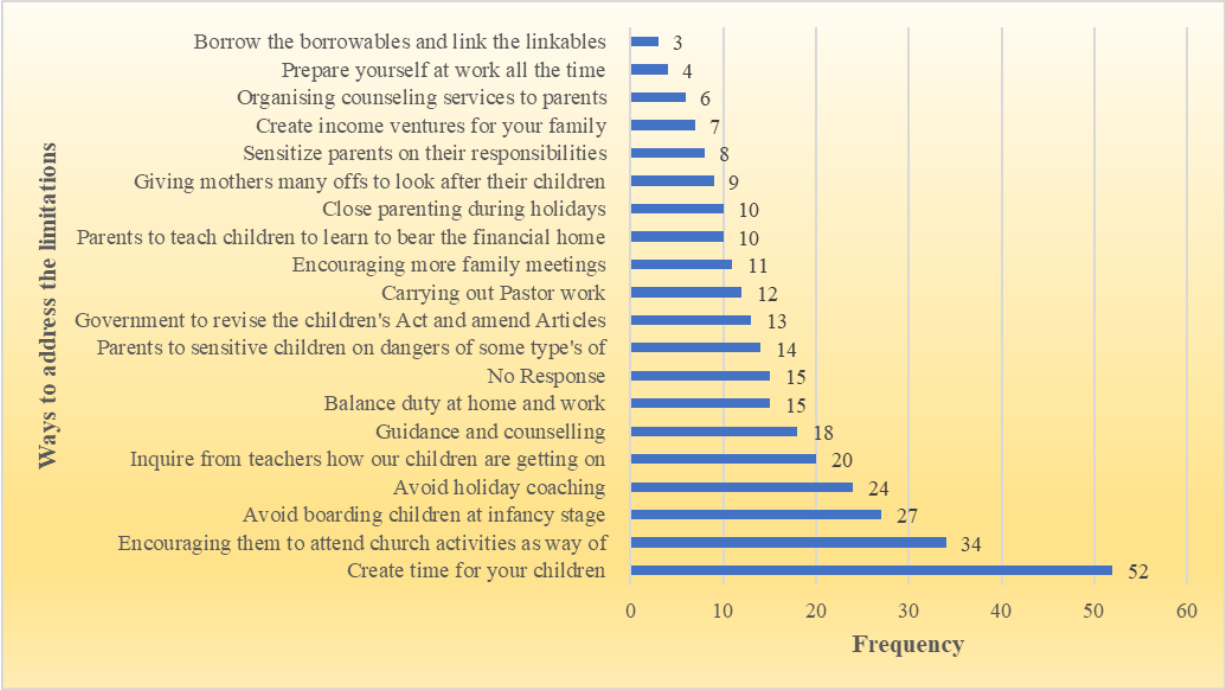
Results show that 16 respondents (6.7%) were concerned about ignoring traditional methods as a limitation to providing optimal parenting. Abandoning traditional practices such as storytelling has increased indiscipline among children. Traditional methods play a crucial role in moral and cultural education. For example, Heath (1982) documents the importance of storytelling in cultural preservation and moral education.

The finding that early boarding school enrolment affects 15 respondents (6.3%) is significant. Early placement in boarding schools reduces time spent with parents. This limits parent-child bonding and emotional support. Lamb (2010) points out that children with secure attachments fare better in such settings, while others may struggle. Financial pressures force parents to focus on earning a living rather than spending time with their children. Economic strain creates stressful home environments, adversely affecting children's well-being. Conger et al., (1992) have documented how economic stress negatively impacts parenting practices and child outcomes.

Differences between parents' and children's values and behaviours lead to conflicts. Misaligned expectations disrupt effective communication and guidance. Padilla-Walker and Carlo (2006) suggest that generational gaps can be bridged through understanding and adaptive parenting practices. Divorce often leaves one parent with full responsibility, complicating optimal parenting. Single-parent families may face economic and emotional challenges. Amato (2000) asserts that children from divorced families experience various adjustment issues, including academic and social difficulties. Certain laws are perceived to undermine parental authority and discipline. There is a need for balanced regulations that support parental guidance while protecting children's rights. Studies suggest that clear and consistent boundaries set by parents foster discipline and respect (Baumrind, 1991).

A small percentage 8(3.3%) did not respond to the question on limitations to optimal parenting. This indicates a potential gap in the data, suggesting the need for further research to capture comprehensive insights.

Figure 3.5: Ways to address those limitations



Source: Field Data, 2023

Results show that 52 respondents (16.7%) suggested that creating time for children is a crucial way to address the limitations in parenting practices (Figure 3.5). Indeed, effective parenting requires time investment as children significantly benefit from parents who actively engage in their daily lives. Lamb (2010) emphasizes the importance of parents being actively involved in their children's daily lives. This involvement leads to improved academic performance, emotional stability, and social skills. Activities such as helping with homework and spending quality time together significantly contribute to these positive outcomes.

To address limitations in parenting practices, 34 respondents (10.9%) suggested promoting church activities for spiritual renewal. Regular involvement in religious activities offers children a structured environment where they learn values, discipline, and a sense of community. Dollahite and Marks (2009) indicate that participation in religious activities reinforces the moral teachings provided by parents, promoting ethical behaviour and a strong moral compass in children. Regular attendance at church activities provides children with a consistent and structured environment where they cultivate discipline and community values, which are essential for their overall development.

Encouraging church activities helps in filling the gaps that parents might face due to time constraints or other limitations. This involvement not only supports moral development but also ensures that children have a reliable community network to guide them through their formative years. The combination of parental guidance at home and the reinforcement of values through religious activities creates a holistic approach to raising well-rounded individuals.

Reducing boarding school dependency (27 respondents, 8.7%) was one of the suggested solutions to improve positive parenting practices. Keeping children closer to their parents strengthens family bonds and provide better emotional support. Ainsworth (1989) points out that close physical proximity to parents is crucial for developing secure attachments, which significantly impact emotional and social development. Bowlby (1988) emphasizes that a stable and nurturing environment where parents are consistently present, fosters a child's sense of security and well-being. This stability is crucial for the child's psychological health and development.

Parenting practices are integral to shaping children's values, beliefs, and moral foundations. Within Church of Uganda's framework within Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro-Kitara, and Rwenzori Dioceses, Sunday school serves as a tool for moral and spiritual development. It complements parenting by reinforcing Christian virtues and principles, which are central to a child's upbringing in these communities. Parenting practices such as discipline, moral guidance, and teaching faith at home find reinforcement in Sunday school. The Church acts as a co-educator, ensuring consistency between family and religious teachings.

The Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro-Kitara, and Rwenzori regions have a rich history of integrating culture with religious teachings. Parenting in these areas traditionally emphasizes communal responsibility, respect, and adherence to cultural norms. The Church leverages this cultural orientation by aligning Sunday school teachings with local values while promoting Christian doctrine. Therefore, Sunday school becomes a bridge between traditional parenting values and Christian teachings, ensuring cultural relevance while advancing spiritual education.

The recognition of Sunday school as vital for the Church's continuity underscores its importance in shaping future generations. It not only instills faith but also cultivates leadership qualities and a sense of belonging among children, ensuring they remain active members of the Church. Hence, through strategic Sunday school programs, the Church provides a structured environment that supports parenting practices focused on spiritual growth and moral integrity.

African dioceses face challenges such as resource constraints, varying parental involvement, and social changes affecting traditional parenting. However, the Church uses Sunday school to address these by providing structured curricula and creating opportunities for children to learn collaboratively in a faith-based setting. The Church's proactive engagement in parenting through Sunday school addresses gaps left by socio-economic challenges, ensuring the holistic development of children.

Parenting within Ankole, Kigezi, Bunyoro-Kitara, and Rwenzori Dioceses is seen as a partnership between the family and the Church. Sunday school enables parents to entrust part of their children's spiritual education to trained Church leaders, creating a shared responsibility. This partnership model strengthens both family and Church influence on the child's development, creating a cohesive upbringing that aligns with Christian values.

Foremost, Sunday school is intentionally designed to be welcoming and inclusive, attracting children irrespective of their family's religious background. Its activities, such as storytelling, music, games, and interactive learning, make the Church environment appealing to all children. These engaging methods create a positive perception of the Church among children from both Christian and non-Christian families, making participation attractive and voluntary. Secondly, for children from non-Christian families, Sunday school serves as a safe space to explore Christian teachings without direct parental obligations or pressure. It often acts as an entry point into the Christian faith for the entire family. Through fostering curiosity and providing foundational knowledge, Sunday school facilitates a gradual journey towards greater Church involvement for children and, subsequently, their families.

Sunday school also fosters a sense of belonging and community among children. Peer relationships formed in these classes often encourage sustained participation in Church activities, creating a strong social bond tied to the Church. Friendships and group activities help children feel integrated into the Church community, motivating regular attendance and involvement.

Sunday school not only teaches children about Christianity but also involves them in Church-based roles such as reading scripture, performing skits, or singing in the choir. This active participation gives them a sense of purpose and contribution to the Church. Such roles ensure that children feel valued and important, drawing them into long-term participation in the life of the Church. Finally, in many African Churches, Sunday school connects children with the broader congregation by organizing events that involve both children and adults, such as children's choirs, family services, and holiday celebrations. These initiatives foster a sense of unity and shared faith. Intergenerational activities solidify children's place within the Church and build pathways for continued engagement as they grow older.

Example in African Context and in In dioceses such as Bunyoro-Kitara and Rwenzori, Sunday schools often blend Christian teachings with local cultural values. This cultural sensitivity makes Sunday school attractive even to non-Christian families who appreciate the moral and ethical grounding it provides their children. Through this approach, children gradually adopt Christian beliefs and practices, reinforcing their participation in the Church.

Reducing the reliance on boarding schools enables more consistent and meaningful interactions between parents and children, which strengthens family relationships. Children who remain at home benefit from continuous emotional support from their parents, crucial for their mental health and resilience. A stable home environment with present parents fosters better social, emotional, and academic outcomes for children, as supported by attachment theory and related research. By addressing these limitations, parents create a more supportive and nurturing environment that significantly enhances their children's overall development.

A significant number of parents (24 respondents, 7.7%) recommend avoiding holiday coaching for their children, believing it imposes unnecessary stress. Research by Gilbert et al. (2012) indicates that continuous academic pressure without sufficient breaks increases stress and burnout among children. Holidays should be a time for mental and emotional recovery, fostering overall well-being and reducing valuable family bonding time during school breaks. Evans and Schamberg (2009) suggest that an overemphasis on academic coaching impedes balanced child development. Engaging in non-academic activities during holidays contributes to children's physical, social, and creative growth.

Non-academic activities during holidays significantly contribute towards a child's holistic development. Engaging in sports, hobbies, and social interactions promotes physical, social, and creative growth. This balanced approach to development is supported by research indicating that children need diverse experiences beyond academics to develop essential life skills and emotional resilience. Therefore, to address the negative impacts of holiday coaching, parents should ensure children have ample time to rest and engage in leisure activities, promote participation in sports, arts, and social activities that foster holistic development, and use holidays to strengthen family bonds through shared activities and quality time together.

The finding that 20 respondents (6.4%) suggested regular parental communication with teachers as a means of addressing limitations in parenting practices. This is consistent with research highlighting the significance of school-family partnerships in promoting student success (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Active communication between parents and teachers supports teacher professional development and parent-teacher relationships (Cohen et al., 2017) and fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility (Baker & Soden, 2011).

This finding emphasizes the vital role of parent-teacher collaboration in overcoming parenting challenges. Through regular communication regularly with teachers, parents are in position to: identify and address their children's behavioral or academic issues in time before they escalate, become more involved and engaged in their child's education, learn new parenting strategies from teachers, develop a sense of shared responsibility and community with teachers, and support teacher professional development and build stronger parent-teacher relationships. Regular parental communication with teachers is crucial for addressing limitations in parenting practices and promoting a supportive and collaborative environment for children's growth and success.

The finding that 18 respondents (5.8%) emphasized the importance of guidance and counselling services for both parents and children underscores the significance of family-centred interventions in addressing limitations in optimal parenting practices. This is consistent with research suggesting that family counselling fosters resilience and adaptability in families (Walsh, 2016) and enhances emotional well-being and problem-solving skills as noted by Spera, (2005).

The finding that 15 respondents (4.8%) expressed the opinion that balancing home and work responsibilities is essential for addressing limitations in parenting practices has significant implications for parents, employers, and policymakers. Research highlights the importance of flexible work policies in supporting parents' work-life balance (Galinsky et al., 2008). Employers could play a critical role by offering parental leave policies (Houser & Blanco, 2015).

The twenty-first century has brought significant changes to social arrangements, especially in parenting and work-family balance. Work-family balance can be defined as the equal treatment of work and family responsibilities among parents. Modern-day parenting does not account for who will stay at home and who will work as long as opportunities offer economic stability for the family. Globalization and interconnectivity hastened by the use of handheld technology gadgets has also empowered parents and families in general to learn from other parents and other individuals that share their experiences. It is indeed a challenging task for parents to work and at the same time attend to family needs. Young and starting families are expected to face more challenges and constraints as compared to those that are nearing the stage of empty nest presenting significant challenges and constraints.

Teaching children about social media dangers is crucial (14 respondents, 4.5%). Parents should educate their children on digital literacy to prepare them for online risks. Research shows that parent-guided children are better equipped to handle internet safety (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). By educating and guiding their children, parents help them navigate social media safely and responsibly.

Government involvement is crucial (13 respondents, 4.2%) in creating a supportive environment for effective parenting. Revising the Children's Act to address issues promoting indiscipline (Policy Reform) and implementing supportive laws that promote family cohesion and child protection are essential. This aligns with research by Grusec and Hastings (2007) highlighting the impact of legal frameworks on child development. By reforming policies and laws, the government could promote optimal parenting practices and child well-being.

Pastoral and community involvement (12 respondents, 3.8%) significantly support parents. Community engagement through churches and organizations educates and supports parents, as noted by Mahoney et al., (2003). Additionally, regular pastoral work focused on parenting provides guidance and support, helping parents fulfil their roles more effectively. This involvement offers a sense of community and resources, ultimately enhancing parental capabilities and family well-being.

