

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**PARENTAL NEGLECT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SAGNERIGU
MUNICIPALITY**

FAUSTINA DAMNYAG



UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**PARENTAL NEGLECT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SAGNERIGU
MUNICIPALITY**

BY

FAUSTINA DAMNYAG

UDS/MGC/0007/22

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING**

NOVEMBER, 2025



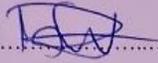
DECLARATION

DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this dissertation/thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

Candidate:

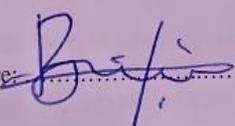
Signature:  Date: 08/08/2025

Name: FAUSTINA DAMNYAG

Supervisor

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation/thesis was supervised following the guidelines on supervision of dissertation/thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor

Signature:  Date: 08/08/2025

Name: DR. BARIHAM IDDRISU



ABSTRACT

The study investigated parental neglect on the academic performance of Junior High School students in the Sagnerigu Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana. The research employed mixed method and a convergent parallel design. The study population consisted of 1,354 students (925 males and 429 females). A total of 153 respondents participated in the study: 100 respondents (students and teachers) were selected for the quantitative strand, while 53 participants (headteachers, parents, community leaders, and a municipal social welfare officer) were purposively. A multistage sampling technique was used. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to reach less accessible participants. The study employed questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs), and structured interviews for data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics while qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were thematically analyzed. The findings revealed that parental neglect, particularly educational, emotional, and physical neglect, is prevalent in the Sagnerigu municipality. Poverty, unemployment, large family sizes, and substance abuse were identified as the primary causes of child neglect in the study area. The study further discovered that parental neglect significantly hinders junior high school students' academic performance, leading to absenteeism and low academic achievement. Recommendations include improving parental education on child care, enhancing economic support for families, and strengthening remedial and counseling services for affected students. The study suggests further research into the long-term impact of neglect on students' academic and emotional development, as well as the effectiveness of social intervention programmes.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the individuals and groups who, in various ways, contributed to the preparation and completion of this work. First and foremost, I extend my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Bariham Iddrisu, whose critical insights, persistent feedback, and valuable suggestions were a source of inspiration. I would also like to acknowledge my lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations, University for Development Studies - Graduate School, Tamale, for their invaluable support in bringing this work to a successful conclusion.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all my family members and friends, especially my little girls,
Wilhemina Yennuturin, Briel Fognampaak and Mary-Anne Lignanturin Duut.



TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION..... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT iv

DEDICATION v

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF ACRONYMS..... xii

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Background of the Study 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem..... 4

1.3 Purpose of the Study 7

1.4 Objectives of the Study..... 7

1.5 Research Questions 8

1.6 Significance of the Study 8

1.7 Delimitations of the Study 10

1.8 Limitations of the Study.....11

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms 12

1.10 Organization of the Study 15





CHAPTER TWO	16
LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	16
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	18
2.4 Conceptual Review.....	19
2.5 Summary of Literature	34
METHODOLOGY	36
3.1 Introduction.....	36
3.2 Research Design.....	36
3.3 Profile of the Study Area.....	37
3.4 Research Philosophy	37
3.5 Population of the Study.....	37
3.6 Sampling Procedure	39
3.7 Data Collection Instruments	42
3.8 Data Analysis Procedure	44
3.10 Ethical Considerations	45
CHAPTER FOUR	47
ANALYSIS AND DISSCUSION OF RESULTS	47



4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents	47
4.4 Factors Responsible for Parental Neglect	71
4.5 Level of Adequacy in Providing Parental Care.....	77
4.7 Strategies to Reduce Parental Neglect of Children.....	92
4.8 Remedial Support and Counseling Services/Interventions to Assist Victims of Neglect	103
CHAPTER FIVE	115
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	115
5.1 Introduction.....	115
5.2 Summary of Key Findings	116
5.3 Counselling Implications	117
5.5 Recommendations.....	119
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research	120
REFERENCES	122
APPENDIXES	131
Appendix II: GES-SMEO Letter of Introduction	132
Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Teachers.....	133
Appendix V: Questionnaire for Parents	138

Appendix VI: Questionnaire for Students..... 145

Appendix VII: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students..... 147

Appendix VIII: Interview Guide for Key Informants..... 148



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 : Incidents of Child Neglect Cases in Sagnerigu Municipality and Tamale Metropolis Recording from 2018 to 2023	6
Figure 2 : Conceptual Framework of the Study	19
Figure 3 : Public Health Child Protection Interventions – Triangle Diagram	32
Figure 4 : Awareness of Child Neglect Prevalence in the Sagnerigu Municipality	51
Figure 6 : Commonly observed forms of child neglect in the Municipality ..	63
Figure 7 : Adequate provision of children basic needs.....	67
Figure 8 : Causes of Parental Neglect of Children	73
Figure 9 : Level of Adequacy in Providing Parental Care.....	78
Figure 10 : Neglect Affecting Children’s Academic Performance	81
Figure 11 : Awareness on Local/National Initiative Available in Addressing Child Neglect.....	93
Figure 12 : Utilization of Any Remedial Support or Counseling Services to Deal with Cases of Neglect	97
Figure 13 : Effectiveness of Services Ever Utilized.....	100
Figure 14 : Suggested Remedial Support and Counselling Services by Participants	104



LIST OF TABLES

Table 2 : Distribution of Accessible Population	38
Table 3 : Framework for Data Analysis	44
Table 4 : Return Rate of Instruments.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 5 : Distribution of Respondents by Sex, Age, Marital Status, Level of Education and Teaching Experience (n=136)	48
Table 6 : Distribution of Parents' Occupation and Number of Children (n=81)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 7 : Parents' Consideration of Acts that Constitute Neglect	54
Table 8 : Correlation between Parental Neglect and Academic Performance	87
Table 9 : Model Fit Summary and ANOVA Results.....	88
Table 10 : Regression Test	89
Table 11 : Commonly Observed Attributes of Neglected Children.....	90



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AM	Assembly Member
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CDC	Centre for Disease Control Prevention
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence And Victim Support Unit
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GES	Ghana Education Service
GPA	Grade Point Average
HT	Headteacher
JHS	Junior High School
KI	Key Informant
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPAG	Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RC	Roman Catholic
SEEK	Safe Environment for Every Kid
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SPSS	Statistical Package For Social Sciences
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
GES	Ghana Education Service
SMEO	Sagnerigu Municipal Education Office



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Child abuse and neglect have become a global issue that must be addressed if children are to have access to a full education and independence. According to research, early exposure to bad childhood experiences such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, aggression, family dysfunction, parental substance misuse or mental illness, and an absent parent are substantial predictors of low academic achievement (Francisco et al., 2017). Research by Shonk and Cicchetti (2001) found that maltreated children exhibited lower academic competence and more behavioral problems, while a systematic review by Perfect et al. (2016) confirmed that exposure to trauma, including abuse and family dysfunction, is consistently linked to poor academic performance and reduced school engagement. According to Ramez and associates, as reported in Francisca et al. (2017), an individual's academic success is heavily influenced by a variety of circumstances outside the classroom, including the home environment.

Thus, as positive home environment of pupils can enhance their academic performance; negative home environment likewise can have a detrimental influence on the pupil's behavior in the classroom and ultimately, the academic performance.

Every child has the inherent right to education, which serves as a cornerstone for achieving meaningful social and economic progress (Francisca et al. 2017). Recognizing this, education funding has been prioritized as a critical investment (UNESCO, as cited in Jane, 2020). Despite this, research reveals that approximately



404 million children under the age of 18 are not enrolled in school, and around 190 million children aged 10 to 14 live on the streets (UNESCO, 2015). These children often miss out on educational opportunities and resources due to various forms of parental neglect.

The issue of early school leaving has become a growing concern, with the Saff Working Party (2010) noting that 18% of early school leavers in European Union countries have only completed primary education. This issue is particularly prevalent in Bulgaria, where 38% of school leavers have completed just primary education, and in Portugal, with 40% in the same situation.

Parental neglect is widely recognized as a significant form of child maltreatment that affects children across the globe, including in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Krug et al. (2002), parental neglect refers to the failure of parents to meet the child's needs in areas such as health, education, emotional well-being, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions. This neglect can cause or is likely to cause harm to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.

The prevalence of parental neglect continues to rise globally. For example, a study conducted by Fabes et al. (2010) in England revealed that by the end of March 2010, 39,100 children were registered by the welfare system, with 17,200 (43.5%) of them being registered due to neglect as either the primary or contributing factor. Similarly, a study by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) found that seven out of every 10 children regularly miss school due to various forms of parental neglect and abuse. As a result, these children often struggle academically and underperform in school (Jane, 2020).



In Ghana, the incidence of parental neglect is also significant across all 16 regions, including the Northern Region. For instance, data from the National Secretariat of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) revealed a steady rise in non-maintenance cases, with 4,798 cases in 2009, 5,830 in 2010, 6,194 in 2011, and 6,897 in 2012 (myjoyonline.com, accessed 1/10/2013 at 2:03 pm). Prior and Glaser (2006) indicate that parental neglect can have severe consequences for children's cognitive development and educational success. There are many factors that could account for the increasing recording of child neglect cases in the global space, and in Ghana precisely. Nonetheless, these factors ultimately contribute to the academic underachievement of students, resulting in repeated grades and early school dropouts, thereby perpetuating a cycle of underperformance. The UNESCO (2004) survey highlighted that grade repetition is particularly high in developing countries, with Sub-Saharan Africa showing the highest rates. Approximately 22% of primary school children in this region repeat a grade each year. The survey further found that globally, 60% of primary school children repeat a grade, with the highest repetition rates observed in West and Central Africa (18.8%). In East Africa, about 12.3% of children are held back. This pattern often leads to school dropouts. According to Jane (2020), Jomtien and Munina emphasized that improving early childhood education is crucial for developing effective human capital. The issue of providing equal educational opportunities and ensuring access to quality education for all children remains a global concern, including in Ghana (Kimatu, 2007).