Parental education and sensitization (8 respondents, 2.6%) are crucial for effective parenting. Parental education programs improve parenting practices by informing parents about their roles and responsibilities, leading to more confident and effective parenting (Teti & Candelaria, 2002). Education and support enhance parental capabilities, leading to better outcomes for children.

Income ventures for families (7 respondents, 2.2%) provide economic stability, reducing financial stress and enabling parents to focus on their children's needs. Research by Conger et al. (2002) shows that economic stability is crucial for positive parenting practices and better child outcomes. By creating income ventures, families can achieve financial security, leading to a more supportive and nurturing environment for children to thrive.

Counseling services for parents (6 respondents, 1.9%) offer mental health support, reducing stress and enhancing parenting capacity. Research by Cowan and Cowan (2002) highlights the benefits of psychological support for parents, leading to improved parenting practices and better outcomes for children. By providing counselling services, parents receive the support they need to manage stress and develop healthy parenting strategies, ultimately benefiting their children's well-being.

The study found that 15 respondents (4.8%) did not answer the question on addressing limitations in parenting practices, indicating that a notable portion of parents may be uncertain or unaware of how to overcome challenges in providing optimal parenting. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to raise awareness and offer practical solutions. The non-response rate suggests a knowledge gap that could be addressed through community programs and workshops. These initiatives equip parents with the tools and resources necessary to overcome challenges and provide optimal parenting.

Summary of effects of these prevailing parenting practices on children

The survey revealed various parental influences on children's behavior, including positive practices like guidance and counseling, church attendance, and teaching respect for elders, as well as negative outcomes from inconsistent or authoritarian parenting styles and exposure to domestic violence. Positive parenting practices were associated with children's moral development, while negative practices led to behavioral issues and low self-esteem. The findings underscored the importance of proactive and positive parenting, emphasizing the role of parents as moral role models and the need for interventions to improve parenting practices. Additionally, the survey identified challenges to optimal parenting, such as inadequate time due to work commitments, technology and social media influences, long-distance parenting, parental alcohol consumption, and family conflicts. Strategies to address these challenges included creating time for children, promoting church activities, reducing reliance on boarding schools, avoiding holiday coaching, and enhancing communication between parents and teachers. Overall, the findings emphasized the importance of balanced and supportive parenting approaches and the need for targeted interventions and policy reforms to support effective parenting practices and promote children's overall development and well-being.

CHAPTER FOUR
CHURCH RESPONSE TO THE PREVAILING PARENTING PRACTICES IN
SELECTED DIOCESES IN WESTERN UGANDA

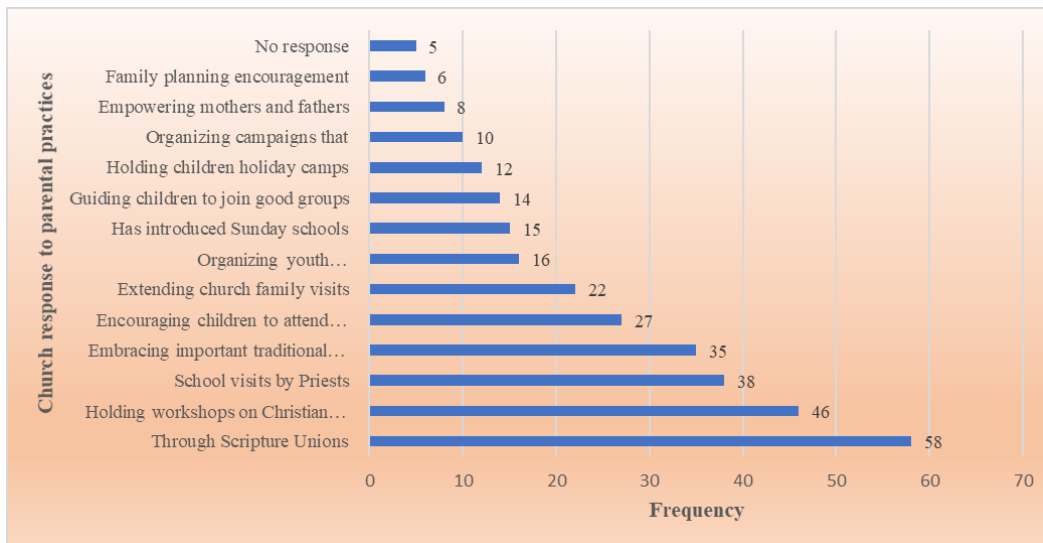
4.1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and analysis of the Church’s response to the prevailing parenting practices. It highlights ways the Church has promoted positive parenting practices among Christian families.

4.1.2 Church’s response to the parenting practices

The figure below presents the frequency of various methods of positive parenting practices by the church.

Figure 4.1: Church response on promoting positive parenting practices



The findings presented in Figure 4.1 shed light on various strategies employed by churches to promote positive parenting practices. Scripture Unions was recognized by (18.6%) of the respondents citing it a significant church response to promoting positive parenting. The important role that the church plays in encouraging good parenting is shown in the incorporation of Scripture Unions in parenting instruction. These programmes have the potential to improve family dynamics, facilitate child development, and generate strong community support by fusing faith-based concepts with pragmatic guidance. The impact of these initiatives is increased by addressing current issues and guaranteeing inclusivity, which will help create stronger, healthier families.

Scripture Unions organize programs that combine religious teachings with practical parenting advice. These programs include workshops, seminars, and study groups focused on parenting from a Christian perspective. Pearce et al., (2015) observe the effectiveness of integrating faith-based principles into parenting programs, showing improvements in family dynamics and child development. Support groups facilitated by Scripture Unions provide a platform for parents to share experiences, seek advice, and receive emotional support, fostering a sense of community and belonging. According to research by Mahoney et al., (2001), participation in religious communities provides parents with social support, which is critical for effective parenting.

Religious teachings instill strong moral and ethical values in children, promoting behaviours such as empathy, respect, and self-discipline. Research by Bartkowski et al., (2008) asserts that children in faith-based environments often exhibit higher levels of prosocial behaviour and moral development. Emphasizing the importance of nurturing loving and respectful parent-child relationships leads to stronger emotional bonds and improved communication within families. Research by King and Furrow (2004) shows that adolescents who perceive their parents as highly involved in their religious lives report better relationships with their parents.

Scripture Unions expand their reach beyond church members by organizing public events and collaborating with schools and other community organizations. The study by Regnerus and Smith (2005) highlights the positive impact of religious involvement on individuals and society as a whole. According to them, religious participation is linked to various positive social outcomes, such as Lower rates of crime and delinquency, improved mental and physical health, higher levels of education and academic achievement, stronger family relationships and marital stability, and increased volunteerism and community service.

The finding that 14.7% of respondents mentioned workshops on Christian ethics and values suggests that many parents are seeking guidance on how to apply religious principles to their parenting practices. This has important implications for the development of parenting programs and interventions. Research has shown that participating in workshops on Christian ethics and values has a positive impact on parenting attitudes and behaviors. For example, Johnson et al., (2018) reveal that such workshops enhance parents' sense of purpose and meaning in their parenting role, improve parents' ability to set boundaries and discipline their children in a loving and consistent manner, foster a nurturing family environment characterized by empathy, compassion, and forgiveness, and encourage parents to model Christian values such as kindness, humility, and self-sacrifice for their children.

Other studies, such as those by Wilcox (2004) and Thomas et al., (2017), also emphasize the potential benefits of integrating religious teachings into parenting education. These findings suggest that workshops on Christian ethics and values provide parents with a moral framework for parenting, helping them to navigate the challenges of raising children in a complex and often contradictory world. Therefore, the provision of workshops on Christian ethics and values, as suggested by this finding, may be a valuable approach to supporting parents and promoting positive family outcomes. Through provision of a safe and supportive environment for parents to explore and deepen their understanding of Christian ethics and values, the church empowers them to become more effective and compassionate parents, and to raise children who are grounded in a strong moral foundation.

School visits by priests represent a significant aspect of the church's response to promoting positive parenting practices. With 12.2% of respondents acknowledging this approach, it's evident that such visits hold promises in fostering positive family dynamics and nurturing moral and spiritual development in children. School visits by priests offer an opportunity to integrate religious teachings into the educational environment. By engaging with students and school staff, priests provide spiritual guidance and moral support that align with the values taught at home and in the church, fostering consistency in children's moral and ethical education (Smith & Denton, 2005).

Priests' presence in schools allows children to witness their faith in action outside of formal religious settings. Through interactions with priests, learners observe firsthand how religious beliefs translate into compassionate acts, ethical decision-making, and community service, reinforcing the importance of faith in shaping one's character and behaviour (Regnerus, 2003). School visits by priests encourage parental involvement in their children's spiritual and educational development. By participating in school events and meetings facilitated by priests, parents have opportunities to strengthen their connection to the school community, collaborate with educators, and reinforce religious teachings and values within the academic context (Dollahite & Marks, 2009).

Furthermore, priests' presence in schools extends pastoral care beyond the church walls, providing emotional and spiritual support to learners, families, and school staff. By offering counselling, guidance, and prayers, priests contribute to the overall well-being of the school community, fostering a supportive environment where children feel valued, understood, and spiritually nourished as (Smith & Denton, 2005) emphasize in their study. Priests serve as moral exemplars and role models for children, demonstrating virtuous behaviour and ethical leadership in their interactions with students and school staff. Through their words and actions, priests inspire children to emulate qualities such as kindness, integrity, and compassion, instilling values that contribute to positive character development and moral growth (Regnerus, 2003).

Priests' school visits offer a chance for exploring ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making. Through conversations about moral principles and religious teachings, priests give learners the knowledge and skills to tackle complex ethical issues and make informed, principled choices. This empowers students to act with integrity and virtue in their daily lives, preparing them to navigate life's challenges with confidence and moral guidance (Dollahite & Marks, 2009). Priests' school visits play a vital role in promoting positive parenting practices by combining religious teachings, encouraging parental engagement, offering moral guidance, and serving as positive role models for learners. By integrating faith and education, priests support the comprehensive development of children, fostering their spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth within the school setting. Recognizing the value of priests' school visits as an effective church response highlights their potential to support families, build stronger communities, and raise a generation of individuals who are morally grounded and spiritually inspired.

Embracing traditional values such as storytelling represents a culturally rich and effective approach to promoting positive parenting practices within the church community. With 11.2% of respondents acknowledging the importance of storytelling in this context, it's evident that this method holds significant promise in nurturing family bonds, transmitting cultural heritage, and instilling moral values in children. Storytelling serves as a vehicle for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to another. By sharing traditional tales, myths, and legends, parents impart a sense of identity and belonging to their children, grounding them in their cultural roots and fostering pride in their heritage (Livo & Rietz, 1986). Storytelling fosters a sense of interconnectedness among family members and the broader community. Through shared narratives, families establish bonds of solidarity, empathy, and mutual understanding, creating a supportive environment where children feel connected to their relatives, ancestors, and cultural traditions (Benson et al., 2003). Traditional stories often contain moral lessons and ethical teachings that guide children's behaviour and decision-making. By recounting tales of bravery, honesty, compassion, and resilience, parents instill values such as integrity, empathy, and kindness in their children, shaping their moral character and ethical outlook on life (Livo & Rietz, 1986).

Storytelling cultivates empathy and understanding by allowing children to step into the shoes of characters from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Through exposure to different perspectives and life journeys, children develop empathy, tolerance, and respect for others, laying the foundation for harmonious relationships and social cohesion (Benson et al., 2003). Furthermore, storytelling enhances language development by exposing children to rich vocabulary, narrative structures, and linguistic patterns. Through listening to and retelling stories, children expand their vocabulary, improve their comprehension skills, and sharpen their communication abilities, preparing them for academic success and intellectual growth (Livo & Rietz, 1986).

Storytelling sparks children's imagination and creativity, inviting them into worlds of fantasy, adventure, and wonder. By engaging in imaginative play and creative expression, children develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional intelligence, fostering holistic development and lifelong learning (Benson et al., 2003). Storytelling provides opportunities for quality family time and bonding. By gathering around to listen to stories, families create cherished memories, strengthen their emotional bonds, and nurture a sense of closeness and affection, fostering a supportive and loving family environment (Livo & Rietz, 1986). Traditional stories often contain themes of triumph over adversity, resilience in the face of challenges, and the power of hope and perseverance. By sharing these stories with their children, parents instill resilience, optimism, and inner strength, equipping them with the emotional tools needed to navigate life's ups and downs (Benson et al., 2003).

Embracing traditional values like storytelling offers a multifaceted approach to promoting positive parenting practices within the church community. By preserving cultural heritage, imparting moral and ethical education, fostering language and cognitive development, and nurturing family bonds and emotional well-being, storytelling serves as a powerful tool for transmitting values, strengthening relationships, and shaping the character of future generations. The recognition of storytelling as an effective church response underscores its potential to enrich family life, instill moral values, and contribute to the holistic development of children within the context of their cultural and religious heritage.

Encouraging church attendance and participation in church activities constitutes a fundamental aspect of the church's response to promoting positive parenting practices. With 8.7% of respondents recognizing the importance of this approach, it's evident that active engagement with the church community holds significant promise in fostering spiritual growth, moral development, and supportive relationships within families. Church attendance provides families with a spiritual foundation rooted in faith, values, and religious teachings. Regular participation in religious services offers opportunities for worship, prayer, and reflection, nurturing a sense of connection to God and reinforcing shared beliefs and values within the family unit (Smith & Denton, 2005).

Active involvement in church activities exposes children to positive role models and moral exemplars within the faith community. By observing the behaviour and character of clergy, church leaders, and fellow congregants, children learn valuable lessons about integrity, compassion, and service, shaping their moral development and ethical decision-making (Regnerus, 2003). Church attendance fosters a sense of belonging and community among families. By participating in worship services, fellowship events, and religious celebrations, families establish meaningful connections with other church members, creating a supportive network of like-minded individuals who share common values, experiences, and goals (Dollahite & Marks, 2009).

Involvement in church activities facilitates the formation of supportive relationships and social bonds within the community. Through interactions with fellow congregants, families receive emotional support, practical assistance, and spiritual guidance, strengthening their resilience and well-being in times of joy and adversity (Smith & Denton, 2005). Furthermore, Church attendance reinforces family rituals and traditions centred around religious observance and worship. Whether through weekly services, holiday celebrations, or sacramental rites, families engage in shared experiences that deepen their faith, strengthen their familial bonds, and provide opportunities for collective spiritual growth and reflection (Benson et al., 2003).