1.2 Statement of the Problem

In 2005, UNICEF reported that there were over 132 million orphans across Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, with 13 million children in these regions having lost both parents (UNICEF, 2015). In the United States, approximately 3.6 million cases of child abuse and neglect are reported annually, with 900,000 of these cases categorized as severe (LaPrairie, 2010). In Norway, around 2,500 new cases of child neglect and 500 new cases of physical abuse are reported each year (WHO, 2022). Children who face neglect, abuse, or insufficient care are at higher risk of experiencing psychological, social, and behavioral problems (Pacheco, Irigaray, Werlang, Nunes, & Argimon, 2014). While orphans may face barriers to attending school due to practical issues such as financial constraints or responsibilities like caring for younger siblings, both orphans and children suffering from neglect may also carry the burden of traumatic experiences that hinder their academic progress.

Parental neglect is a complex societal issue that has not received sufficient research or media attention. However, this issue has become more prevalent, particularly with changes in family structures, the rise of single-parent households, increasing numbers of working mothers, and the growing socio-economic challenges faced by parents (Fabes et al., 2010). The impact of neglect on children is significant, especially in their academic performance.

Research by Hammerstrom et al. (2016) indicated that children who have suffered abuse, maltreatment, or neglect tend to perform worse in school compared to their peers who have not been exposed to such circumstances. Similarly, Slade and Wissow (2007) found that child neglect often results in poor academic outcomes,





and more severe forms of childhood maltreatment were associated with lower GPAs and difficulties in completing homework. A study in Scotland revealed that of nearly 5,000,000 cases of parental neglect, 47% of the affected children experienced negative effects such as insecurity in their ability to learn, leading to academic underachievement, lower GPAs, and increased school absenteeism (Ziegler, 2012).

Evidence suggests a significant incidence of child neglect cases recorded in the Sagnerigu Municipality and the Tamale metropolis over the years. With the two assemblies, the following cases, as shown in Figure 1 below, were recorded from the year 2018 to the year 2023. These cases fluctuate over the years without any consistent pattern. However, between the years 2020 and 2021 there was a rapid up skip in the cases recorded, increasing from 16 to 72 case. The rise in neglect cases continued to 99 cases in 2022 and then a down turn to 63 cases in 2023.

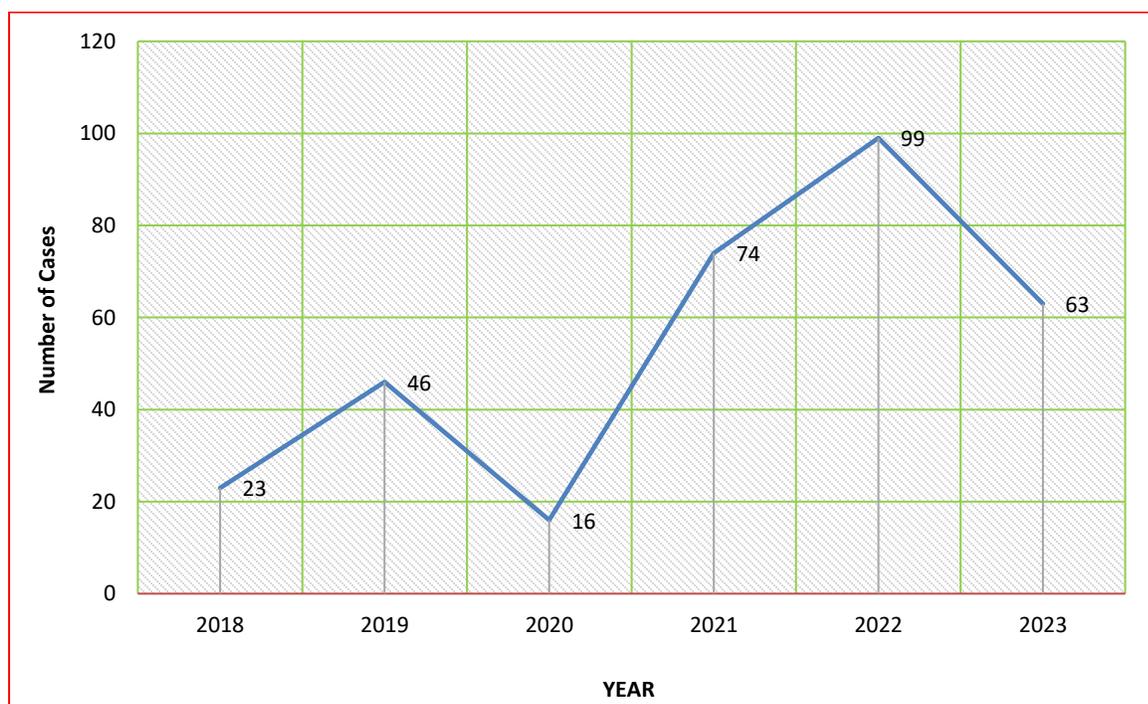


Figure 1: Incidents of Child Neglect Cases in Sagnerigu Municipality and Tamale Metropolis Recording from 2018 to 2023

Source: Social Welfare Department – Northern Region

In Nigeria, a study on "child abuse and neglect, and the academic achievement of children in the Central Senatorial District" found that 64% of respondents believed parental neglect and 33% believed parental divorce were significant factors contributing to their academic struggles (Okpechi, 2005). Similarly, in Ghana, a publication on myjoyonline.com linked the country's low education standards and the high failure rates in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to the prevalence of irresponsible parenting. The article suggested that neglectful parenting, including failure to pay school fees, provide necessary books, and offer emotional support, could be key reasons behind these high failure rates (myjoyonline.com, 2013). In line with this assertion, the exam officer at the Sagnerigu Municipal Education office in a personal interaction indicated that the performance of students at the BECE has not been impressive in the municipality, stating that the overall pass rate of the municipality keeps dwindling, the reason(s) for which is yet to be discovered. Investigations by other researchers show that there is a high number of children from the various levels of the educational ladder who suffer low academic achievement or do not complete their education due to parental neglect (Fabes et al., 2010). However, existing research on parental neglect and its impact on academic performance has generally been limited, especially concerning Ghana, and more specifically the Northern Region. Most of these studies have been conducted in Western countries (Jane, 2020). This gap highlights the urgent need for context-specific investigations. Therefore, this study seeks to



examine the impact of parental neglect on the academic performance of Junior High School students in selected schools within the Sagnerigu Municipality, aiming to provide evidence-based insights for targeted interventions and policy recommendations.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the effects posed by parental neglect on the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students in the Sagnerigu Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana. Specifically, this study was concerned with identification of the forms of parental neglect, which is prevalent in the municipality and its effects on the academic performance of students at the JHS level, as well as to establish the possible measures to alleviate parental neglect among JHS students in the Sagnerigu Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Assess the level of awareness of parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality.
- ii. Investigate the various forms of parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality.
- iii. Examine the causes of parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality.
- iv. Determine the influence of parental neglect on the academic performance of JHS students in the Sagnerigu Municipality.
- v. Identify support services for learners experiencing parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality.



1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the level of awareness of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
- ii. What are the various forms of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
- iii. What are the causes of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
- iv. What is the relationship between parental neglect and academic performance of JHS students in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
- v. What are the support services for learners experiencing parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are of significance to parents in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The study findings emphasize the influence of parental neglect on students' academic performance, informing parents about their crucial role in their children's education. This awareness would enable parents to prioritize their children's needs, such as overseeing homework and addressing emotional and physical well-being. Furthermore, the study could motivate parents to implement effective family planning strategies to ensure adequate support for their children. Based on the study results, training programs could be created to educate parents on the significance of active involvement in their children's academic and overall growth.

Additionally, teachers in Junior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality could benefit from the study's insights on parental neglect and its impact on students' academic and social behaviors. This knowledge can help teachers develop targeted



interventions, such as counselling services, parental engagement workshops, and mentorship programs, to support neglected students. By collaborating with parents, teachers would create a conducive environment at home and in school, leading to improved student performance and reduced dropout rates.

This research will be a valuable resource for the Social Welfare Department in the Sagnarigu Municipality to implement child protection policies. The findings offer evidence-based insights into parental neglect, helping the department design targeted interventions. Recommendations from the study inform programs to educate parents on child rights and responsibilities and support vulnerable families. The department can also use the findings to enhance collaborations with schools and communities to create safe environments for children.

The Northern Regional Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) will benefit from the study when combating child abuse and neglect. The data collected reveal the types of neglect experienced by students in the area, enabling tailored programs to be developed such as awareness campaigns and community outreach to educate the public on the legal and social consequences of child neglect. Additionally, the findings can enhance training for DOVVSU personnel to better identify, prevent, and address cases of child neglect.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) can benefit from this research by gaining insights to develop policies addressing the impact of parental neglect on students' academic performance. For example, implementing parental involvement programs like mandatory parent-teacher conferences can enhance the school-family partnership. Additionally, the study findings will improve teacher training as it will help educators recognize and address signs of neglect in students.