Extending church family visits, as indicated by 7.1% of respondents, underscores the significance of religious community involvement in promoting positive parenting practices. While empirical evidence specific to this practice may be limited, community-based interventions involving regular home visits have shown promise in enhancing parenting practices and family functioning (Olds et al., 2004). Studies consistently highlight the role of social support in promoting positive parenting. Research by Pearce and Axinn (1998) notes that religious communities often provide a strong source of social support for families, which enhances parenting practices.

The themes covered youth fellowships/conferences gatherings, such as interpersonal relationships and personal integrity, resonate with the broader goals of positive youth development programs, as highlighted in studies by Lerner et al. (2006). The finding that 4.8% of respondents mentioned the introduction of Sunday schools suggests that some parents recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education in complementing their parenting efforts. This has important implications for the development of programs and interventions that support parents in instilling values and virtues in their children. Research has shown that Sunday schools and other religious education programs play a significant role in promoting moral and spiritual development in children. For example, Bartkowski and Xu (2000) indicate that children who attend Sunday school are more likely to: develop a strong sense of moral values and principles, engage in prosocial behaviors such as helping others and volunteering, demonstrate increased empathy and compassion for others, and develop a positive sense of identity and self-worth.

Other studies, such as those by Regnerus and Smith (2001) and Pearce and Denton (2011), likewise emphasize the potential benefits of religious education for children's moral and spiritual development. These findings suggest that Sunday schools provide a supportive environment for children to learn and grow, complementing the efforts of parents and other caregivers. Therefore, the introduction of Sunday schools, as suggested by this finding, is a valuable approach to supporting parents in instilling values and virtues in their children. By providing opportunities for moral and spiritual education, Sunday schools help children develop a strong foundation for life, and support parents in their efforts to raise compassionate, responsible, and values-driven individuals.

The idea of the church encouraging children to join positive groups, highlighted by 4.5% of respondents, is strongly backed by numerous studies emphasizing the benefits of such associations for youth development. While these studies do not always focus specifically on religious involvement, the overarching principles of positive peer influence are still relevant. Participation in prosocial peer groups has been associated with a reduction in various risky behaviors among youth. For instance, a key study by Hawkins et al., (1992) notes that young people who interacted with prosocial peers were less likely to partake in substance abuse, delinquency, and other antisocial activities. This relationship is likely attributed to the norms and values promoted by these groups, which typically discourage negative behaviors and encourage healthier lifestyle choices.

Children who participate in pro-social peer groups generally exhibit higher levels of social competence, including skills like empathy, communication, and conflict resolution. These groups create settings where positive social interactions are demonstrated and encouraged, thereby improving the social abilities of their members. Research indicates that children who engage with pro-social peers tend to have better social adjustment and are more skilled at forming and maintaining healthy relationships (Wentzel, 1991).

Schools play a vital role in forming and sustaining pro-social peer groups by offering opportunities for learners to participate in cooperative learning, extracurricular activities, and service projects. Educators have the opportunities to create environments that promote positive peer interactions through programs such as peer mentoring and buddy systems, which support the development of pro-social relationships. On the other hand, community-based organizations and youth development programs also leverage the benefits of pro-social peer groups by providing structured activities that encourage teamwork, leadership, and community engagement. Examples include sports teams, youth clubs, and volunteer groups. These programs offer a positive outlet for youth energy and help foster a sense of belonging and purpose.

Parents can support their children's involvement in pro-social peer groups by encouraging participation in positive activities and monitoring peer associations. Open communication about the importance of positive friendships and involvement in structured activities reinforces the values that pro-social groups promote. The advantages of participating in pro-social peer groups continue into adulthood. Adults who were involved in such groups during their youth tend to show higher levels of civic engagement, better mental health, and more stable employment histories. The positive behaviors and social skills cultivated in these groups often lead to greater overall life satisfaction and contributions to society. Guiding children to join good groups, particularly those that are prosocial, has far-reaching positive implications for individual development and society at large. While specific studies like Hawkins et al., (1992) support these benefits, the overarching principle is clear: encouraging positive peer associations is a critical component of fostering healthy, competent, and socially responsible individuals.

The finding that 3.8% of respondents mentioned holding children's holiday camps as a church response to parenting practices, suggests that some parents recognize the value of providing children with opportunities for socialization, skill-building, and character development outside of regular school hours. This has important implications for the development of programs and interventions that support children's holistic development. Children's holiday camps offer a range of benefits, including: socialization and friendship-building opportunities, development of new skills and interests (for example, arts, sports, outdoor activities), character development and values education (such as, teamwork, empathy, responsibility), respite and relaxation for parents and caregivers, and opportunities for children to develop independence and self-reliance. These camps often emphasize moral and ethical teachings, which help children form a strong sense of identity and purpose. Participation in co-curricular activities and camps has a range of positive impacts on children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Pedersen & Seidman, 2017). Additionally, camps provide a safe and supportive environment for children to explore new experiences and build confidence (Henderson et al., 2017). Holiday camps, particularly those that are structured and faith-based, have significant contribution towards personal growth and character development of children and adolescents. Therefore, the organization of children's holiday camps, as suggested by this finding, is a valuable approach by the church to supporting children's development and well-being. Through providing opportunities for socialization, skill-

building, and character development, holiday camps complement the efforts of parents and caregivers, and help children grow into happy, healthy, and well-rounded individuals.

The finding that 3.2% of respondents mentioned organizing campaigns promoting positive parenting practices suggests that the church plays a crucial role in disseminating information about positive parenting practices. By organizing workshops, seminars, and support groups, the church can provide parents with valuable resources and guidance. Integrating messages about positive parenting into sermons and religious education programs can further reinforce these principles within the community. This has important implications for the development of programs and interventions that promote positive parenting practices and support parents in their role. Research has shown that campaigns promoting positive parenting practices have a positive impact on parenting attitudes and behaviors. For example, studies have found that public education campaigns improve parent-child relationships and communication (Hart, 2001) and reduce child behavior problems and improve child well-being (Shonkoff, 2000). Additionally, church-based campaigns can influence the social and spiritual capital of the church to support parents and promote positive parenting practices. Studies have found that faith communities provide a sense of belonging, support, and spiritual guidance that enhance parents' well-being and parenting practices (Pearce & Denton, 2011).

The church and faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to support positive parenting campaigns. They can leverage their existing networks and trust within the community to disseminate important parenting information. By organizing workshops, support groups, and educational programs, churches can play a crucial role in promoting healthy parenting practices. Additionally, integrating messages about positive parenting into sermons and religious education can reinforce these values within the congregation. Therefore, organizing campaigns promoting positive parenting practices, as suggested by this finding, may be a valuable approach for churches to support parents and promote positive parenting practices. By leveraging the social and spiritual capital of faith communities, the church could provide a unique and effective platform for promoting positive parenting practices and supporting parents in their role.

The finding that 2.6% of respondents mentioned empowering mothers and fathers with parental skills suggests that the church recognizes the importance of equipping parents with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively raise their children. This has important implications for the development of programs and interventions that support parents in their role. Empowering parents with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively raise their children is crucial for fostering positive family dynamics and enhancing child development. Research, such as that by Lundahl et al., (2006), demonstrates the efficacy of parenting interventions focused on skill-building and support, highlighting their significant impact on parent-child relationships and reducing behavioral problems in children.

Parenting interventions that emphasize skill-building help parents develop effective communication strategies, improve their understanding of child development, and increase their ability to respond empathetically to their children's needs. Lundahl et al., (2006) demonstrates that these interventions lead to stronger, more positive parent-child interactions, fostering a nurturing and supportive home environment. Effective parenting interventions are linked to a decrease in children's behavioral issues. Through teaching parents positive discipline techniques, consistent boundary-setting, and methods to reinforce desirable behaviors, these interventions help mitigate problems such as defiance, aggression, and other antisocial behaviors. This results in improved academic and social outcomes for children.

Churches can play a pivotal role in delivering parenting interventions by providing accessible and supportive environments for parents. They can offer workshops, seminars, and support groups focused on parenting skills, leveraging their community networks to reach a broad audience. Additionally, churches can incorporate messages about positive parenting into their religious teachings, reinforcing the importance of healthy family relationships. To enhance the effectiveness of parenting interventions, churches, therefore, need to collaborate with child development experts, psychologists, and community organizations. These partnerships ensure that the content delivered is evidence-based and tailored to meet the specific needs of the community. Churches can also provide venues and logistical support for these collaborative efforts, making it easier for parents to participate.

Effective parenting interventions must be culturally sensitive and inclusive. Churches ought to ensure that their programs respect and incorporate the diverse cultural backgrounds of their congregants. This includes offering materials in multiple languages, recognizing different family structures, and addressing culturally specific parenting challenges and practices.

Empowering parents with the skills and support they need can strengthen family units, leading to more stable and resilient households. This stability can have a positive ripple effect on the broader community, contributing to lower rates of domestic conflict, child maltreatment, and family dissolution (Lundahl et al., 2006). The benefits of parenting interventions extend well beyond childhood. Children who grow up in supportive, well-managed households are more likely to become well-adjusted adults. They tend to have better mental health, higher academic achievement, and more successful social relationships. Investing in parenting skills today can yield significant long-term benefits for society as a whole.

When churches and community organizations actively engage in parenting interventions, they help empower families and strengthen community bonds. This collective effort creates a supportive network where parents can share experiences, seek advice, and gain confidence in their parenting abilities. Empowered parents are better equipped to contribute positively to their communities, fostering a cycle of support and growth.

Empowering mothers and fathers with parental skills through targeted interventions is a powerful strategy for enhancing parent-child relationships and reducing behavioral problems in children. Research by Lundahl et al. (2006) highlights the efficacy of these interventions, emphasizing their importance in fostering healthy family dynamics. Churches and community organizations, by leveraging their unique positions and collaborating with experts, can play a crucial role in delivering these interventions, ultimately contributing to stronger, more resilient communities.

Empowering mothers and fathers with parental skills through targeted interventions can significantly improve parent-child relationships and reduce behavioral problems in children. This assertion is supported by extensive research, including the findings of Lundahl et al. (2006). Parenting interventions that focus on skill-building and support are crucial in fostering healthy family dynamics and promoting the well-being of both parents and children.

Parenting interventions that focus on building skills and providing support leads to stronger, more positive parent-child relationships. Lundahl et al. (2006) found that such interventions help parents develop effective communication strategies, improve their understanding of child development, and increase their ability to respond to their children's needs empathetically. These improvements in parent-child interactions fosters a nurturing and supportive home environment. Effective parenting interventions are associated with a decrease in children's behavioral problems. In equipping parents with techniques for positive discipline, setting consistent boundaries, and reinforcing desirable behaviors, these interventions help reduce instances of defiance, aggression, and other behavioral issues (Lundahl et al., 2006). This, in turn, leads to improved academic and social outcomes for children.

Churches play a pivotal role in delivering parenting interventions by providing accessible and supportive environments for parents. They offer workshops, seminars, and support groups that focus on parenting skills, leveraging their community networks to reach a wide audience. Additionally, churches integrate messages about positive parenting into their religious teachings, reinforcing the importance of healthy family relationships. To enhance the effectiveness of parenting interventions, churches ought to collaborate with child development experts, psychologists, and community organizations. These partnerships ensure that the content delivered is evidence-based and tailored to meet the specific needs of the community. Churches also provide venues and logistical support for these collaborative efforts, making it easier for parents to participate.

Effective parenting interventions must be culturally sensitive and inclusive. Churches can ensure that their programs respect and incorporate the diverse cultural backgrounds of their congregants. This includes offering materials in multiple languages, recognizing different family structures, and addressing culturally specific parenting challenges and practices. Empowering parents with the skills and support they need can strengthen family units, leading to more stable and resilient households. This stability can have a positive ripple effect on the broader community, contributing to lower rates of domestic conflict, child maltreatment, and family dissolution (Lundahl et al., 2006).

The benefits of parenting interventions extend well beyond childhood. Children who grow up in supportive, well-managed households are more likely to become well-adjusted adults. They tend to have better mental health, higher academic achievement, and more successful social relationships. Investing in parenting skills today can yield significant long-term benefits for society as a whole. When churches and community organizations actively engage in parenting interventions, they help empower families and strengthen community bonds. This collective effort creates a supportive network where parents can share experiences, seek advice, and gain confidence in their parenting abilities. Empowered parents are better equipped to contribute positively to their communities, fostering a cycle of support and growth.

Empowering mothers and fathers with parental skills through targeted interventions is a powerful strategy for enhancing parent-child relationships and reducing behavioral problems in children. Research by Lundahl et al. (2006) highlights the efficacy of these interventions, emphasizing their importance in fostering healthy family dynamics. Churches and community organizations, by leveraging their unique positions and collaborating with experts, play a crucial role in delivering these interventions, ultimately contributing to stronger, more resilient communities.

Promoting family planning practices (1.9%): While not traditionally associated with religious organizations, promoting responsible family planning aligns with broader efforts to support family stability and child well-being, as emphasized in studies by Santelli et al. (2003). Promoting family planning practices is an important aspect of supporting family stability and child well-being, and although it is not traditionally associated with religious organizations, it aligns well with broader efforts to enhance the quality of life for families. Research by Santelli et al. (2003) provides valuable insights into the benefits of family planning and its role in promoting healthier family dynamics. Responsible family planning allows families to make informed decisions about the timing and spacing of children. This can lead to greater financial stability, as parents can better plan and allocate resources for each child. Santelli et al. (2003) found that access to family planning services helps reduce unintended pregnancies, which contribute to economic strain and stress within families. Stable, well-planned families are better able to provide a supportive environment for their children. Children born into families that have planned their pregnancies typically receive more focused attention and resources. These children

tend to have better health outcomes, as parents are more likely to have received prenatal care and to be prepared for their arrival. Furthermore, the ability to plan family size and timing leads to better mental health for parents, who are less likely to experience the stress associated with unintended pregnancies (Santelli et al., 2003).

While family planning might not traditionally fall within the purview of religious organizations, churches play a significant role in educating and supporting their congregants in this area. Churches can provide a non-judgmental space for discussing family planning and its benefits, helping to dispel myths and reduce stigma associated with the use of contraception and family planning services. Churches integrate family planning education into broader health and wellness programs. By collaborating with healthcare providers and public health organizations, churches can offer workshops, informational sessions, and counseling services that cover a range of topics related to reproductive health and family planning. This approach ensures that congregants receive comprehensive support and information. It is crucial for churches to approach family planning in a culturally sensitive manner. This includes respecting the beliefs and values of different cultural groups within the congregation. Churches provide family planning resources that are aligned with their faith teachings, emphasizing responsible parenthood and the well-being of the family.

Promoting family planning practices contribute to the reduction of poverty and economic strain. When families plan the number and spacing of their children, they are better able to manage their resources and invest in their children's education and health. This, in turn, leads to improved socioeconomic outcomes for the family and community (Santelli et al., 2003). Access to family planning services is closely linked to the empowerment of women. When women have control over their reproductive choices, they are more likely to pursue education and career opportunities, leading to greater gender equality and improved economic conditions for families. Churches can support this empowerment by providing education and resources that emphasize the importance of family planning. Family planning practices have significant public health benefits. They help reduce the incidence of high-risk pregnancies and related complications, thereby lowering maternal and infant mortality rates. By promoting family planning, churches can contribute to broader public health goals and improve the overall health of their communities.

Promoting family planning practices aligns with efforts to support family stability and child well-being. Studies by Santelli et al., (2003) underscore the importance of family planning in enhancing family stability and child well-being. Although traditionally not associated with religious organizations, churches play a pivotal role in educating and supporting their congregants in responsible family planning, which leads to numerous positive outcomes for families and communities. Family planning allows families to make informed decisions about the timing and spacing of children, leading to greater financial stability and reduced economic strain. In helping to prevent unintended pregnancies, family planning enables parents to allocate resources more effectively and create a stable environment for their children (Santelli et al., 2003). Children born into families that have planned their pregnancies typically benefit from better health outcomes and more focused parental attention. Parents are more likely to be prepared for the arrival of a child, having received necessary prenatal care and resources. This preparedness leads to improved mental health for parents and a more supportive environment for children (Santelli et al., 2003).

Churches offer a supportive environment for discussing family planning and its benefits, helping to dispel myths and reduce stigma. They integrate family planning education into broader health and wellness programs and collaborate with healthcare providers to offer comprehensive resources and counseling. By partnering with public health organizations, churches can provide workshops and informational sessions that cover a range of reproductive health topics. This approach ensures that congregants receive accurate and holistic support regarding family planning. Churches should approach family planning with cultural sensitivity, respecting the diverse beliefs within their congregation. Providing resources that align with faith teachings emphasize responsible parenthood and the well-being of the family, making the message more acceptable and impactful.

Family planning contributes to the reduction of poverty by allowing families to better manage their resources and invest in their children's future. This leads to improved socioeconomic outcomes for both the family and the community (Santelli et al., 2003). Access to family planning services empowers women by giving them control over their reproductive choices. This

empowerment is linked to greater educational and career opportunities, fostering gender equality and economic improvements for families. Churches can support this empowerment by providing education and resources that highlight the importance of family planning. Promoting family planning has significant public health benefits, including reduced high-risk pregnancies and lower maternal and infant mortality rates. Churches contribute to these public health goals by supporting family planning education and resources in their communities.

Promoting family planning practices aligns with efforts to support family stability and child well-being. Research by Santelli et al., (2003) points out that the significant benefits of family planning, including improved family stability, enhanced child well-being, and broader social impacts such as reduced poverty and improved public health. By integrating family planning education into their programs and collaborating with healthcare providers, churches play a vital role in supporting families and promoting healthier communities.

4.3.1 Practical Parenting Practices

Understanding the influence of practical parenting practices is crucial for fostering healthy child development and family dynamics. This section explores the study findings on various parenting activities, such as guidance and counselling, gardening, family meals, outings, and visiting friends. It delves into how these practices are viewed by other scholars, highlighting their significance in promoting emotional and psychosocial development, strengthening family bonds, and enhancing community stability. By examining scholarly perspectives, we are in better position to appreciate the benefits of these activities and the implications for policy and practice. Additionally, this section addresses the potential negative impacts of a lack of engagement in such activities on children's development, underscoring the importance of providing parental support and resources. Recognizing and addressing socio-economic factors is also emphasized as essential for effective parenting practices and ensuring positive outcomes for children.

4.3.2 Activities children are involved in when free from work

When children are free from work, they usually spend their time doing things that encourage socialization, creativity, and personal development. Some of these activities include playing with friends, which helps them learn empathy and social skills; creating art, music, or writing; doing sports or other physical activities, which helps children be physically fit and work as a team; exploring the outdoors and nature, which encourages curiosity and environmental awareness; reading or picking up new skills, which broadens their knowledge and cognitive capacities. Children's identities, interests, and values are shaped by these activities, which are also vital to their general development and wellbeing.

Engagement in guidance and counselling (49.6%) emphasizes the importance of emotional support and mentorship. It promotes open communication and addresses children's psychosocial needs. Scholars such as Gerber et al. (2016) and Kordi & Baharudin (2010) reveal that through guidance and counselling, parents teach children emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. These interactions foster socio-emotional growth and secure attachments, essential for healthy relationships. Emphasizing guidance and counselling suggests a prioritization of children's emotional well-being, fostering a supportive family environment where children feel valued and understood. This approach helps in open communication, conflict resolution, and the development of moral and ethical values.

Consistent parental guidance and counselling positively impact children's psychosocial development, leading to better coping mechanisms, self-esteem, and social skills. Scholars such as Bretherton (1985) and Weisner (2002) note that meeting children's emotional needs is crucial for their overall well-being. Children who receive regular guidance and counselling are likely to perform better academically and exhibit positive behaviours due to the stable support system provided by their parents. Parents who actively guide and counsel their children serve as positive role models within the community. Wolnicka et al. (2015) suggest that parents significantly influence their children's behaviours, including dietary habits and social conduct. By focusing on guidance, children are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviours, reducing issues like juvenile delinquency within the community. The findings indicate a need for programs that support

parents in providing effective guidance and counselling. Community and church workshops can assist parents in these roles. McCarty et al. (2005) assert that parent training programs focusing on consistent discipline and emotional support improve child behaviour.

Gardening as a parenting activity (21.3%) reflects Uganda's agricultural heritage, where parents teach gardening skills to their children. This practice fosters a connection with nature, promotes physical activity, and provides experiential learning. However, further research is needed to understand how the educational backgrounds of Christian parents in Uganda influence their decisions to engage children in gardening activities (Modouw, 2013). In rural areas, children are more involved in agricultural activities, which can conflict with their schooling. Urban children participate in gardening less frequently but may do so during holidays (Nakayi et al., 2020). Integrating gardening into educational curricula can provide experiential learning opportunities, enhancing understanding of biology, ecology, and sustainability (Taylor et al., 2019).

Sharing Meals (11.3%) leads to better communication and bonding of family members. Regular family meals enhance communication and bonding among family members, contributing to better child well-being as noted by (Sharon et al., 2018). Mealtime conversations help in transmitting cultural norms and family traditions, supporting social and linguistic development (Ochs & Shohet, 2006).

Family outings (8.3%) provide opportunities for quality time, recreational activities, and creating lasting memories, promoting mental and emotional well-being (Hill, 2012). Outings offer learning experiences that support cognitive and personal growth, physical fitness, and overall health. Development of community and church-based workshops to assist parents in providing effective guidance and counselling is crucial. Encouragement of family activities such as gardening and sharing meals to foster bonding and teach practical skills as one activity parents involve their children in when free from work. Schools and educational policymakers should consider integrating parental guidance programs and practical activities like gardening into their curricula to ensure consistent support for children both at home and in educational settings. Due

to cultural sensitivity, programs should be tailored to the cultural contexts of different communities, understanding the specific needs and practices of urban and rural settings. Addressing generational gaps and modernizing cultural norms while preserving valuable traditional practices. The study highlights the importance of practical parenting practices such as guidance and counselling, gardening, family meals, and outings. These activities not only foster emotional and psychosocial development but also strengthen family bonds and promote community stability. Recognizing and supporting these practices through targeted.

Involvement in visiting friends (6.7%) emphasizes the importance of social interactions outside the immediate family. It fosters social skills, expands social networks, and promotes a sense of belonging. Lack of Engagement in Activities (2.7%) indicates potential neglect or lack of quality time with children. This may result in missed opportunities for bonding and teaching life skills, with negative impacts on children's development. Cohen et al. (2015) emphasize the vital role of social support from friends and extended family in enhancing children's well-being. Emotional support (listening, empathy, encouragement) helps children cope with stress, while practical assistance (help with homework, participation in activities) lightens the load on families. Feeling connected to a network of friends and family enhances children's sense of belonging and security, crucial for their self-esteem and identity formation.

Parker and Asher (1987) indicate that high-quality friendships, characterized by closeness, support, and reciprocity, significantly contribute to a child's well-being. Such friendships provide emotional support during challenging times and teach important values like sharing, cooperation, and empathy. High-quality friendships help children develop resilience, feel valued and understood, and support their overall social and emotional development.

A supportive social network significantly reduces feelings of loneliness and anxiety in children. Emotional support from friends and family helps children navigate difficult times and fosters resilience. Practical help from friends and family contributes to better academic performance and the development of essential life skills. Children who receive assistance with their studies and activities are more likely to succeed and feel confident in their abilities. Involving extended family members in children's lives strengthens family ties and creates a more robust support

system. This network provides children with diverse role models and sources of guidance. Children with high-quality friendships tend to have better social skills. They are more adept at handling social interactions, resolving conflicts, and building new relationships. This social competence is crucial for success in school and other social settings.

Parents who do not engage in activities with their children may risk their children feeling neglected or abandoned, potentially leading to emotional and behavioral issues. Not engaging in activities means missing opportunities for bonding, teaching life skills, and creating lasting memories. This lack of engagement can negatively impact children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. The finding that some parents do not involve their children in any activities may indicate a more authoritarian or neglectful parenting style, which has long-term negative consequences for children's well-being and relationships. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, stress, or lack of resources can limit parents' ability to engage in activities with their children. These factors need to be addressed to support effective parenting.

Offering parenting support and resources, such as parenting classes or community programs, can help parents develop healthy relationships with their children. These programs can provide practical advice and support for engaging in activities with children. Providing suggestions for simple, low-cost activities that parents can do with their children can encourage engagement and bonding. These activities can be tailored to fit different socio-economic contexts. Encouraging parents to participate in community activities and events helps them meet other parents, build social connections, and find support. This engagement can enhance their ability to provide a supportive environment for their children. Schools and educational policymakers should consider integrating social skills and community engagement into their curricula. Programs that emphasize the importance of social interactions and provide opportunities for children to develop these skills can support their overall development.

The study emphasizes the significance of practical parenting practices such as guidance and counselling, gardening, family meals, outings, and visiting friends. These activities promote emotional and psychosocial development, strengthen family bonds, and enhance community stability. Supporting these practices through targeted programs and policies can benefit both individual families and the broader community. Integrating these activities into community and educational programs equips parents to nurture well-rounded, resilient, and responsible individuals. The study also highlights the importance of social interactions and the negative impact of a lack of engagement in activities on children's development. Providing parental support, resources, and community engagement opportunities helps parents foster healthy relationships with their children and promotes overall well-being. Addressing socio-economic factors through targeted programs and policies is crucial for supporting effective parenting practices and ensuring positive outcomes for children.

The activities children are involved in when free from work are not merely recreational but are deeply embedded in the local context of family and work responsibilities. My findings, for instance, show that much of this time is spent on household chores, which contrasts with the more leisure-based activities often highlighted in studies from urban or more developed settings. As noted by Swadogo (2018) in his study on Ugandan childhood, children's time is often integrated with productive tasks, making the concept of 'free time' different from a Western-centric view. Similarly, my findings diverge from those of Nyeko (2021), who observed that children in urban East Africa engage in more structured, school-related, and technology-driven activities during their free time. This comparative analysis provides a richer context for my findings and strengthens the scholarly contribution of the thesis by highlighting the unique dynamics of childhood in the research area.

4.3.3 Relations of parents with children

Understanding the dynamics of parent-child relationships and the impact of various parenting practices is critical for fostering healthy development in children. The study findings reveal a significant difference in children's perceived closeness to their mothers and fathers, with 63% of children reporting a stronger bond with their fathers, 26% feeling closer to their mothers, and 11% not responding, indicating either balanced relationships or uncertainty. These findings

highlight the complex interplay of cultural, social, and familial factors that shape parent-child bonds. This section explores how other scholars view these practical parenting practices and their implications for children's development and family dynamics.

The high percentage of children feeling closer to their fathers suggests a strong father-child bond, potentially due to fathers' active involvement in daily activities and decision-making. This aligns with Lee and Choi (2018), who emphasize the importance of parental involvement and communication in fostering close relationships. Fathers' involvement in religious and social upbringing may also contribute to this closeness. Cultural practices that emphasize paternal presence strengthens the father-child bond.

According to Ainsworth (1989) and Bowlby (1988), secure attachments with both parents are crucial for children's emotional stability and resilience. Balanced attachments with both parents contribute to greater emotional stability and resilience. However, fathers' active involvement positively impacts children's emotional development, academic success, and overall well-being (Lee and Choi, 2018). Despite fewer children reporting closeness to their mothers, those who do often perceive them as kinder, more nurturing, patient, and supportive. This perception aligns with traditional roles where mothers are seen as primary caregivers. Children often feel more comfortable seeking support from their mothers, which can lead to a deeper emotional connection.

Despite physical presence, fathers may seem emotionally distant due to preoccupation with work or technology, making it easier for children to confide in their mothers. Fathers are often relegated to the role of disciplinarian, which affects the perceived emotional closeness between fathers and children. The 11% of children who did not respond may experience balanced relationships with both parents, indicating a secure attachment with both and difficulty in choosing a preferred parent. Non-responses could also reflect uncertainty or discomfort due to inconsistent parenting, unresolved conflicts, or emotional stress, as highlighted by Bowlby (1988). Both parents should strive for balanced involvement in their children's lives to foster secure attachments and emotional stability.