Lastly, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection will find the study instrumental in designing child protection and welfare policies for Ghana. The research provides a localized understanding of the challenges faced by children in the Sagnerigu Municipality, which can be extrapolated to other regions. Policies that address child neglect, promote family welfare, and ensure that the enforcement of child rights can be developed or refined based on the study's findings. Additionally, the ministry can use the data to advocate for increased funding and resources to support child welfare programs nationwide.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The focus of this study was to explore how parental neglect impacts the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students in the Sagnarigu Municipality, located in the Northern Region of Ghana. The research delved into different forms of parental neglect, including emotional, physical, and educational neglect, and examined how these forms affect students' academic outcomes. The study also investigated the underlying causes of parental neglect within the municipality, considering factors such as socio-economic, cultural, and environmental influences. Additionally, the study evaluated potential strategies to address and reduce the negative consequences of parental neglect on students' academic achievements.

This study was geographically limited to the Sagnarigu Municipality in Northern Ghana, focusing specifically on Junior High Schools (JHS) in the area. While other pressing social issues, such as drug abuse, child exploitation, and child prostitution, also demand attention, this research concentrated primarily on the forms of parental neglect prevalent in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The study aimed to understand the



effects of parental neglect on children's academic performance, identify its root causes, and explore possible solutions to mitigate its impact.

The data for the study were gathered from various sources, including JHS students, teachers, headteachers, parents, assembly members, and the social welfare office in the Sagnarigu Municipality. However, the study excluded other factors that might influence academic performance, such as peer influence, school infrastructure, or broader socio-economic issues, unless directly related to parental neglect. Furthermore, the study did not explore the impact of parental neglect on other aspects of students' lives, such as psychological or social development, unless these factors were specifically linked to academic performance.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study aimed to analyze secondary data from various sources, which may contain errors that could go unnoticed. To ensure the reliability of the secondary data, the researcher used credible sources, cross-checked multiple datasets, and addressed any inconsistencies through clarification or additional information. However, there is a potential for bias, as some respondents may be reluctant to provide the necessary information or may fail to return questionnaires promptly. To minimize these biases, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and clear instructions were included with the questionnaires. Data triangulation, combining surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, helped improve reliability, while probing during interviews assisted in obtaining accurate responses.

Furthermore, the study focused solely on Junior High School students in the Sagnarigu Municipality, meaning the findings cannot be generalized to other



regions of the country due to contextual and cultural differences. Therefore, the results are limited to the Sagnerigu Municipality.

There may also be a risk of overestimating bias due to initial differences in child development. For example, a child with a higher degree of depression might be more sensitive to or more aware of parental neglect than a child without depression (Hwang, 2019). To address this, the study used validated tools to assess depression and distinguish between subjective sensitivity and actual experiences of neglect. Additionally, the study did not focus on gender, which Lee and Kim (2014) suggest may influence how depression or anxiety manifests in adolescents. They found that female adolescents tend to have higher levels of depression or anxiety compared to males, even when accounting for child maltreatment.

Thus, self-reported surveys from respondents may result in measurement errors. For instance, children who have been neglected for extended periods may fail to recognize their situation as neglect because they have become accustomed to it. As a result, respondents may inaccurately report their circumstances. To reduce such errors, validated survey instruments, along with cross-checking data through interviews and focus groups, were used to ensure accurate assessments of neglect. Chung (2012) highlighted that children are more commonly exposed to chronic neglect than overt abuse, and neglect is often overlooked by both the perpetrators and external observers, even though it persists over time. Further research is needed to explore the various degrees of neglect and its variation by gender.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

The following key concepts have been defined within the context of the study.



Absenteeism: Absenteeism refers to when a child fails to attend class during scheduled school hours. This can happen for various reasons, such as illness, family responsibilities, or disengagement from school. Chronic absenteeism negatively affects a student's ability to stay up to date with academic material and leads to gaps in learning.

Academic Performance: Academic performance is the measurement of a student's success across different subjects, usually evaluated through assessments, exams, and assignments. It reflects how well students meet educational objectives and is influenced by factors such as study habits, teacher support, and personal motivation.

Caregiver: A caregiver is a parent or guardian responsible for meeting a child's basic needs, including food, clothing, education, and medical care. The caregiver plays an essential role in a child's development, shaping their physical, emotional, and academic growth.

Child Abuse: Child abuse refers to actions or inactions by individuals or institutions that harm or risk harming a child. This includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect, all of which can severely impact a child's development. Addressing child abuse involves intervention and efforts to protect children from harm.

Drop-out: A drop-out refers to a child who leaves school before completing a certain educational level, often due to financial challenges, lack of support, or lack of interest in school. Dropping out limits future opportunities and negatively affects children overall well-being.



Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence is any violence directed at a person based on their gender or gender identity. It includes physical, sexual, and emotional harm and is often rooted in societal inequality. Gender-based violence can have serious effects on a person's physical and mental health, and social and educational outcomes.

Parental Neglect: Parental neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to meet a child's basic needs, including food, clothing, medical care, and education. This lack of care can negatively affect a child's development and academic performance, taking various forms such as emotional, physical, and educational neglect.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): SGBV encompasses acts of violence committed against a person's will based on gender norms and inequality. This includes physical, sexual, or emotional harm directed at individuals because of their gender. SGBV is a severe violation of human rights with long-lasting impacts on health, safety, and education of the victim.



1.10 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, each addressing different aspects of the research. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, outlining the background, research problem, objectives, significance, and research questions. It also discusses the scope and limitations of the study and defines key terms. In chapter two, the relevant literature related to the topic was reviewed. Specifically, the review included theoretical review, conceptual review and empirical review. Chapter three describes the research methodology. This includes the research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure. The research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques and procedures were also discussed. Chapter four presented the data obtained with the research instruments, results of the data and the discussion of the study's findings. The last chapter highlights the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section explores the key concepts and theories relevant to the research topic. It includes a review of existing literature, drawing from various sources such as books, journal articles, and prior research studies related to parental neglect and its impact on students' academic performance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study is based on two primary theories: the Theory of Ecological Systems and Attachment Theory. While there are numerous complex theories related to learning and social relationships, these two theories were selected to provide a clearer understanding of the issue of parental neglect and its effect on students' academic performance.

2.2.1 Theory of Ecological Systems

Developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), the Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the interactions between children and their immediate environment, highlighting how these interactions influence children's educational outcomes. According to this theory, there are multiple layers of context that affect a child's development. The microsystem refers to the immediate environment the child interacts with, such as family and school. The mesosystem involves the connections between different elements of the microsystem, such as the relationship between a child's home life and school life. The exosystem includes external social settings that the child is not directly involved in, but which still have an impact on their education. The macrosystem encompasses broader social and cultural factors that shape a child's



experiences and educational outcomes. Lastly, the chronosystem represents the changes over time in the child's environment, which also affect their learning.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory stresses the importance of the family's role in supporting a child's education, as it is within the family environment where a child's educational needs are first addressed. Monks and Mason (1993) noted that the environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's development, including their educational progress. Thrupp (2001) further emphasized that parental involvement is critical for children to succeed academically, as positive engagement with education leads to better learning outcomes. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which highlights the vital role of family (microsystem) in shaping a child's educational experiences and development.

2.2.2 Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory, introduced by Bowlby (1973), explains the bond between children and their caregivers, and how this bond influences children's emotional and psychological development. Bowlby defined attachment as behaviors that help a child seek proximity to a caregiver for comfort and security. Ainsworth et al. (1978) extended this theory by identifying four types of attachment styles: secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure-ambivalent attachment, and disorganized-disoriented attachment.

In a secure attachment, the caregiver is attentive and responsive to the child's needs, helping the child feel safe and supported (Tarabulsy et al., 2008). In contrast, in an insecure-avoidant attachment, the child avoids the caregiver, displaying emotional independence and an inability to seek comfort in times of distress. Insecure-



ambivalent attachment involves a child who seeks constant attention and reassurance from the caregiver, often displaying conflicting behaviors. Finally, disorganized-disoriented attachment describes children who lack a reliable source of comfort and protection from their caregiver.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes parental neglect as the lack of proper supervision, support, and provision of essential resources such as food, clothing, health care, and learning materials. The framework assumes that when families are unable to create an environment conducive to learning, by not supporting children with their homework, providing basic needs, ensuring regular school attendance, and offering necessary educational materials; it negatively affects academic performance.

The study suggests that a positive and supportive family environment that addresses these needs enables children to thrive academically. For instance, parents who assist with schoolwork, provide healthcare, supervise school attendance, and offer adequate learning resources help children achieve better educational outcomes. The following figure (Figure 2) visually represents this conceptual framework, illustrating how different variables in the study are interconnected and how they contribute to the academic success of students.