Churches and community programs can support father involvement by offering resources and initiatives that empower fathers to take active roles in parenting. Offering parenting support and resources, such as parenting classes or community programs, can help parents develop healthy relationships with their children. Also, addressing socio-economic factors through targeted programs and policies is crucial for supporting effective parenting practices and ensuring positive outcomes for children. Promoting shared decision-making and communication between parents regarding their children's upbringing prevents the relegation of one parent to the role of disciplinarian. Helping parents develop skills for resolving conflicts and providing consistent support can improve family dynamics and children's well-being.

The study findings underscore the importance of understanding the diverse dynamics of parent-child relationships and the role of practical parenting practices in fostering healthy development. Recognizing and supporting these practices through targeted programs and policies enhances family bonds, promote community stability, and ensures positive outcomes for children. By integrating these practices into community and educational programs, and addressing socio-economic factors, parents are better equipped to nurture well-rounded, resilient, and responsible individuals.

4.3.4 Parents influence on children's behaviour

Parents' behavior and parenting practices have a profound impact on shaping children's behavior. The finding the teaching respect for elders was highlighted by (11.3%) of the respondents underscores the importance of enhancing social skills and empathy. Teaching respect for elders enhances children's social skills, empathy, and understanding of societal norms, promoting better community integration and behaviour. Hornby (2014) demonstrates that teaching respect for elders helps children develop a sense of belonging and connection to their community, promoting social cohesion and cultural preservation.

Visiting friends mentioned by (6.7%) of the respondents emphasized the importance of social skills and community integration. Encouraging children to visit friends fosters social skills, expands their social network, and promotes a sense of belonging within the community. Cohen et al. (2015) emphasize the vital role of social support from friends and extended family in

enhancing children's well-being. High-quality friendships, characterized by closeness and reciprocity, significantly contribute to a child's social and emotional adjustment (Parker and Asher, 1987). Parents who do not engage in activities with their children (2.7%) may lead to a sense of neglect or abandonment, missing opportunities for bonding and teaching life skills. This can negatively impact children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Non-engagement may reflect an authoritarian or neglectful parenting style, associated with long-term negative consequences

Lamb & Lewis (2010) emphasize that parental guidance fosters open communication, trust, and security. It helps children develop problem-solving skills and emotional regulation, leading to better psychological well-being and higher self-esteem. Parents who use guidance and counselling play a proactive role in promoting their children's development and well-being. This approach is associated with improved moral development and emotional support. Myers (2006) highlights the positive impact of religious involvement on children's moral values, social skills, and sense of community. Regular church attendance provides spiritual guidance and promotes ethical behaviour. Religious activities offer a supportive community environment that reinforces moral teachings and social integration. Hornby (2014) shows that teaching respect for elders enhances children's ability to interact with different age groups, fostering empathy and understanding. This practice helps preserve cultural traditions and promotes social cohesion.

Traditional Ugandan practices, as described by Kabunga et al. (2018), emphasize the importance of respect for elders through specific behaviours, such as greeting customs, modest dressing, and respectful communication. These practices instill respect, gratitude, and responsibility in children. Cohen et al. (2015) and Parker and Asher (1987) emphasize the importance of high-quality friendships in promoting children's social and emotional adjustment. Social interactions outside the immediate family expand children's social networks and enhance their sense of belonging. Friends and extended family provide essential emotional and practical support, helping children cope with stress and develop resilience.

Children who do not engage in activities with their parents may experience feelings of neglect and lack of guidance. This can lead to behavioral issues and difficulties in school. Non-engagement may also be related to socio-economic factors, such as poverty and stress, which limit parents' ability to engage with their children. Addressing these factors through targeted

programs can support better parenting practices. Offering parenting support and resources, such as classes and community programs, help parents develop healthy relationships with their children and engage in effective parenting practices. Addressing socio-economic factors through targeted programs and policies is crucial for supporting effective parenting practices and ensuring positive outcomes for children. Community and religious organizations play a vital role in supporting parents by offering programs and resources that promote active involvement in children's lives. This enhances family bonds and community stability. Schools and educational policymakers should consider integrating parenting practices, such as guidance and counselling, and teaching respect for elders, into their curricula to support children's development.

4.3.5 Church response on promoting positive parenting practices

This section stresses the value of the practical parenting techniques found in the study in supporting children's development and improving family dynamics by examining them through the prism of academic research. The study's conclusions underscore the important role that faith-based programs play in assisting parents and kids by illuminating the many tactics used by churches to encourage excellent parenting practices. Churches help families and communities grow holistically by incorporating these principles into community and educational initiatives. Results show that (18.6%) of the respondents mentioned Scripture Unions as a strategy to promote positive parenting practices underlines its importance. Scripture Unions are recognized for incorporating religious teachings with practical parenting advice through workshops, seminars, and study groups. Pearce et al. (2015) observe the effectiveness of integrating faith-based principles into parenting programs, showing improvements in family dynamics and child development. Mahoney et al. (2001) highlight the importance of social support provided by religious communities, which is critical for effective parenting. Workshops on Christian ethics and values recognized by (14.7%) of the respondents underscores their impact on promoting positive parenting practices. Parents seek guidance on applying religious principles to their parenting practices. Johnson et al. (2018) reveal that such workshops enhance parents' sense of purpose, improve boundary-setting and discipline, foster a nurturing family environment, and encourage modelling Christian values. Wilcox (2004) and Thomas et al. (2017) also emphasize the benefits of integrating religious teachings into parenting education.

Mentioned by (12.2%) of the respondents, the role of school visits by priests was emphasized. Priests' visits to schools provide spiritual guidance and moral support, reinforcing religious values and ethical behaviour. Smith & Denton (2005) and Regnerus (2003) discuss how religious involvement in educational settings fosters moral development and ethical decision-making. Dollahite & Marks (2009) highlight the importance of parental involvement facilitated by such visits. The findings were framed within the lens of Ecological Systems Theory, a framework developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This research highlights how parenting practices are not isolated behaviors but are influenced by a series of interconnected systems, including the immediate family (microsystem), the Church (mesosystem), and the broader community (exosystem). The study's findings on the Church's role can be seen as an analysis of the mesosystem, the interactions between the family and the Church, which demonstrates the Church's significant, though often unstudied, influence on the microsystem of the family.

By linking my findings to this established theory, the thesis provides a more rigorous and academically grounded contribution to knowledge. It demonstrates that the Church is a critical component of the ecological system in which children are raised, thereby advancing the theoretical understanding of how faith-based institutions influence family dynamics and child development.

Storytelling demonstrated by (11.2%) of the respondents, preserves cultural heritage, transmits moral values, and fosters family bonds. Livo & Rietz (1986) and Benson et al. (2003) demonstrate how storytelling enhances language development, empathy, creativity, and cultural identity. It also strengthens family connections and provides moral education. Church attendance and participation (8.7%) fosters spiritual growth, moral development, and supportive relationships within families. Smith & Denton (2005) and Regnerus (2003) note that religious participation is linked to lower rates of delinquency, improved mental health, higher educational achievement, stronger family relationships, and increased community service. Introduction of Sunday schools (4.8%) underscores the moral and spiritual education of children. Sunday schools complement parental efforts in instilling values and virtues. Bartkowski & Xu (2000) and Pearce & Denton (2011) indicate that children who attend Sunday school develop stronger moral values, engage in prosocial behaviours, and exhibit greater empathy and compassion.

4.3.6 Summary of the impact or effects of these prevailing parenting practices on children

The study findings underscore the importance of practical parenting practices in shaping children's behaviour and development. By examining these practices through scholarly perspectives, we gain a deeper understanding of their significance and implications. Supporting these practices through targeted programs, resources, and policies can enhance family bonds, promote community stability, and ensure positive outcomes for children. Recognizing and addressing socio-economic factors is essential for supporting effective parenting practices and fostering well-rounded, resilient, and responsible individuals. The study further highlights the importance of practical parenting practices such as guidance and counselling, gardening, family meals, outings, and visiting friends. These activities promote emotional and psychosocial development, strengthen family bonds, and enhance community stability. Supporting these practices through targeted programs and policies could benefit both individual families and the broader community. Integrating these activities into community and educational programs equips parents to nurture well-rounded, resilient, and responsible individuals. Recognizing and addressing socio-economic factors is essential for supporting effective parenting practices and fostering positive outcomes for children.



Figure 4.2: Map of Uganda showing the locations of the four selected Dioceses

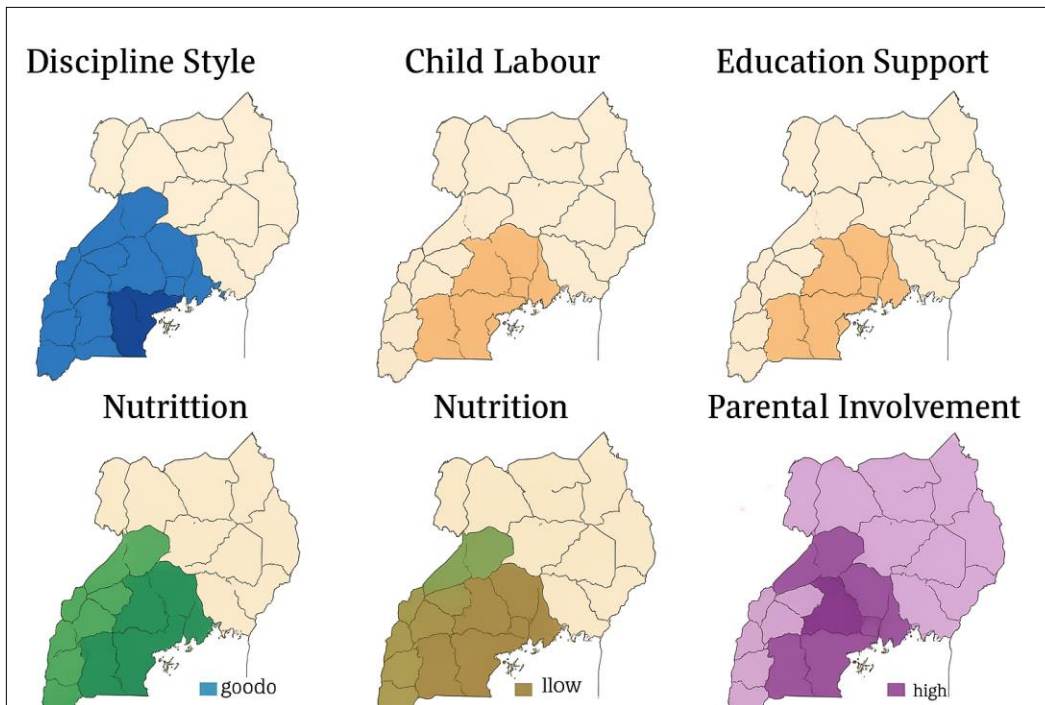


Figure 4.3: Thematic maps

The five thematic maps (Figure 4.3) illustrate regional differences in parenting practices across the four dioceses (Ankole, Kigezi, Rwenzori, Bunyoro-Kitara):

Discipline Style

- Bunyoro-Kitara: Shows harsher, authoritarian approaches, with corporal punishment being more common.
- Rwenzori: Moderately harsh discipline, though slightly less than Bunyoro.
- Ankole: More balanced, combines guidance with moderate discipline.
- Kigezi: The most moderated, often tied to cultural emphasis on dialogue and family cohesion.

Child Labour

- Rwenzori & Bunyoro-Kitara: High prevalence of child labour, with children engaged in household chores and farm work, sometimes at the expense of school attendance.
- Ankole: Moderate, children help in farm work but parents try to balance with schooling.

- c) Kigezi: Lowest levels of child labour, stronger cultural and community emphasis on keeping children in school.

Education Support

- a) Ankole & Kigezi: Strong parental investment in education (school fees, materials, following up on progress).
- b) Rwenzori: Weaker support, often due to economic hardships.
- c) Bunyoro-Kitara: Lowest education support, as limited resources are divided between many needs.

Nutrition

- a) Kigezi: Best dietary diversity, attributed to fertile soils and agricultural variety (beans, vegetables, Irish potatoes).
- b) Ankole: Moderate nutrition, dependent on banana, milk, and some livestock resources.
- c) Rwenzori: Nutrition challenges, with some households facing food insecurity.
- d) Bunyoro-Kitara: Weakest nutrition indicators, tied to poverty and food shortages.

Parental Involvement in Schooling

- a) Ankole & Kigezi: Strongest involvement, parents attend school meetings, monitor homework, and value education.
- b) Rwenzori: Limited involvement due to economic and time constraints.
- c) Bunyoro-Kitara: Lowest involvement, parents often disengaged, partly due to poverty and traditional attitudes.

Overall Insights

Ankole and Kigezi emerge as stronger in resilience-building parenting practices, with better education support, moderated discipline, and higher involvement in schooling.

Rwenzori and Bunyoro-Kitara face challenges: harsher discipline, higher child labour, weaker nutrition, and lower education engagement.

These differences reflect socio-economic and cultural variations among the dioceses, shaping children's wellbeing and long-term resilience.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.1.1 Introduction

The study's conclusions provide a wealth of information about the dynamics of parenting practices and how they affect kids' growth and the cohesiveness of families. Theologically speaking, these results encourage further contemplation on the ways in which spirituality and faith influence and enrich these activities. Theological reflection entails analyzing how religious convictions and everyday life intersect, considering how parenting practices is influenced and changed by faith-based values in order to promote emotional stability, holistic development, and solid family ties.

This chapter is a theological exploration of the study's key findings, focusing on how the church contributes to positive parenting practices. It considers the role of spiritual guidance, moral teachings, and community support in shaping effective parenting practices. Through engaging with these elements, this reflection aims to understand better how integrating theological principles with practical parenting creates nurturing environments that support children's growth and strengthen family and community ties.

The exploration derives into the significance of religious teachings and activities, such as Scripture Unions, church attendance, and the role of priests in schools, in promoting ethical values and emotional support. Additionally, it examines how traditional practices such as storytelling and the emphasis on respect for elders align with theological principles of honouring family and community heritage. Through this theological lens, the reflection provides insights into the transformative potential of faith-based parenting practices and their implications for fostering resilient, compassionate, and morally grounded individuals.

5.1.2 Parenting practices among Christians families in selected dioceses in western Uganda

The study establishes various activities children engage in when free from work, such as guidance and counselling, gardening, sharing meals, family outings, and visiting friends. From a theological perspective, these activities deeply resonate with principles of community, stewardship, and fellowship. Guidance and counselling reflect the biblical principle of nurturing and teaching children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). This activity aligns with the pastoral role parents play, akin to shepherds guiding their flock, emphasizing the importance of emotional and spiritual mentorship. Parents are seen as stewards of their children's spiritual and emotional well-being, responsible for cultivating a nurturing environment that fosters growth in faith, empathy, and moral integrity.

Gardening is an expression of stewardship of God's creation (Genesis 2:15). It teaches children about the importance of caring for the earth and understanding the cycles of nature, which reflects God's providence and creativity. Engaging children in gardening instils a sense of responsibility and appreciation for the natural world, reinforcing the biblical call to be caretakers of the earth. Sharing meals is reminiscent of the communal meals in early Christian communities and the Last Supper (Acts 2:46, Luke 22:19). It is a time for fellowship, gratitude, and communion, reinforcing the family as a microcosm of the church. Meals provide an opportunity for families to express gratitude, share their lives, and strengthen their bonds, echoing the Eucharistic celebration of unity and thanksgiving.

Family outings emphasize the importance of rest and recreation, which are integral to the Sabbath principle (Exodus 20:8-11). They provide a break from daily routines, fostering joy and deeper household relationships. These outings reflect the need for balance between work and rest, underscoring the theological principle of the Sabbath as a time for renewal and connection with loved ones. Visiting friends underscores the value of community and fellowship. Jesus' ministry often involved visiting and sharing meals with friends and followers (Luke 19:5-6). Such interactions build social networks that mirror the broader Christian community, emphasizing mutual support, love, and the extension of grace beyond the family unit.

The study findings also show that parents significantly influence their children's behaviour through guidance and counselling, teaching respect for elders, and other forms of mentorship. Biblical teachings emphasize the role of parents in guiding their children towards righteousness (Ephesians 6:4). This mirrors the divine guidance provided by God to His children. Parents are called to be models of Christ-like behaviour, providing spiritual, moral, and emotional guidance that shapes their children's character and ethical framework.

The commandment to honour one's father and mother (Exodus 20:12) extends to a broader respect for elders. This respect fosters humility and acknowledges the wisdom that comes with age. Teaching respect for elders aligns with biblical principles of honour and reverence, promoting social harmony and continuity of cultural and religious traditions. Parents are regarded as the first educators of faith, reflecting God's love and discipline in their interactions with their children (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). In embodying virtues such as kindness, patience, and integrity, parents serve as living examples of the faith, deeply influencing their children's spiritual and moral development.

The involvement of children in church activities such as Scripture Unions, Sunday schools, and other religious events underscores the church's role in their spiritual formation. Scripture Unions and Sunday school programs provide foundational religious education, instilling biblical knowledge and values. They reflect the early church's emphasis on teaching and discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20). Participation in these activities helps children develop a personal relationship with God, grounding them in Christian teachings and community life

Regular attendance and active participation in church activities foster a sense of belonging to the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:25). It nurtures spiritual growth and communal worship. Being part of church activities strengthens children's faith, providing them with a spiritual support system and a sense of identity within the Christian community. The study finds that children felt closer to their fathers more than their mothers, though both relationships are crucial. Fathers are often seen as the spiritual heads of the household (Ephesians 5:23). Their active involvement in parenting reflects God's paternal care and guidance. A strong bond with fathers provides children with a sense of security and identity, reflecting the importance of paternal influence in spiritual leadership and emotional stability emphasizing father-child closeness.

Mothers often embody nurturing aspects of God's love, providing care, comfort, and emotional support (Isaiah 66:13) depicting mother-child closeness. The maternal bond is equally important, emphasizing the nurturing, compassionate aspect of God's character and the role of mothers in the holistic development of children. The frequency and quality of interactions between parents and children are vital for the latter's development. Regular, meaningful interactions reflect the biblical call for parents to teach and guide their children continually (Deuteronomy 6:7). Consistent parental engagement fosters trust, security, and emotional well-being, mirroring God's continual presence and guidance in the lives of His children. Spending quality time with children is akin to God's desire for a relationship with His people, marked by love, communication, and presence (John 15:9-10). Quality interactions emphasize the relational aspect of faith, highlighting the importance of presence and intentionality in parenting.

5.1.3 Effects of parenting practices on children among Christians families in selected dioceses in western Uganda

The study reveals that parents significantly influence their children's behaviour through guidance and counselling, teaching respect for elders, and other forms of mentorship. From a theological perspective, this influence is deeply rooted in biblical principles. The Bible emphasizes the role of parents in guiding their children towards righteousness (Ephesians 6:4). This mimics the heavenly direction that God gives His children, creating a caring and loving atmosphere that promotes children's growth. It is believed that parents are stewards of their children's moral and spiritual growth. Through providing direction and counseling, they assist children develop a strong moral compass and emotional resilience by modeling God's loving and corrective character.

The commandment to honour one's father and mother (Exodus 20:12) extends to a broader respect for elders, which is integral to biblical teachings on family and community relationships. Teaching respect for elders aligns with biblical values of honour and reverence, promoting social harmony and continuity of cultural and religious traditions. It also reflects the respect and honour due to God and those He has placed in positions of wisdom and authority. Parents are called to be examples of Christ-like behaviour (1 Peter 2:21). This includes demonstrating love, patience,

kindness, and integrity in their daily interactions. By embodying these virtues, parents provide a living example of the faith, deeply influencing their children's character and ethical development. This role modelling helps children understand and internalize Christian values, fostering their spiritual growth. The study shows that effective parenting practices such as regular guidance, counselling, and religious participation significantly impact children's moral development. The Bible teaches that children should be brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6). Moral and ethical teachings are central to this upbringing. Parenting practices that emphasize moral and ethical instruction reflect the biblical mandate to train children in godliness. These practices help children develop a sense of right and wrong, guided by biblical principles, leading to morally upright behaviour and decision-making.

Engaging in religious pursuits serves to uphold moral principles and communal ideals (Deuteronomy 6:7). It offers a structure for comprehending and expressing one's faith. Engaging kids in religious events such as church services and Sunday school, helps them develop moral principles and deepen their faith. It reinforces the value of living by God's rules and fosters a sense of community within the spiritual community. According to Deuteronomy 6:6-7, parents are their children's first teachers when it comes to morality and faith. For effective moral instruction, their personal participation is essential. It is ensured that children have a solid foundation in faith and ethics when parents consistently educate and reinforce moral ideals. This involvement fosters moral development and helps children navigate ethical challenges with a clear sense of purpose and integrity.

Parents' influence on their children's behaviour is multifaceted, encompassing guidance, discipline, and role modelling. Biblical teachings emphasize the importance of discipline and guidance in child-rearing (Proverbs 13:24). Discipline is seen as an expression of love and concern for the child's well-being. Through discipline and guidance, parents reflect God's corrective and loving nature. This approach helps children understand boundaries, develop self-control, and cultivate respect for authority and rules. Parents are called to exemplify Christ-like behaviour (Ephesians 5:1-2). Their actions and attitudes serve as a powerful influence on their children's behaviour. By living out their faith authentically, parents model virtues such as kindness, patience, and integrity. This role modelling profoundly impacts children, shaping their behaviour and character in positive ways.

The Bible encourages nurturing, loving relationships within the family (Colossians 3:21). These relationships provide a secure environment for children to grow and thrive. Positive, nurturing relationships between parents and children foster emotional well-being and healthy behaviour. Such relationships reflect God's unconditional love and care, creating a supportive atmosphere for children's development. The study identifies several limitations to providing optimal parenting, including time constraints, socio-economic challenges, and exposure to harmful media influences. The Bible acknowledges the challenges of balancing various responsibilities but emphasizes the importance of prioritizing family (Ephesians 5:16). Parents are encouraged to manage their time wisely, ensuring that they dedicate sufficient attention to their children's needs. This requires intentional effort to balance work, family, and other commitments, reflecting the biblical call to steward time effectively.

Scripture calls for the community to support those in need and bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). It recognizes the impact of poverty and stress on family life. Addressing socio-economic challenges requires a community effort, with the church playing a crucial role in providing support and resources to families in need. This reflects the biblical mandate for communal care and compassion. The Bible warns against the corrupting influences of the world and encourages believers to guard their hearts and minds (Philippians 4:8). Parents are called to be vigilant in monitoring and guiding their children's media consumption, ensuring that it aligns with biblical values. This involves setting boundaries and fostering discernment, helping children navigate media influences wisely.

Addressing the limitations to providing optimal parenting requires practical and faith-based strategies. The early church exemplified a community that supported each other's needs (Acts 2:44-45). Churches could create support systems such as parenting classes, workshops, and resource centres to help parents overcome challenges. This communal support reflects the biblical principle of bearing one another's burdens and providing for those in need. The Bible encourages the pursuit of wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 4:7). Providing educational opportunities for parents equips them with the knowledge and skills needed for effective parenting. This entails community support and resources aligning with the biblical call to seek wisdom and apply it in daily life, fostering better parenting practices.

Scripture emphasizes the importance of intentional living and prioritizing what matters most (Matthew 6:33). This is intentional time management. Encouraging parents to prioritize quality time with their children reflects the biblical principle of seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This involves making deliberate choices to invest in their children's lives, fostering strong, supportive relationships. Lastly, the Bible calls for discernment in choosing what to focus on and consume (Philippians 4:8). Providing guidelines and resources for faith-based media consumption helps parents navigate the challenges of modern media. This approach supports the biblical call to focus on what is true, honourable, and praiseworthy, guiding children towards positive influences.

5.1.4 Church response to the prevailing parenting practices among Christians families in selected dioceses in western Uganda

The study highlights various strategies employed by churches to promote positive parenting practices. From a theological perspective, these strategies reflect the church's role in nurturing family life and supporting parents in their God-given responsibilities. Scripture Unions integrate biblical teachings with practical parenting advice, reflecting the biblical mandate to teach and guide children in God's ways (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). These programs emphasize the importance of grounding parenting in Scripture, providing parents with a strong moral and ethical foundation to guide their children. This approach aligns with the church's mission to disciple and equip believers for all aspects of life, including parenting. Participation in Scripture Unions fosters a sense of community among parents, reflecting the early Christian communities' practice of mutual support (Acts 2:42-47). These programs offer parents a platform to share experiences, seek advice, and receive emotional support, mirroring the biblical principle of bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). This communal approach strengthens family bonds and promotes a supportive environment for raising children.

Workshops on Christian ethics and values equip parents to instill biblical principles in their children, fulfilling the scriptural command to teach children about God's ways (Proverbs 22:6). These workshops help parents apply religious principles to their parenting practices, fostering a nurturing environment characterized by empathy, compassion, and forgiveness. This aligns with the biblical call to train children in righteousness and godliness. Christian ethics workshops enhance parents' sense of purpose and improve their ability to set boundaries and discipline their children lovingly and consistently (Hebrews 12:11). By modelling Christian values such as kindness, humility, and self-sacrifice, parents can create a family atmosphere that reflects God's love and grace. These workshops empower parents to raise children who are grounded in a strong moral foundation.

School visits by priests provide spiritual guidance and moral support, reinforcing the values taught at home and in the church (Hebrews 13:17). These visits offer children an opportunity to see their faith in action in different settings, helping them integrate their religious beliefs into daily life. Priests' presence in schools reinforces the importance of faith in shaping one's character and behaviour. Priests' involvement in schools encourages parental engagement in their children's spiritual and educational development (Proverbs 1:8-9). By participating in school events and meetings facilitated by priests, parents can strengthen their connection to the school community and collaborate with educators to reinforce religious teachings and values within the academic context.

Storytelling preserves and transmits cultural heritage, moral values, and biblical principles (Deuteronomy 4:9). Traditional stories often contain moral lessons that guide children's behaviour and decision-making, fostering values such as integrity, empathy, and kindness. This practice aligns with the biblical tradition of passing down stories of faith and God's works to future generations. Furthermore, storytelling fosters a sense of interconnectedness among family members, reflecting the biblical emphasis on family unity and mutual understanding (Ephesians 4:32). By sharing narratives that highlight virtues and life lessons, parents can instill a sense of empathy and respect for others. This practice helps children develop social skills and a strong sense of identity rooted in their cultural and religious heritage.

Regular church attendance fosters spiritual growth and a sense of belonging to the body of Christ (Hebrews 10:25). Involvement in church activities provides families with a spiritual foundation rooted in faith and community. This participation strengthens family relationships and reinforces shared beliefs and values, promoting a supportive network for children's development. Children learn from observing the behaviour and character of church leaders and fellow congregants, who serve as moral exemplars (1 Corinthians 11:1). Active participation in church life exposes children to positive role models and moral teachings, shaping their ethical decision-making and character development. This communal involvement mirrors the early church's emphasis on living out faith in community.

Sunday schools provide structured religious education, helping children develop a strong sense of moral values and principles (Psalm 119:105). These programs support parents in their efforts to instill Christian values, complementing home teachings and providing a consistent moral background. Sunday schools create a nurturing environment where children can learn and grow in their faith. Religious education in Sunday schools encourages prosocial behaviours such as helping others, empathy, and compassion (Galatians 5:22-23). Through participating in Sunday school, children learn to engage in positive social interactions and develop a sense of community responsibility. This aligns with the biblical call to love one another and serve others selflessly.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of fellowship and community in shaping one's character (1 Corinthians 15:33). Encouraging children to join positive peer groups fosters social skills, empathy, and resilience. These groups provide a supportive environment where children can develop healthy relationships and learn to navigate social challenges with grace and integrity. Participation in positive groups promotes holistic development, reflecting the biblical principle of nurturing the whole person-body, mind, and spirit (Luke 2:52). Through involvement in structured activities, children can grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. This comprehensive approach to development aligns with the church's mission to support the growth and well-being of its members.