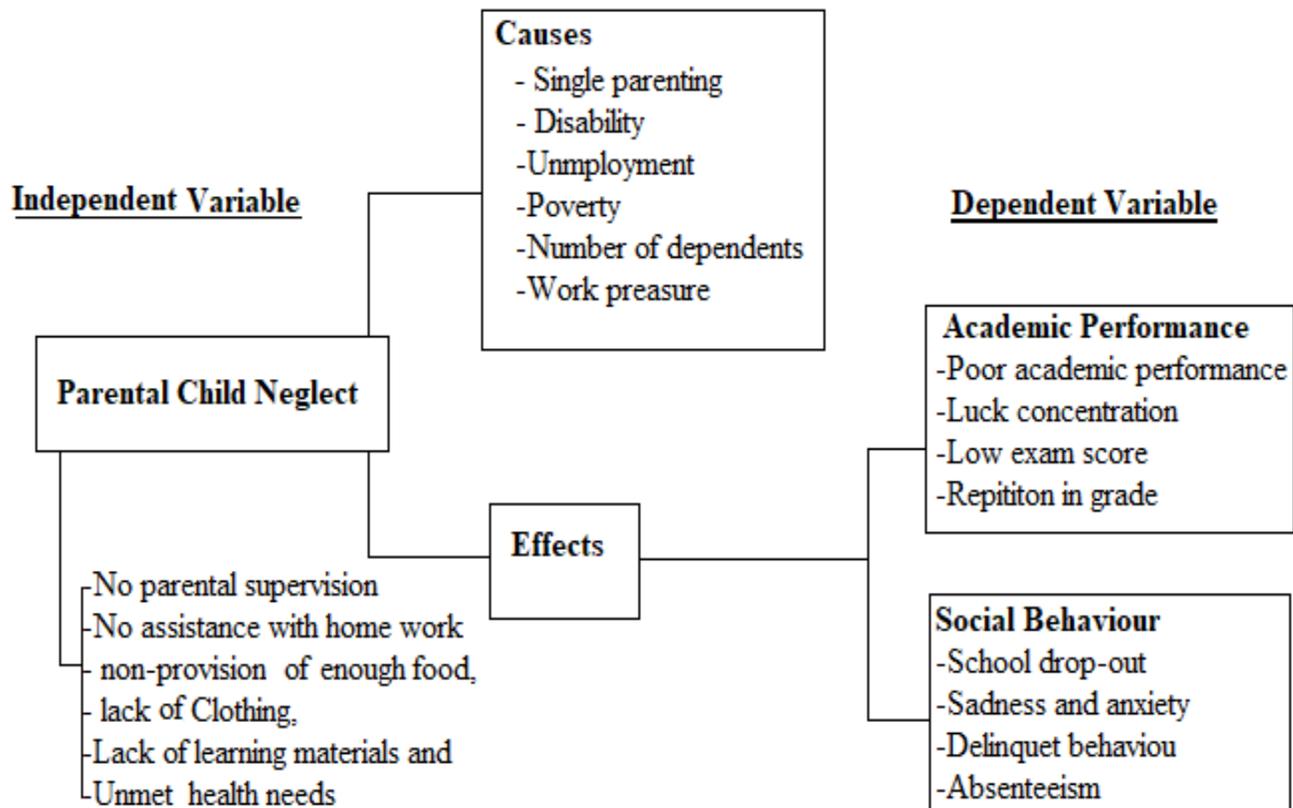


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: *Author`s Construct*

2.4 Conceptual Review

The empirical review of the study focused on the relevant literature based on the objectives posed for this study, taking into account the various dimensions or forms of parental child neglect; the factors that leads to the perpetuation of the incidents (Neglect); the effects child neglect have on the academic performance of students; the strategies identified to help prevent or reduce child neglect; and, finally, explore remedial support services that could help assist Junior High School students suffering from parental neglect.



An Overview of the Concept of Parental Neglect

Parental neglect occurs when a caregiver, typically a parent or guardian, fails to meet a child's essential needs, such as physical, emotional, educational, and medical care. This neglect can have a profound effect on a child's overall development, emotional well-being, and academic performance. Neglect manifests in various forms, including physical neglect (failure to provide food, shelter, or clothing), emotional neglect (lack of affection or support), and educational neglect (failure to ensure proper education). The impact of parental neglect can lead to emotional difficulties, such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and behavioral issues, all of which hinder a child's academic success. The long-term consequences can include cognitive development challenges and a negative influence on a child's life outcomes. To effectively address parental neglect, we must consider factors such as socio-economic conditions, family dynamics, and a lack of education, while also implementing a comprehensive approach that supports caregivers, provides child welfare interventions, and promotes educational programs to raise awareness about the significance of neglect.

2.4.1 Forms of Parental Neglect Cases Student Suffer

Parental neglect is described as the failure of caregivers to adequately provide for the development of children in essential areas, including health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions. This neglect may be unintentional or occur due to the caregiver's limited resources or circumstances. However, regardless of the cause, neglect can significantly harm the child's physical, emotional, mental, and social development (Hammerstrom et al., 2016). Neglect can also involve the failure to supervise a child appropriately and to



protect them from potential harm. According to the Korean Child Welfare Act (2001), neglect includes abandoning a child or neglecting the fundamental protection and nurturing responsibilities.

Parental neglect may take many forms, as detailed by various researchers. Alicia (2022) describes emotional neglect as when parents or caregivers fail to provide the necessary affection, love, or support for a child, which can lead to feelings of rejection or isolation. Medical neglect occurs when caregivers do not seek or provide adequate medical treatment for a child, which can endanger the child's health. Educational neglect refers to the failure to ensure that a child receives an education, whether by not enrolling the child in school or not ensuring they attend regularly. Additionally, children may suffer from physical neglect, which involves neglecting basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.

The U.S. Children's Bureau (2019) highlights several categories of neglect, including:

1. **Educational Neglect:** Failing to enroll a child in school or ignoring a child's special educational needs.
2. **Emotional Neglect:** Exposing a child to domestic violence or substance abuse, or not providing emotional support.
3. **Inadequate Supervision:** Leaving a child home alone or not protecting the child from safety hazards.
4. **Medical Neglect:** Denying or delaying necessary medical care.
5. **Physical Neglect:** Failing to provide for a child's basic needs like food, hygiene, and shelter.



While the definitions above suggest intentional neglect, socio-economic factors, such as financial strain or family breakdown, can lead to unintended parental absence, which children might perceive as neglect. Kim (2014) argues that a child's perception of neglect may sometimes be more significant than the actual neglectful behavior of the parent, as the child's emotional response to the caregiver's actions is crucial in understanding neglect (Yoo & Chung, 2014). Therefore, neglect should be defined and understood not only through the caregiver's actions but also from the child's perspective. Welch and Bonner (2013) categorize neglect into three key forms:

- **Care Neglect:** Deprivation of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- **Supervisory/Environmental Neglect:** Inadequate supervision, leading to harm or accidents.
- **Medical Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary medical care for a child.

Rashmi (2020) also identifies various forms of neglect, such as emotional neglect, which occurs when a parent prioritizes career needs over a child's emotional well-being, or educational neglect, which happens when parents fail to support their child's academic needs. Physical neglect includes abandonment, medical neglect, and failing to provide adequate supervision or care. The Texas definition of neglect (Taylor, 2019) aligns with these ideas, detailing the failure to provide basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing, and neglecting a child's medical and emotional needs. These definitions all point to the critical role that caregivers play in meeting the child's fundamental needs, and how neglect, whether intentional or not, can severely impact a child's development and well-being.

Thus, parental neglect, in its many forms, profoundly impacts a child's physical, emotional, and educational development. Whether it involves the failure to provide basic needs, emotional support, or proper supervision, neglect can have long-lasting effects on a child's life. It is essential to recognize the diverse forms of neglect and to approach the issue from a comprehensive perspective, considering both the caregivers' actions and the child's perceptions. Understanding these dynamics is vital for identifying effective strategies to prevent and address neglect, especially in the context of educational settings where the effects of neglect may be most visible

2.4.2 Causes of Parental Neglect of Children

In a study examining the causes and effects of child neglect, Esmina and Maja (2020) pointed out that while child neglect is a widespread issue, its causes and consequences are not adequately explored. However, previous research indicates that child neglect arises from various interconnected factors, spanning from individual and family dynamics to broader community and societal influences. Child neglect is considered the outcome of complex interactions between risk factors present in both the child and their environment.

Belsky's developmental-ecological framework identifies three contexts where child maltreatment occurs: 1) the developmental-psychological context, which includes both parent and child characteristics, parental developmental history, and the transmission of maltreatment across generations; 2) the immediate interactional context, which encompasses parenting behaviors and the nature of parent-child interactions; and 3) the broader context, which includes community and social



support, socio-economic conditions, neighborhood influences, social norms, and cultural factors. These factors are often interrelated, and no single pathway to child neglect exists (Howard, 2019).

The reasons behind child neglect are multifaceted, with no singular theory explaining the phenomenon. Various theoretical models have been proposed to understand child neglect and abuse. Blumenthal (2015) categorizes these models into three main types: the parental deficit model, the environmental deficit model, and the ecological-transactional model. In the parental deficit model, the emphasis is on the individual (parent or guardian) being primarily responsible for ensuring child welfare, with inadequate parenting being the main cause of neglect (Cameron et al., 2007). Parental characteristics such as mental health issues, cognitive distortions, or past neglectful experiences are seen as major contributing factors. However, this model overlooks the broader socio-economic and environmental influences that may impact parenting and contribute to neglect (Smith & Fong, 2004).

The environmental deficit model, on the other hand, posits that material deprivation is the primary cause of neglect, highlighting the role of poverty and the stress it places on families. This model, grounded in sociological theories, suggests that poverty creates stress, which in turn limits the ability of parents to meet their child's physical and emotional needs. The ecological-transactional model views neglect as a product of the interaction between family characteristics and external environmental factors. It focuses on the level of stress within the family and the coping mechanisms available to parents. When family stress exceeds the coping capacity, neglect may occur (Daniel et al., 2011). Research suggests that when



children are exposed to risk factors without sufficient protective factors, the likelihood of neglect or abuse increases (Lamont & Price-Robertson, 2013). However, the mere presence of risk factors does not necessarily result in neglect.

Research has identified a range of causes for child neglect, from simple to complex factors that contribute to its persistence. For instance, Rashmi Prakash, a psychotherapist, lists poverty and substance abuse by parents as significant causes of neglect. While existing literature highlights these causes, there is a lack of specific studies on how parental neglect affects children's academic performance, especially in regional contexts like the Sagnarigu Municipality in Northern Ghana. Much of the existing research addresses child neglect in general terms, without exploring its specific manifestations in diverse socio-economic and cultural environments, or how it impacts educational outcomes. Parents facing difficulties such as depression, unemployment, or other life stresses may unintentionally direct these struggles towards their children, resulting in neglect or abuse. Additionally, adults who have experienced neglect or abuse in their own childhood may normalize these behaviors, perpetuating a cycle of neglect (Rashmi, 2020).

2.4.3 Influence of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance of Students

Child neglect has profound and damaging effects on various aspects of a child's development, including physical health, psychological well-being, cognitive abilities, academic performance, and social skills. The impact of neglect varies depending on its severity, timing, and duration. Research led by Robert Wilson at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago revealed that adults who experienced moderate neglect during childhood had a threefold higher risk of suffering strokes



compared to those who experienced lower levels of neglect, even after accounting for common risk factors. In this study, 1,040 individuals aged 55 and above were interviewed, and after 3.5 years, 257 had died. Autopsies of 192 participants showed evidence of stroke in 89 cases, while another 40 had a history of strokes.

Child development is cumulative, with new developmental milestones building upon earlier achievements. Neglect in early childhood can hinder development, making it harder for children to succeed in later tasks. As one of the most widespread forms of child maltreatment, neglect significantly disrupts physical, mental, and emotional development, leading to long-term consequences such as depression, personality disorders, and poor academic performance. A Canadian study by Herren Kohl et al. (2021) examined the relationship between child maltreatment and academic performance. The findings indicated a negative correlation: a unit increase in abuse or neglect led to a 0.3441 unit decrease in academic performance. The researchers emphasized the importance of parents providing love, care, and meeting their children's needs to improve learning outcomes.

Neglect can be as damaging as physical abuse. Comparative studies cited by Howard (2019) found that neglected children often had underdeveloped brain structures like the corpus callosum. Additionally, children who experienced neglect during early childhood performed worse on academic tests in their first six years of schooling compared to non-maltreated peers. The cognitive deficits associated with neglect, such as lower IQ and poor reading ability, often persist into adulthood. Perlman and Fantuzzo (2019) explored the bidirectional relationship between childhood neglect and academic performance, considering factors such as



attachment, emotion regulation, and systemic influences (e.g., family and school environments). They found that neglected children often face academic and psychological challenges, including anxiety, aggression, and difficulties with interpersonal relationships. These challenges are more pronounced among children in out-of-home care.

Lawson and Lawson (2020) studied how neglect affects children's attention spans and classroom engagement. Their findings highlighted a strong connection between neglect and reduced attention in class, alongside a link between parental involvement and positive attitudes toward school assignments. The researchers recommended addressing the impact of neglect on classroom behavior and academic outcomes in policy discussions. Efforts to prevent neglect must target risk and protective factors across individual, community, and societal levels. Strategies include public education campaigns, promoting protective factors, and providing families with resources to prevent maltreatment. The Children's Bureau-Child Welfare Information Gateway (2019) emphasized that childhood maltreatment leads to immediate and long-term physical, psychological, and societal consequences. Long-term effects include developmental delays, higher societal costs, and increased involvement in criminal justice systems. They advocated for evidence-based interventions and community engagement to mitigate these effects.

Research by Jane (2020) demonstrated how parental neglect contributes to educational wastage, manifesting as school dropouts, grade repetition, and absenteeism. The study highlighted the importance of educating parents about consistent school attendance and enforcing government policies to reduce neglect. Likewise, Vulliamy and Sullivan (2020) found that child abuse and neglect



negatively impact academic performance and, consequently, the economy. They stressed collaborative efforts among parents, schools, and policymakers to address this issue.

A study cited by Herrenkohl et al. (2021) focused on child labor and academic outcomes. It linked activities like street hawking to lower academic performance, emphasizing the need for better policies to protect children from exploitation. Howard (2019) noted that neglected children often face social challenges, such as withdrawal and poor peer interactions, alongside internalizing problems like anxiety and depression. Neglect also impacts brain development, resulting in impaired cognitive and emotional functions. Rashmi (2020) added that neglected children struggle with focus, speech, and language development, which negatively affect academic performance in reading and math.

2.4.5 Remedial Support Services to Reduce Parental Neglect of Students

Preventing child neglect requires a proactive approach that emphasizes support for parents and the cultivation of positive parenting skills. Programs designed to help parents learn effective communication, appropriate discipline, and responsiveness to their children's physical and emotional needs are essential. These programs, which aim to prevent child abuse and neglect, also improve parent-child relationships and provide social support. They can take place in various settings, such as homes, schools, clinics, or community centers, and may involve either individual or group sessions (Lieberman, 2022).

Howard (2019) highlights the effectiveness of specific approaches like home visitation programs, where nurses support parents before and after childbirth.





Parenting programs, including the Triple P intervention and the SEEK (Safe Environment for Every Kid) model, also show promise. The SEEK model leverages the pediatrician-family relationship to identify and address risk factors like parental depression and intimate partner violence. For families already experiencing neglect, interventions such as SafeCare aim to prevent recurrence by addressing family-specific needs and risk factors. Key principles of these interventions include addressing contributors to neglect, building a supportive alliance with families, establishing clear goals, monitoring progress, and ensuring professional collaboration (Howard, 2019).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2021) underscores that child neglect is a significant issue with lasting harmful effects. To combat this, the CDC focuses on modifying policies, practices, and societal norms to foster safe and nurturing relationships and environments. Their strategies include strengthening economic support for families, promoting positive social norms, enhancing early childhood care and education, and improving parenting skills (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2021). The CDC also emphasizes the importance of addressing risk and protective factors at individual, relational, community, and societal levels.

Programs like those advocated by the Virtual Lab School (2023) integrate protective factors into their design to prevent child neglect. These programs focus on fostering family friendships and support networks, enhancing parenting skills, responding to family crises, linking families to community services, facilitating children's social and emotional development, and observing early warning signs of neglect. Furthermore, they value parents by encouraging their active participation and leadership within these programs.

According to WHO (1999, as cited in Jane, 2009), measures to improve parenting practices and provide family support include education on child development and behavior management. For example, in Singapore, secondary schools include "preparation for parenthood" classes, which provide practical experience in childcare and development. Similarly, school-based programs like Ireland's Stay Safe initiative incorporate preventive strategies into their curricula to raise awareness and mitigate neglect. In Kenya, a coalition was formed in 1996 to improve public awareness and service provision, while Zimbabwe's multisectoral program uses role plays, drama, and discussions to address child neglect (Jane, 2009).

Research by Rashmi (2020) emphasizes early prevention through education for parents and children, mental health support for stressed parents, and public awareness campaigns. Policies and programs aimed at addressing poverty, malnutrition, and ill-treatment at home can mitigate the root causes of neglect. Providing psychological counseling to parents struggling with caregiving can also strengthen family dynamics.

Remedial services, often called tertiary child protection services, address the needs of children who have experienced or are at risk of significant harm. These services also support their parents and caregivers (Better Care Network, 2014). According to the Ghana Health Service (2018), an inclusive approach to child abuse addresses multiple forms of abuse across different settings. Their guidelines focus on prevention, protection, medical care, psychological support, victim rehabilitation, and perpetrator interventions.

The public health approach identifies and addresses risk factors for child abuse and neglect before they escalate. This includes interventions at three levels: primary (universal), secondary (targeted), and tertiary (specific). Primary interventions focus on educating the general population to prevent abuse, such as community health education campaigns. Secondary interventions target families at risk, offering resources like home visits and parenting education. Tertiary interventions provide care and support for children who have already experienced neglect, focusing on safety, rehabilitation, and preventing recurrence (Ghana Health Service, 2018).

Figure 3 illustrates the three levels of intervention using a triangle to represent the distribution of children at each level. The widest section, representing the primary level, includes the majority of interventions, while the narrowest section, the tertiary level, involves fewer cases. Effective identification and support provided to families at the primary and secondary levels can significantly reduce instances of child abuse and neglect. Even in severe cases, where children have already suffered violence, abuse, or neglect, tertiary interventions remain crucial in preventing further harm to the same child or potential abuse of siblings or other children by the same perpetrator (Ghana Health Service, 2018).



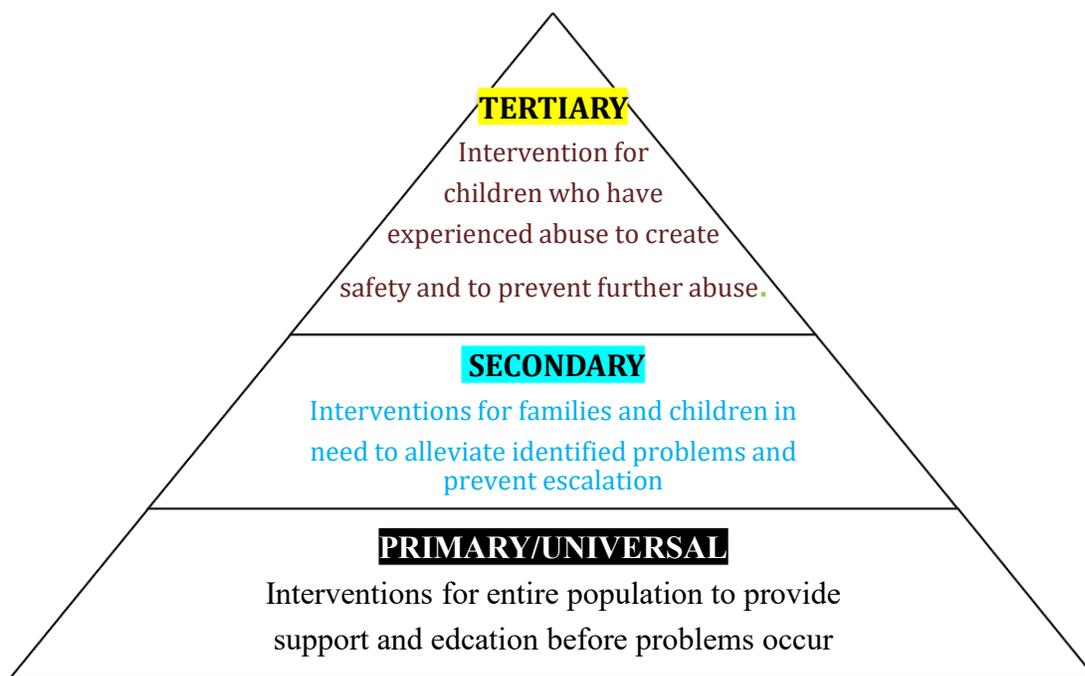


Figure 3: Public Health Child Protection Interventions – Triangle Diagram

Source: Ghana Health Service

The primary or universal level encompasses interventions designed for the entire population, focusing on education and support to prevent child abuse before it occurs. For instance, health workers may deliver educational programs within communities, raising awareness to deter child abuse. The secondary level involves targeted interventions aimed at families and children identified as being at risk of or experiencing abuse. These interventions seek to address the existing issues and prevent their escalation, which could otherwise result in abuse or neglect. An example of a secondary intervention is a health worker conducting home visits to families with a history of child abuse, educating caregivers about the consequences of such behavior and how to improve their parenting practices. Tertiary level interventions, on the other hand, are designed for children who have already experienced violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. These interventions aim to



ensure the child's safety and health, provide opportunities for their basic needs to be met, and prevent further incidents of abuse or neglect (Ghana Health Service, 2014).