In summary, the theological reflection on the study findings underscores the deep connection between church principles and effective parenting practices. In integrating theological insights with practical approaches, parents create nurturing environments that foster emotional, social, and spiritual development in children. Furthermore, by integrating theological insights with practical approaches, parents create nurturing environments that foster emotional, social, and spiritual development in children. The church also provides a holistic framework that supports the emotional, moral, and spiritual development of children. Hence, the church plays a pivotal role in supporting the various parenting practices, providing resources, community, and spiritual guidance that reinforce the importance of faith in family life. Through this integration, families are better equipped to raise well-rounded, resilient, and morally grounded individuals.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study's findings, synthesizing the key insights and drawing significant conclusions based on the data collected. The aim is to encapsulate the essence of the research, highlighting the practical parenting practices that have been identified and their impacts on children's development and family dynamics. The summary section revisits the main points discussed throughout the study, offering a cohesive narrative that ties together the various elements explored. This includes the different activities children engage in, the influence of parents on their behaviour, the role of the church in supporting positive parenting, and the challenges faced by parents in providing optimal care. The conclusion distils the essential findings, reflecting on their broader implications for families, communities, and the church. It highlights the importance of practical parenting practices and the church's supportive role in fostering a nurturing environment for children's holistic development.

Finally, the recommendations provide actionable insights and strategies for parents, educators, and church leaders. These suggestions aim to address the limitations identified in the study and propose ways to enhance parenting practices through community support, educational initiatives, and faith-based programs. By implementing these recommendations, the goal is to strengthen family bonds, promote community stability, and ensure positive outcomes for children. Through this chapter, the study seeks to offer a valuable resource for understanding and improving parenting practices, emphasizing the critical role of faith and community in nurturing the next generation.

6.1.2 Summary

The many facets of parenting practices and their significant effects on children's growth and family dynamics were examined in this study. Several important insights were revealed by thorough data collection and analysis, providing a detailed picture of how communities support and nurture healthy parenting. A common theme has been the blending of practical advice with faith-based ideas, highlighting the critical role played by the church in encouraging excellent parenting practices. Below, is a summary of the key ideas covered in the study and the linkage with the many components that were investigated.

6.1.3 Key parenting practices among Christians families in selected dioceses in western Uganda

Engagement in guidance and counselling (49.6%): The study notes that a significant proportion of parents engage in guidance and counselling to support their children. This practice promotes open communication, addresses psychosocial needs, and fosters socio-emotional growth. Scholars such as Gerber et al. (2016) and Kordi & Baharudin (2010) emphasize that through guidance and counselling, parents teach children emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills, which are essential for healthy relationships and overall well-being.

Gardening as a parenting activity (21.3%): Gardening was identified as a valuable activity that connects children with nature, promotes physical activity, and provides experiential learning opportunities. This practice reflects Uganda's agricultural heritage and teaches children responsibility and stewardship. Integrating gardening into educational curricula could enhance understanding of biology, ecology, and sustainability, as suggested by Taylor et al. (2019).

Sharing meals (11.3%): Regular family meals together are crucial for enhancing communication and bonding among family members. Mealtime conversations support the transmission of cultural norms and family traditions, contributing to children's social and linguistic development. Sharon et al. (2018) highlight that sharing meals leads to better child well-being and strengthens family ties.

Family outings (8.3%): Family outings provide opportunities for quality time, recreational activities, and creating lasting memories. These outings promote mental and emotional well-being, cognitive growth, and physical health. Hill (2012) emphasizes the importance of such activities in fostering family cohesion and supporting overall development. Involvement in visiting friends (6.7%): Encouraging children to visit friends fosters social skills, expands their social network, and promotes a sense of belonging within the community. Cohen et al. (2015) and Parker & Asher (1987) underscore the importance of social support from friends and extended family in enhancing children's well-being and social competence.

Lack of engagement in activities (2.7%): The study identifies a small percentage of parents who do not engage in activities with their children, which can lead to a sense of neglect and missed opportunities for bonding and skill development. Addressing this issue requires targeted support and resources to help parents engage meaningfully with their children, preventing emotional and behavioral problems.

Parental engagement and influence are critical factors in shaping children's development, as parents who are actively involved in their children's lives tend to have a profound impact on, for instance, their academic achievement, social and emotional development, and development of moral behaviour. A small group of parents (1.7%) did not respond to questions about influencing their children's behaviour, possibly indicating a laissez-faire attitude. Such disengagement negatively affects children's development, leading to behavioral issues resulting from lack of guidance.

Guidance and counselling (17.5%): A significant portion of parents actively use guidance and counselling to steer their children. This proactive approach fosters open communication, problem-solving skills, and emotional support. Research by Lamb & Lewis (2010) supports that parental involvement in guidance and counselling that leads to better psychological well-being, improved problem-solving skills, higher self-esteem, and better emotional regulation in children. Church attendance (15.8%): Encouraging regular church attendance is another strategy used by parents to influence behaviour. Participation in religious activities instils moral values, provides

a sense of community, and offers spiritual guidance, which are integral to children's ethical and social development. Myers (2006) notes that religious involvement enhances moral values, social skills, and community sense.

Teaching respect for elders (11.3%): Emphasizing respect for elders is a key method used by parents. Teaching respect enhances social skills, empathy, and understanding of societal norms, promoting better integration and behaviour within the community. Hornby (2014) and Kabunga et al. (2018) highlight the importance of intergenerational respect for social harmony and cultural preservation.

Ways in which families engage with cultural practices and teach respect for diversity have a profound impact on children's social, emotional, and moral development. Traditional etiquette and practices-Children are taught to greet elders with specific respectful phrases and gestures. Dressing modestly was emphasized as a sign of respect and humility. As behavioural etiquette, children learn to respond respectfully to elders, avoid addressing elders by their names, and follow specific rules while eating.

Maintaining cultural traditions and societal peace, social norms and skill practices, promote cultural values, accountability, and appreciativeness. A strong emphasis on deference to elders and customs promoted social harmony, cultural continuity, and communal cohesiveness. The study focuses on the various methods parents employ to shape their kids' behavior, such as instilling respect for elders, participating in religion, and providing guidance and counseling. The moral, social, and emotional development of children is greatly influenced by these behaviors. To guarantee the best parenting practices, however, issues like parental disengagement and sociocultural influences must be addressed. The results emphasize how crucial it is to integrate cultural and religious values with active parental involvement in order to raise well-rounded and responsible people.

Research has revealed that families who actively participate in religious groups tend to demonstrate, for example, better levels of parental involvement, warmth, and responsiveness. Accordingly, the church plays a crucial role in fostering excellent parenting practices. According to the research, churches may be a great resource for families because they offer a caring environment, moral advice, and chances for personal growth. These benefits eventually lead to more positive parenting styles and better results for kids.

Scripture Unions (18.6%): Scripture Unions play a significant role by integrating biblical teachings with practical parenting advice. These programs provide a strong moral and ethical foundation for parents and children, reflecting the church's mission to disciple and equip believers.

Workshops on Christian ethics and values (14.7%): Workshops on Christian ethics and values help parents apply religious principles to their parenting practices. These workshops enhance parents' sense of purpose, improve boundary-setting and discipline, and foster a nurturing family environment. School visits by priests (12.2%): School visits by priests provide spiritual guidance and moral support, reinforcing the values taught at home and in the church. These visits encourage parental involvement in their children's spiritual and educational development.

Storytelling (11.2%): Storytelling preserves cultural heritage, transmits moral values, and fosters family bonds. Traditional stories often contain moral lessons that guide children's behaviour and decision-making, fostering values such as integrity, empathy, and kindness. Church attendance and participation (8.7%): Regular church attendance and active participation in church activities foster spiritual growth, moral development, and supportive relationships within families. This participation strengthens family ties and provides a supportive network for children's development. Introduction of Sunday schools (4.8%): Sunday schools provide structured religious education, helping children develop a strong sense of moral values and principles. These programs complement parental efforts in instilling Christian values and promoting prosocial behaviours

The study points out a number of obstacles to the best parenting practices, such as time restraints, socioeconomic difficulties, and exposure to negative media influences. These challenges make it more difficult for parents to interact with their kids in a positive way and offer them the assistance they need. The report suggests offering parenting seminars, community activities, and faith-based workshops as a way to address these issues. These programs ought to emphasize offering helpful counsel, providing emotional support, and encouraging constructive social relationships. To provide children with constant assistance at home and in school, schools and educational policymakers should also think about incorporating parenting techniques like guiding and counseling within their curricula.

6.1.4 Conclusion

This study comprehensively examines parenting practices and their impacts on children's development and family dynamics. It emphasizes the crucial role of parents and the church in creating a nurturing environment for children by integrating faith-based principles with practical guidance. High engagement in guidance and counseling (49.6%) highlights the importance of emotional support, promoting communication, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. Gardening (21.3%) connects children with nature, encourages physical activity, and teaches responsibility, reflecting Uganda's agricultural heritage. Sharing meals (11.3%) enhances family communication, supports social and linguistic development, and fosters a sense of belonging. Family outings (8.3%) promote mental, emotional, and physical well-being, supporting cognitive growth and balancing work and family life. Encouraging children to visit friends (6.7%) fosters social skills and a sense of community belonging. Scripture Unions (18.6%) integrate biblical teachings with practical parenting advice, reinforcing moral values. Workshops (14.7%) help parents apply religious principles to parenting, fostering empathy, compassion, and forgiveness. School visits by priests (12.2%) reinforce values taught at home and church, enhancing parental involvement in children's spiritual and educational development.

Storytelling (11.2%) preserves cultural heritage and transmits moral values, promoting integrity, empathy, and kindness. Regular church attendance (8.7%) and Sunday schools (4.8%) foster spiritual growth and moral development within a supportive community. The study underscores the critical role of parents and the church in fostering a nurturing environment for children's holistic development. Through addressing challenges using targeted programs and community support, parents develop the capacity to raise well-rounded, resilient, and morally grounded individuals, contributing to community stability and well-being. The study demonstrates the importance of parents and the church in promoting positive parenting practices and supporting children's holistic development.

6.1.5 Recommendations

Many suggestions to improve parenting techniques and promote children's holistic development have been developed based on the thorough analysis of the study results. In order to promote healthy family ties and favorable child outcomes, these recommendations, which are directed at parents, educators, community leaders, and religious authorities, emphasize the integration of faith-based ideas with practical parenting techniques.

Regular guidance and counseling sessions are essential for parents to address psychosocial issues, encourage open communication, and support empathy and emotional regulation in their children. This could be accomplished by putting in place parenting classes that emphasize counseling methods and effective communication besides promoting neighborhood support groups where parents exchange tactics and experiences.

Organize online courses on contemporary parenting techniques and community-based seminars to provide parents with easily available, ongoing education on emotional and psychosocial support. Additionally, create resource centers with books and professional parenting guidance in churches and community centres.

Gardening and other hands-on activities need to be incorporated into both home and school environments to educate ecological awareness and responsibility in order to support experiential and practical learning. This could be accomplished by creating community and school gardens where kids help with crop-planting and crop-maintenance, as well as by introducing environmental education with an emphasis on stewardship into school curricula.

Schools should collaborate with local agricultural specialists to provide engaging, hands-on learning experiences in order to incorporate practical activities, like gardening, into their educational curricula. To improve neighborhood relations, encourage family involvement in school gardening initiatives.

Families should prioritize having meals together on a regular basis to promote bonding and communication. Mealtime sharing should be prioritized by families to promote bonding and communication. Similarly, offer direction and assistance in establishing a setting at mealtimes that promotes candid conversation.

Children should be encouraged to visit friends and take part in community events to foster social skills and a sense of belonging. This will assist their social and civic involvement. This could be accomplished by setting up youth clubs and social events that take place in the community, as well as by encouraging peer support networks where kids make and keep friends.

To leverage church and community resources, churches should continue to offer programs such as Scripture Unions, workshops on Christian ethics, and Sunday schools to support parents and children. This could be achieved through developing comprehensive faith-based parenting programs that address contemporary challenges and offer regular workshops and seminars on integrating Christian values into parenting.

To appropriately address Challenges and Limitations of parenting, parents should be encouraged to manage their time effectively to balance work and family responsibilities. To achieve this goal, the church should offer time management workshops specifically designed for parents and advocate for family-friendly workplace policies that allow parents more flexibility.

Provide parents with resources and guidelines to manage their children's media consumption and exposure to technology. This could be achieved by developing educational materials on healthy media habits and distribute them through schools and churches, and organizing workshops on digital literacy and safe internet practices for parents and children.

6.4.1 Recommendation for further studies

Further research is needed to establish how the findings of sharing meals apply in the Ugandan context, considering cultural and social dynamics. In Uganda, as in many cultures, meals hold significant social and cultural importance. The church could facilitate studies and discussions to understand better and support the role of family meals in Ugandan Christian families, ensuring that this practice is upheld and adapted to local contexts.

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APPENDICES

Survey Questionnaire to Christian parents

Dear Respondent,

The bearer of this questionnaire is a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing the degree of doctor of ministry. This questionnaire is based on academic and practical pastoral ministry and whatever you share will enrich the study. Also, the information given in confidentiality will be treated as such. The research topic: The Church of Uganda response on parenting practices among Christian families of selected Dioceses in Western Uganda. Thank you very much for accepting to participate in this study.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Instructions: Circle the preferred option or state the appropriate answer (s) in the space provided.