The medical approach to addressing child abuse serves as a critical strategy to mitigate the health consequences and broader effects of violence against children. This method has the potential to achieve substantial outcomes in child protection, especially when compared to programs that focus only on specific types of violence or their impacts in particular populations or settings (UNICEF, 2018). However, implementing this approach requires a comprehensive and holistic framework, as it involves various complexities. Health professionals, including doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, public health practitioners, clinical psychologists, and dentists, play a pivotal role in three key areas: first, in the prevention of child abuse; second, by providing immediate medical examinations and treatment, including stabilization or referral for necessary medical and psychological care; and third, in gathering evidence from victims and documenting findings to support investigations and legal proceedings (UNICEF, 2018).

Child protection systems are defined as the set of laws, policies, regulations, and services across different social sectors designed to prevent and respond to child abuse. Typically, these systems are government-managed services aimed at safeguarding the welfare of children and young people while promoting family stability. At the preventive level, the goal is to support and strengthen families to reduce the risk of abuse. In cases where abuse has occurred, the focus shifts to delivering compassionate and effective care to affected children (Ghana Health Service, 2018). If it is determined that a child has been abused or neglected by a



parent or caregiver, in-home services may be provided to address the root causes of the abuse and improve family dynamics. This intervention ensures the child's safety while allowing them to remain in their home environment (Department of Social Services, North Carolina, 2024).

2.5 Summary of Literature

Parental neglect significantly impacts students' academic performance, as it encompasses the failure of caregivers to meet a child's essential physical, emotional, educational, or medical needs. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory, the literature review highlights the critical role of caregiver-child relationships and the broader environment in shaping educational outcomes. Parental neglect manifests in various forms, including physical neglect (deprivation of basic needs), emotional neglect (lack of affection or psychological support), medical neglect (failure to provide necessary healthcare), and educational neglect (hindering access to education). These forms of neglect adversely affect children's ability to manage stress, explore their environment, and succeed academically.

Neglect arises from interconnected parental and environmental deficits. Parental deficits, such as psychopathology, cognitive distortions, or adverse developmental histories, impair caregivers' abilities to meet their children's needs. Environmental deficits, particularly poverty and material deprivation, exacerbate stressors, limiting parents' capacity to provide adequate emotional and material support. Together, these factors create a complex interplay that perpetuates neglect.



To address parental neglect, preventive and intervention strategies are essential. Parenting education programs, such as Triple P and SEEK, equip caregivers with skills to foster positive discipline, communication, and emotional support while addressing stressors like depression and domestic violence. Community-based initiatives, including public awareness campaigns and economic support, create nurturing environments that promote child well-being. Targeted interventions like SafeCare address specific risk factors in families already experiencing neglect, enhancing parenting practices and fostering professional collaboration.

Public health frameworks, such as those implemented by the Ghana Health Service, prioritize interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. These efforts aim to prevent neglect, mitigate its effects, and support rehabilitation. A comprehensive approach integrating education, mental health services, and societal awareness is crucial to protecting children, strengthening family dynamics, and promoting academic success.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

It is acknowledged that several methodological options are available in social research, however, the choice of a research methodology is dependent largely on the objectives of the study. This leads the discussion on the research philosophy, design, study population, sample size and sampling procedure, instruments of data collection, data collection procedure and methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations, which are presented in the next sub-sections of this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

A research design serves as the foundation for the procedures and strategies a researcher uses to conduct a study. It is the overarching strategy used to integrate the many components of a study in a consistent and logical way, guiding the researcher to effectively handle the subject matter under study. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed research design to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. The descriptive research design approach, according to Kombo and Tromp (2006), is used to help describe the state of affairs without altering the environment. This design was adopted since the study sought to obtain information about the current status of parental child neglect and its effects on students' academic performance and would not require manipulation of the variables.





3.3 Profile of the Study Area

The Sagnerigu Municipality, which is considered for this study, is one of the newly created districts in the Northern Region of Ghana. It was carved out of the Tamale Metropolis in the first half of 2012 with its capital being Sagnerigu. It has 79 communities, comprising of 20 urban, six peri-urban, and 53 rural areas. In terms of geographical location, the Sagnerigu Municipality covers a total land size of 200.4km² and shares boundaries with the Savelugu-Nanton Municipality to the north, Tamale Metropolis to the south and east, Tolon District to the west and Kumbungu District to the north-west. Geographically, the district lies between latitudes 9°16' and 9° 34' North and longitudes 0° 36' and 0° 57' West.

3.4 Research Philosophy

The study was guided by the pragmatism paradigm. The ontology of pragmatism is that reality is the practical effects of ideas (Akudugu, 2019). Epistemologically, pragmatist perceives any way of doing or thinking that offer solutions to practical issues to be useful. Methodologically, pragmatists make good use of mixed methods-quantitative and qualitative and often geared towards answering the following research questions: What can be done to improve a given situation? Can a given intervention help solve a problem? Do these activities yield the desired outcomes? (Akudugu, 2019).

3.5 Population of the Study

According to Creswell (2014), a research population refers to the group of individuals or cases about whom the researcher is interested in making inferences. A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. The population of the study comprised all

public junior high school students, teachers, parents and social welfare staff in the Sagnarigu Municipality in the Northern Region. Statistics indicate that there are 82 Junior High Schools and 11 circuits in the Sagnarigu Municipal with a total student population of 15,364, girls 7, 371 and 7, 371 boys (Sagnarigu District Education Directorate, 2024). The total population of Junior High school teachers comprised 1,354, with 925 being males and 429 females (Sagnarigu District Education Directorate, 2024).

The accessible population consisted of students and teachers in 11 circuits. In each of the circuits, one Junior High School was selected to make the total of 11 schools. The schools selected were; The total number of pupils in the 11 selected schools comprises of 2,506 pupils. Again, two students were randomly selected from each of the schools to form a sample size of 22 pupils.

Table 1: Distribution of Accessible Population

Names of school	Circuit	male	female	Total
Yalpasi JHS	Choggu	156	182	338
Our Lady of Fatima JHS	Gumani-Nyanshegu	116	148	264
Fuo Zion JHS	Fuo	25	38	63
Kanvilli Roman Catholic JHS	Kamina “A”	136	193	329
Dungu Anglican R /C. JHS	Mile “9”	112	140	252
Gurugu Roman Catholic JHS	Kamina “B”	38	47	85
1 st November JHS	Kumbungu	125	150	275
Tishegu Anglican	Tinshegu	87	130	217
St. Mary JHS	Nyankpala	123	154	277
Gbaya T I JHS	Sagnarigu South	85	76	161



Bagabaga Demo. JHS	Sagnarigu North	163	82	245
Total		1166	1340	2506

Source: Sagnarigu Municipal Education Office (2023)

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Multistage sampling was used to select the research participants. In this sampling method, the larger population of schools was divided into clusters (circuits), and then a subset of clusters is randomly selected for further investigation (Heeringa et al., 2017). Subsequently, within the chosen clusters, subgroups or elements were randomly sampled, ultimately resulting in the final study sample. This sampling technique was chosen due to its efficiency and practicality in large and geographically dispersed populations, allowing for more manageable data collection and reducing costs associated with exhaustive sampling (Heeringa et al., 2017). Additionally, the technique offers flexibility to accommodate diverse population structures and geographic variations, improving the generalizability of study findings (Frankel & Chmiel, 2004). Owing to the fact that there were differences in population size of selected schools and wanted representativeness, stage one quota sampling was used, stage two purposive sampling, and stage three snow ball sampling.

Quota sampling was used to select 11 Junior High Schools (JHS) from the 11 circuits in the Sagnarigu Municipality, a systematic approach was employed to ensure both representation and diversity in the sample. The 11 circuits were first identified, and a predetermined quota of one JHS school per circuit was established. Criteria such as enrollment size, academic performance, and infrastructure were considered to guide the selection process. A sample random sampling method was





employed within each circuit and one JHS, which met the criteria was chosen to fulfill the quota. This approach offered a well-structured and deliberate method in selecting schools which allow for a representation of various characteristics within the Sagnarigu Municipality. The use of quota sampling helped in the systematic collection of data from a diverse set of schools but also ensured that the sample was a reflective of the larger population in the municipal area. In total 153 respondents were considered for this study. Thus 22 pupils/students and were sampled using snowball sampling technique. Head teachers, recognized for their authoritative positions within schools, were purposefully chosen to provide insights into the administrative and educational aspects affected by parental neglect. Additionally, parents were selected purposively due to their direct involvement in the identified students' lives, making them key informants on the familial dynamics that contribute to or mitigate the effects of neglect. By specifically targeting head teachers and some parents, purposive sampling technique aimed to capture diverse perspectives, enriching the understanding of how parental neglect manifests and influences students' academic and socio-emotional well-being. However, the rest of the participants in the parents' category (59) and 55 teachers were randomly selected across the 11 school schools. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select five (5) community leaders, being the Assembly members of the various electoral areas of the Sagnerigu Municipality as well as one (1) staff from the Municipal Social Welfare office, as key informants for the interviews.

The initial participants, likely known to the researcher, community members and in the school, were intentionally chosen due to their potential experiences and challenges. The discovered students were then used to identify and select other

students who had experienced or were familiar with parental neglect, tramadol abuse, or engagement in other social vices. This method allowed for the selection of participants who might not be easily identifiable through conventional means, allowing a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding these issues and generating a more complex perspective from students directly affected or involved. The sampling procedure was suitable since it ensured that certain scope of females and males were comprised in the sample size and guaranteed fair representation of gender in the sample and representation of each school's respondents. Thus, these methods were employed as they offer no opportunity for human bias that could manifest itself during sampling.

Table 3: Distribution of Sample Size

Category	Number
Parents	59
Teachers	55
Headteachers	11
Social Welfare Office	1
Opinion Leaders	5
Students	22
Total	153



3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The study made use of three instruments (questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion FGD, and interviews) to collect the data from the various categories of respondents considered for the study: Junior High School students, headteachers, parents, teachers, Assemblymen/women and Municipal Social Welfare officer.

Questionnaires: The researcher use a structured questionnaire to collect data on the independent variable, and data for the dependent variable (academic performance) was drawn from the terminal reports of the pupils. There were two different sets of questionnaires namely, questionnaire for teachers and parents, respectively, for data collection. Each set of questionnaires consisted of both closed and open-ended items. The opened-ended questions was included to enable the researcher elicit more information on the issues at stake and to give the respondents enough latitude to freely give their responses. Some of the items in the questionnaire were designed with 5-points Likert scale. Questionnaires were chosen as the data collection method for their efficiency, standardization, and ability to capture diverse perspectives. They enable the collection of large amounts of data from a wide population in a short time, making the study time and cost-effective. The standardized format minimizes bias and ensures consistent interpretation of questions. The Questionnaires included closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, supporting a comprehensive analysis. They provided anonymity and privacy, encouraging honest responses. Respondents answered at their own pace, improving response quality and reducing errors. Overall, questionnaires were the most suitable tool for achieving the study's objectives.





Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The method aims at obtaining data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Tobias et al., 2017). The use of focus group discussion is mostly needed to generate discussion or debate about a research topic that requires collective views and the meanings that lie behind those views (including participants experiences and beliefs) (Harissha & Padmavathy, 2013). According to Wilkinson, cited in Tobias et al. (2017), it can be utilized within a suite of techniques in a multi-method research design, as a principal research method in its own right, or as a form of participatory action research to empower participants and promote social change. Focus group discussion is a flexible technique and can be adaptable at any stage of the research. Compared to more conventional techniques such as individual interviews and surveys, focus group discussion offers an opportunity to explore issues that are not well understood or where there is little prior research on the topic and can take different forms; single focus group, two-way focus group, mini focus group and online focus groups (Tobias et al., 2017). Thus, this study employed the single focus group discussion approach to gather information from selected students. The key feature of this approach is the interactive discussion of the topic by all the selected participants and a team of facilitators as one group in one place.

Structured interview: Key informant interviews were conducted among the participants using an interview guide. These participant included the Headteachers (HT), Assembly members (AM) of the various electoral areas of the municipality, community leaders and an officer from the Social Welfare Office (SWO) and

students. The rationale was to solicit independent views on issues relating to the state of parental neglect of students/pupils and its impact on their academic outcomes. Interviews with these people most likely allowed for emergence of new and unanticipated issues and ideas on the prospects and challenges associated with the implementation neglect intervention programs.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

For the purpose of empirical analysis, the data collected was analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods. The academic performance of the students included in this study was the average of learner's third term exams scores for 2023/2024 academic year in Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, and Social Studies. The scores were summed and divided by 4 to obtain the average for each student. The four core subjects were selected because they were compulsory for every junior high school student. Table 3 presents the data collection instruments as well as framework for data analysis.

Table 4: Framework for Data Analysis

Research Objectives	Research Instrument	Type of Data	Data Analysis Plan
Level of awareness of child neglect in the study area	Questionnaires Interviews FGD	Quantitative Qualitative	Frequencies, frequencies and Thematic analysis.
Dimensions (forms) of parental neglect junior high school students often experience	Questionnaire Document analysis FGD	Quantitative Qualitative	Frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and thematic analysis



Causes of parental neglect of junior high school students in Sagnarigu Municipality.	Questionnaires Interviews FGD	Quantitative Qualitative Qualitative	Percentages, frequencies, and thematic analysis
Impact parental neglect on the academic performance of JHS students	Questionnaires Document analysis schedule	Quantitative Quantitative	Frequencies, percentages, Correlation, ANOVA, regression and thematic analysis.
Remedial support and counselling services to assist neglected students	Focus Group Discussion Interviews	Qualitative Qualitative	Frequencies, percentages, and thematic analysis.

Source: Author’s Construct (2024)

Data collected were fully checked, coded and quantified for analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using graphs (pie charts and bar graphs) and tables as captured in Table 3.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Before the commencement of the study, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University to ensure that all procedures met the required ethical standards. Permission was also obtained from the relevant authorities within the study setting, using an introductory letter issued by the University. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and requested the respondents’ voluntary cooperation in providing the necessary data. Participants were required to sign a consent form before taking part in the study. They were assured of the



confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and informed that the findings would be used solely for academic purposes. The study posed no physical, psychological, or emotional risk to the participants. Respondents were made aware that their participation was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to decline or withdraw from the survey, interview, or focus group discussion (FGD) at any point without any consequences.



CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the results obtained from the study. The chapter is structured into two main sections: the presentation of quantitative data; and the thematic analysis of qualitative data concurrently. In the first sections, the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires is analyzed using frequency tables and charts to highlight patterns, trends, and relationships within the data. These statistical tools provide a clear visual representation of the responses, allowing for a deeper understanding of the key issues under investigation.

The second sections on each theme focuses on the qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussion. Using thematic analysis, this section identifies and discusses the recurring themes and insights that emerged from the responses. The combined analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of the research findings, addressing the research questions and objectives outlined in earlier chapters.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

In order to help understand the subject matter and interpret the data without any biases, the researcher reported the demographic profile of the respondents who answered the questionnaires (only teachers and parents).



Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Teacher (n=55)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	24	43.6
Female	31	56.4
Total	55	100.0
Age		
23-27 years	4	7.3
28-32 years	14	25.5
33-37 years	17	30.9
38 years & above	20	36.4
Total	55	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	49	89.1
Single	6	10.9
Total	55	100.0
Level of Education		
Middle School	4	7.3
Secondary/SHS	4	7.3
Diploma	8	14.5
Degree	18	32.7
Total	55	100.0
Teaching Experience		
0-10 years	18	32.7



11-20 years	20	36.4
21-30 years	11	20.0
Above 30 years	6	10.9
Total	55	100.0

Source: *Field Survey (2024)*

From the Table above, most respondents were female (56.4%) and in their mid to late careers, with 36.4% aged 38 years and older. The majority are married (89.1%), suggesting possible family obligations. In terms of education, 32.7% have a degree and 14.5% hold a diploma. Teaching experience varies, with 36.4% having 11-20 years and 32.7% with 0-10 years.

Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Parents (n=59)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	26	44.1
Female	33	55.9
Total	59	100.0
Age		
23-27 years	6	7.5
28-32 years	15	25.4
33-37 years	19	32.2
38 years & above	19	32.2
Total	59	100.0
Marital Status		



Married	52	88.1
Single	7	11.9
Total	59	100.0
Level of Education		
Middle School	6	7.5
Secondary/SHS	7	9.0
Diploma	13	16.4
Degree	26	32.1
Total	59	100.0

Source: *Field Survey (2024)*

The survey shows that 55.9% of respondents are female, primarily in their mid to late careers. 32.2% are aged 33-37 years, and 38 years & above. The majority are married (88.1%), suggesting family responsibilities. Educational qualifications vary, with 32.1% holding a degree and 16.4% a diploma. In summary, the respondents are mostly female, married, and well-educated.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

4.3.1 Awareness of Parental Neglect

To understand the level of awareness among respondents about the prevalence of child neglect within the municipality, Figure 5 reveals that the vast majority (88%) of respondents were aware of child neglect issues in the Sagnerigu Municipality.