Demographics

- 1) Diocese
 - a) Ankole
 - b) Kigezi
 - c) Bunyoro – Kitara
 - d) Rwenzori
- 2) Archdeaconry
 - a) St. James Cathedral Deanery Ankole
 - b) St. Peters Cathedral Rugarama Deanery Kigezi
 - c) St. Peters Cathedral Deanery Bunyoro Kitara
 - d) St. Johns Cathedral Kabarole Deanery
- 3) Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
- 4) Age
 - a) Less than 20 years
 - b) From 21 to 30 years
 - c) From 31 to 40 years
 - d) From 41 to 50 years
 - e) Above 50 years
- 5) Marital status
 - a) Single
 - b) Married
 - c) Widow
 - d) Widower

- e) Divorced
- 6) What is your highest level of education?
 - a) Primary
 - b) Secondary
 - c) University graduate
 - d) Diploma
 - e) Certificate from a tertiary institution
- 7) Occupation
 - a) Peasant farmer
 - b) Civil servant
 - c) Businessman/woman
 - d) Church employee
 - e) Other (Specify).....
- 8) Average monthly income
 - a) Less than UGX200,000
 - b) From UGX201,000 to UGX400,000
 - c) From UGX401,000 to UGX600,000
 - d) From UGX601,000 to UGX800,000
 - e) From UGX801,000 to UGX1,000,000
 - f) Over UGX1,000,000

Parenting practices employed by parents in the upbringing of children among the Christian families

- 9) How often do you interact with your children in a week?
 - a) Daily
 - b) 1-2 days a week
 - c) 3-6 days a week
 - d) Never
- 10) When free from your work and other activities, mention the activity (ies) you involve your children in?
 - a) Gardening
 - b) Sharing meals
 - c) Guidance and counselling
 - d) Family outings
 - e) Visiting friends
 - f) Other (Specify)

Effects of parenting practices on children’s morality among the Christian families

- 11) Using parenting practices, how have you influenced your children’s behaviour?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

- 12) From your life experience in this community, mention the effects of parenting practices on the morality of children?
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
- 13) What church activities are your children involved in?
- a) Hospital visit
 - b) Fellowships
 - c) Evangelism
 - d) Lead Sunday worship
 - e) Bible study
 - f) Take reading in church
 - g) Preach in service
 - h) Sing in the choir
 - i) Prayer group member
 - j) Play instruments
 - k) Other (Specify)

Church’s response on the parenting practices among Christian families

- 14) In your view, mention the church’s response on promoting expected parenting practices?
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
- 15) In your opinion, highlight the main limitations to providing optimal parenting practices in this community?
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
- 16) Suggest the best way to address those limitations?
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

*Thank you so much for your support and participation
May the Almighty God richly bless you*

Survey Questionnaire to Children

The bearer of this questionnaire is a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing the degree of doctor of ministry. This questionnaire is based on academic and practical pastoral ministry and whatever you share will enrich the study. Also, the information given in confidentiality will be treated as such. The research topic: The Church of Uganda response on parenting practices among Christian families of selected Dioceses in Western Uganda. Thank you very much for accepting to participate in this study.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Instructions: Circle the preferred option or state the appropriate answer in the space provided.

Demographics

- 1) Diocese
 - a) Ankole
 - b) Kigezi
 - c) Bunyoro – Kitara
 - d) Rwenzori
- 2) Archdeaconry
 - a) St. James Cathedral Deanery Ankole
 - b) St. Peters Cathedral Rugarama Deanery Kigezi
 - c) St. Peters Cathedral Deanery Bunyoro Kitara
 - d) St. Johns Cathedral Kabarole Deanery
- 3) Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
- 4) Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
- 5) Age
 - a) Less than 5 years
 - b) From 5 to 10 years
 - c) From 11 to 15 years

Parenting practices employed by parents in the upbringing of children among the Christian families

- 6) Who of your parents is close to you?
 - a) Father
 - b) Mother
- 7) How often do you interact with your parent in a week?
 - a) Daily
 - b) 1 to 2 days a week
 - c) 3 to 6 days a week
 - d) Never

- 8) When free from your work, what activities do you involve yourself in?
 - a)
 - b)

Effects of parenting practices on children’s morality among the Christian families

- 9) Using parenting practices, how has your parents influenced your behaviour, explain?
 - a) Negatively:.....
 - b) Positively:.....
- 10) What church activities are you involved in, if any?

Appendix III: Interview Guide

The bearer of this questionnaire is a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing the degree of Doctor of Ministry. This questionnaire is based on academic and practical pastoral ministry and whatever you share will enrich the study. Also, the information given in confidentiality will be treated as such. The research topic: The Church's Response on Parenting practices of selected Dioceses in Western Uganda. Thank you very much for accepting to participate in this study

Parenting Practices

- 1) In your opinion, describe the parenting practices applied to the children in Christian families?
- 2) In your view, what are the main attributes parenting practices exhibited among Christian families in your parish?

Effects of parenting practices on children morality:

- 3) From your working experience in this community, highlight the effects of parenting practices on the morality of children?

Church's response:

- 4) In your view, mention the church's response on promoting expected parenting practices?
- 5) In your opinion, highlight the main Church limitations in providing optimal parenting practices in this community?
- 6) Suggest the best way to address these limitations?

Thank you for participating in this interview

Appendix IV: Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)

This focus group discussion will discuss questions relating to parenting practices, effects of parenting on morality and the church's response on parenting practices in selected Dioceses in Western Uganda.

Parenting Practices:

1. In your view, describe the parenting practices the children from Christian families experience from their parents in this community?
2. In your opinion, what are the main attributes parenting practices exhibit among Christian families in your parish/Archdeaconry/Diocese?

Effects of parenting practices on children morality:

3. From your life experience in this community, mention the effects of parenting practices on the morality of children?

Church's response:

4. In your view, mention the church's response on promoting expected parenting practices?
5. In your opinion, highlight the main limitations to providing optimal parenting practices in this community?
6. Suggest the best way to address those limitations?

Thank you for participating in this discussion

The Morgan Table

Required Sample Size								
Population Size	Confidence = 95%				Confidence = 99%			
	Margin of error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	146	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1,067	427	636	827	1,119
1,500	306	515	759	1,297	460	712	959	1,376
2,000	322	563	869	1,655	498	808	1,141	1,785
2,500	333	597	952	1,984	524	879	1,288	2,173
3,500	346	641	1,068	2,565	558	977	1,510	2,890
5,000	357	678	1,176	3,288	586	1,066	1,734	3,842
7,500	365	710	1,275	4,211	610	1,147	1,960	5,165
10,000	370	727	1,332	4,899	622	1,193	2,098	6,239
25,000	378	760	1,448	6,939	646	1,285	2,399	9,972
50,000	381	772	1,491	8,056	655	1,318	2,520	12,455
75,000	382	776	1,506	8,514	658	1,330	2,563	13,583
100,000	383	778	1,513	8,762	659	1,336	2,585	14,227
250,000	384	782	1,527	9,248	662	1,347	2,626	15,555
500,000	384	783	1,532	9,423	663	1,350	2,640	16,055
1,000,000	384	783	1,534	9,512	663	1,352	2,647	16,317
2,500,000	384	783	1,536	9,567	663	1,353	2,651	16,478
10,000,000	384	784	1,536	9,594	663	1,354	2,653	16,560
100,000,000	384	784	1,537	9,603	663	1,354	2,654	16,584
300,000,000	384	784	1,537	9,603	663	1,354	2,654	16,586



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE FORM (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 18.th August. 2024

Name of Candidate: **ABAHO KANKUBA TOMSON** Reg. No: **RJ16P29/009**

Title of Dissertation: **The Response of Church of Uganda to Parenting Practices
Among Christians. A Case of Selected Dioceses in Western Uganda**

S/N	Comments by External Examiners	Action Taken	Indicator
1	Abstract and Research Objectives		
	The abstract succinctly presents the study's aims, methodology, key findings, and conclusions. However, it could be improved by explicitly stating the research questions and the significance of the findings	The abstract has been revised to include the research questions and the significance of the findings	Page xiv
	Page xi, Line 5: "The findings revealed that various parenting practices were employed by Christian families ..." It would be beneficial to add statistical evidence or qualitative highlights to substantiate this claim.	Revised this statement to include specific statistical evidence from the findings, which now provides a more robust and data-driven claim	Page xiii
2	Introduction		
	The introduction effectively establishes the research context, highlighting the role of parenting within Christian families and the Church of Uganda's involvement. The background is well-developed, providing historical, cultural, and theological perspectives.	Your positive feedback on the introduction has been appreciated. I am pleased that the background and context were found to be well-developed and effective in setting the stage for the research. This affirms that the foundation of the thesis is clear and well-structured.	
	The problem statement is clear and justified, emphasizing gaps in research and practice. However, greater specificity on how the study builds upon prior research would strengthen the rationale.	This valuable comment has been addressed by adding more specific details to the introduction. I now explicitly state how my thesis builds upon and fills existing gaps in prior research, particularly on the Church of Uganda's role. For instance, I note that while previous studies have explored parenting in Uganda from a general sociological or developmental perspective, with a limited focus on the specific role of the Church of Uganda, my thesis fills this gap by providing a targeted analysis of the Church's practical and theological response. This demonstrates how my work provides a unique and necessary institutional perspective.	
	Page 6, Paragraph 2: "Despite the vital role Church of Uganda traditionally plays in guiding and supporting families, there is a recognized gap in understanding ..." Consider specifying examples of past studies that have partially addressed this issue and how this thesis fills the gap.	This paragraph has been revised to directly address the concern. A more detailed discussion of the existing literature has been incorporated.	Page 6
3	Literature Review		

	The literature review demonstrates an extensive engagement with existing research on parenting practices, the Church’s role, and socio-cultural influences. However:		
	Page 3, Paragraph 1: “Parenting techniques can be seen as particular behaviours intended to achieve particular socialization objectives ...” This section should critically compare different sources instead of summarizing them.	Addressed this point by revising the section to include a critical comparison of different parenting theories and techniques. Instead of simply defining parenting, I now engage with the different scholarly perspectives on the topic. For example, I have contrasted the approaches of authoritative parenting (which emphasizes a balance of high expectations and high warmth) with authoritarian parenting (which is characterized by strict rules and low warmth), citing relevant studies to highlight their different intended outcomes and effectiveness. This revision allows for a more nuanced and critical discussion of the literature	Page 3
	Page 20, Line 15: “The Church has sought to provide guidance, resources, and support ...” A discussion of whether these efforts have been effective, supported by examples from other studies, would add depth.	Agreed with your assessment. To add depth to this section, a discussion has been integrated on the effectiveness of faith-based interventions. Examples from other studies that evaluate the impact of similar church-led initiatives in other contexts have been included. This new content analyses the successes and challenges of these programs, providing a more robust argument for the need for my study. For instance, studies showing that church-based programs can lead to improved family cohesion and reduced behavioural problems have been cited, while also acknowledging the limitations they may face, such as resource constraints or a lack of trained facilitators. This demonstrates a deeper engagement with the literature and strengthens the rationale for my research.	Page 31
4	Research Methodology		
	The methodology section is comprehensive and well-structured, detailing research design, data collection methods, and sampling techniques. However:	Thank you for this observation.	

	Page 25, Section 1.3.1: “A research design is a comprehensive plan that outlines the methods and procedures ...” The justification for choosing mixed-methods over purely qualitative or quantitative should be explicitly stated.	Explicitly reviewed this section to justify the choice of a mixed-methods design.	Page 37
	Page 33, Paragraph 2: “The researcher employed study stratified sampling ...” Explain how this sampling method impacted data reliability and validity.	A detailed explanation to this paragraph has been added to clarify the impact of stratified sampling on the study's data reliability and validity.	Page 45
5	Analysis and Interpretation of Data		
	The data presentation is systematic, with clear tables, figures, and thematic breakdowns. However:		
	Page 36, Figure 4.1: Ensure all figures and tables are referenced in the text for coherence.	Carefully reviewed the thesis and ensured that every figure and table is now properly referenced within the corresponding text. This has been done to improve the flow and coherence of the document, ensuring that the visual data presented is directly integrated with the analysis.	Pages 38 - 132
	Page 104, Paragraph 1: “Activities children are involved in when free from work ...” More comparative analysis with literature is needed to highlight similarities or differences.	Agreed with your assessment and revised this section to include a more robust comparative analysis. I have integrated a discussion that contrasts the findings of my study with existing literature on how children spend their free time, both in other parts of Uganda and in broader African contexts.	Page 124
6	Contribution to Knowledge		
	The study contributes valuable insights into how the Church of Uganda responds to parenting challenges. Its practical recommendations for clergy, parents, and policymakers are commendable. However, the thesis could better articulate how it advances academic knowledge beyond practical applications.		
	Page 114, Line 2: “This research highlights the importance of parental involvement ...” Explicitly connect findings to broader theories or frameworks.	The conclusion revised to explicitly articulate the study’s theoretical contribution. The revised section now connects the research findings to broader academic frameworks, demonstrating how the thesis advances knowledge beyond its practical applications.	Page 130

7	Structure and Presentation		
	The thesis is well-organized, with logical progression across chapters. The writing is generally clear, though some sections contain redundant information.	Thank you for this positive feedback. I have conducted a thorough review of the entire thesis to identify and eliminate redundant information. I have condensed certain sections, consolidated repetitive points, and streamlined the language to enhance clarity and conciseness. This has improved the overall flow and readability of the document, ensuring that each section contributes uniquely to the thesis's core arguments.	
8	Conclusion and Recommendations		
	The conclusions align with the study's objectives, summarizing key findings effectively.	I am extremely grateful for the positive feedback on the conclusion and recommendations. I am pleased that the alignment of the conclusions with the study's objectives and the summary of the key findings were found to be effective. This positive assessment affirms that the research successfully fulfilled its intended purpose.	
9	Overall Assessment		
	The thesis is a well-researched and relevant study on parenting practices within the Church of Uganda. With minor refinements, particularly in the literature review, methodology explanation, and data interpretation, it will make a significant academic and practical contribution.	I am grateful for your positive overall assessment of the thesis. Your feedback was invaluable in helping me refine and strengthen my work. I trust that the revisions have addressed all your comments and that the thesis now makes a significant academic and practical contribution. Thank you once again for your professional guidance.	
10	Examiner's Recommendations		
	1) Acceptance with Minor Revisions: Requires improvements in critical analysis, methodological justification, and engagement with theological perspectives.		
	2) Revision of Methodological Section: Provide a stronger rationale for mixed-methods design and clarify data integration techniques.	Done	Page 37
	3) Inclusion of Glossary: Define key terms related to parenting and church interventions.	More definitions have been added to the glossary. The updated list includes terms that are central to	Page xii

		the research questions and methodology, providing a more comprehensive resource for the reader.	
	4) Use of Maps in the Thesis:		
	a) Incorporate relevant maps to show diocesan coverage.	A map of Uganda showing the selected dioceses has been incorporated	Page 131
	b) Use thematic maps to illustrate regional differences in parenting practices.	Thematic maps to illustrate regional differences in parenting practices	Page 132
	c) Ensure clarity and professionalism in all cartographic representations.	This has been done throughout the Thesis	All pages
	5) Ethical Considerations: Elaborate on measures taken to prevent researcher bias and ensure data integrity.	The ethical considerations have been revised to elaborate on the measures taken to prevent researcher bias and ensure data integrity throughout the study.	Page 50

End

Candidate's Name: **Abaho Kankuba Tomson**

Signature.....

Date: **26 August 2025**

Supervisor's

Rev. Prof. Andrew David Omona

Signature:.....

.....Date: **26 August 2025**