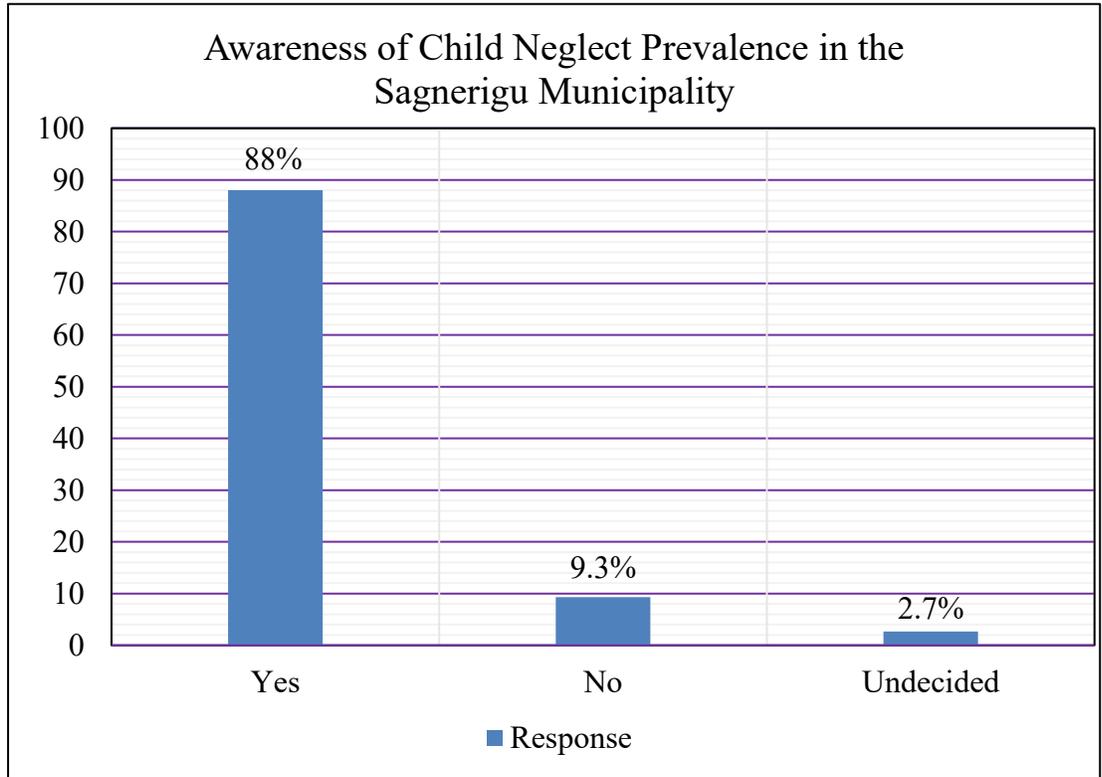


Figure 4: Awareness of Child Neglect Prevalence in the Sagnerigu Municipality

Source: Field survey (2024)

This high level of awareness indicates either personal experience or a general understanding of the problem among the community that child neglect is a serious and recognized issue. A fairly smaller percentage of respondents (9.3%) indicated unaware of child neglect incidents with 2.7% being indecisive. Notwithstanding the insignificant size of these groups, it is an indication that there is still a portion of the population that were either unfamiliar with the social concerns in the area or is new and therefore was separated from larger community issues.

An interview with key informants in a similar vein revealed that parental neglect is a well-recognized issue in the municipality, and it manifests in several forms such as financial, emotional, and physical neglect. According to the Social Welfare Officer (SWO) this is a pervasive problem affecting many children:

"Mmmmh, yes, it is a serious issue and not new in this municipality. We have parental neglect in the form of financial neglect, emotional neglect, and even physical neglect."(SWO)

In addition, a head teacher (HT) observed that many children suffer from neglect, especially financially, explaining that children often arrive at school tired and inadequately dressed, lacking basic school supplies due to their parents' inability or unwillingness to provide for them. He added:

"Parents often don't take care of their children, and the children come to school looking tired and poorly dressed. They sometimes say their parents can't afford to feed them or buy school supplies." (HM1)

Another head teacher (HT) confirmed a similar instance of neglect within his area, stating that some students attend school without proper uniforms, footwear, or learning materials, portraying a visible consequence of neglect on children in the municipality:

"Talking about the nature of parental neglect, I see some students who come to school looking wretched, some without uniforms, walking barefoot, and some with torn uniforms. Some students don't even have learning materials."(HT2)

It was clearly established from the interviewees that parental neglect is evident through children's physical appearance and demeanor. Children are often spotted wearing torn uniforms and look visibly miserable as the head teacher reiterated:

"At times you will see a child with a torn uniform still wearing it, and such children look miserable and hungry."



In a close interaction with the Assembly member of one electoral area of the municipality, the interviewee acknowledged that parental neglect as a recurrent issue within the municipality, often arise from family disputes where one parent might expel children from the home due to conflicts with the other spouse. This highlights a critical aspect of neglect stemming from adult relationships rather than direct inadequacies in caring for the child. Sharing a real-life example of parental neglect driven by family conflict, where a child was expelled from home due to disputes between the parents, she stated:

"A child was sacked from the house just because the mother was not in good terms with the father, and it was the fault of the mother that the father was chasing the children away, simply because the child was perceived by the father to be more loyal to the mother than to him." (AM1)

The researcher developed a deep insight of several instances of parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality, where parents failed to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, and educational materials as revealed by the key informants. In some cases, parents neglected their children's` education by refusing to pay school fees and by fare contributing to the irregular school attendance of their wards:

"The nature of it is such that parents failing to provide basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter largely contribute to the poor school attendance of these children. In some cases, the actions of these parents show their unwillingness to support their children's` education."

4.3.2 Consideration of Acts that Constitute Neglect by Parents (Forms of Parental Neglect)





In order to explore the nature of child neglect from multiple perspectives, the researcher sought to understand how parents (respondents) perceive various acts that constitute neglect. Table 7 highlights instances of behaviors that participants identified as forms of parental neglect within the Sagnerigu Municipality. Notably, the most commonly identified form of neglect, as reported by 55.6% of respondents, was exposing children to substance abuse or domestic violence. This finding suggests that while many parents struggle to manage conflict and substance use within the household, they are aware of the harmful effects these issues can have on children.

Additionally, 53.3% of respondents considered failing to ensure that children attend school regularly as a form of neglect. This indicates that a significant number of parents in the municipality recognize the importance of active involvement in their children's education and understand that neglecting this responsibility can have long-term negative impacts on the child's academic performance. The findings suggest that the failure of parents to actively ensure their children's school attendance is widely regarded within the municipality as a significant form of neglect. Other acts of neglect identified by respondents include leaving children unattended (48.9%) and failing to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter (48.9%). These acts, while acknowledged as forms of neglect, may be seen by some as less urgent or severe issues.

Table 3: Parents' Consideration of Acts that Constitute Neglect

Neglectful Acts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Leaving a child unattended for a long time	22	48.9

Failing to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter to a child	22	48.9
Not providing medical attention for a child's illness or injuries	10	22.2
Exposure of the child to domestic violence or substance abuse	25	55.6
Not checking to ensure the child attend school everyday	24	53.3

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Interestingly, fewer respondents (22.2%) recognized medical neglect; failure to provide timely medical attention as a significant issue. This may indicate a lack of awareness among parents about the importance of prompt healthcare for children in the municipality.



Research Question 2: What are the various forms of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

4.3.3 Forms/Dimensions of Parental Neglect

This section of the research question aims to identify and classify the various forms of parental neglect experienced by junior high school students in the Sagnarigu Municipality. It seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how neglect appears across different aspects within the municipality. Sixteen items were used. These items were categorized into three dimensions: physical neglect, educational

neglect and emotional neglect. The items were rated using a 4-point Likert scale: Undecided (0), Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4). The data was analyzed descriptively using means and standard deviations. Table 8 highlights significant differences in respondents' experiences of parental neglect across these three dimensions: physical, educational, and emotional.

Table 8: Forms of Parental Neglect

Dimension	Responses Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Physical Neglect	Undecided	0	0%	7.25	1.737
	Strongly Agree	32	23.5%		
	Agree	47	34.6%		
	Disagree	35	25.7%		
	Strongly Disagree	22	16.2%		
Educational Neglect	Undecided	0	0%	7.14	2.081
	Strongly Agree	29	21.3%		
	Agree	52	38.2%		
	Disagree	30	22.1%		
	Strongly Disagree	25	18.4%		
Emotional Neglect	Undecided	0	0%	7.42	2.046
	Strongly Agree	33	24.3%		
	Agree	45	33.1%		
	Disagree	40	29.4%		
	Strongly Disagree	18	13.2%		

Source: *Field survey (2024)*

Table 9: Interpretation of the Likert Scale Used





Response	Interpretation
Strongly agree	A high level of agreement of an opinion or statement
Agree	Admit, concede, and concur
Strongly Disagree	A high level of disagreement of an opinion or statement
Disagree	Refusal to accept or support a statement that it's true
Neutral	Real opinions about the statement is not shared

Source: *Researcher's Constructs*

It was discovered that physical neglect was most prevalent, with 58.1% (79) agreed or strongly agreed response, while 25.7% and 16.2% on the contrary, respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed. This suggests that around 42% not perceiving physical neglect to be a serious concern. However, a mean score of 7.25 and a standard deviation of 1.737 indicate a general agreement with some variability in views; and 59.5% (81 respondents) viewed educational neglect as a concern by respectively agreeing and strongly agreeing with 38.2% and 21.32%. Meanwhile, 22.1% disagreed and 18.4% strongly disagreed. Implying that about 40% of the respondents did not see educational neglect as a major issue in the municipality. The mean score of 7.14 and standard deviation of 2.081 suggest moderate variability. Regarding emotional neglect, 57.4% (78 respondents) agreed that it was one form of neglect to be concern with. Although 42.6% of the respondents had a contrary opinion, with 29.4% (40) and 13.2% (18), respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed, with a mean score of 7.42 and standard deviation of 2.046 reflecting moderate differences in opinions of the respondents. Overall, the results indicate that most respondents acknowledge parental neglect in its various forms,

although their perceptions vary. This variability may reflect differing levels of awareness or personal experience with specific cases of neglect.

The findings suggest that students in the Sagnarigu Municipality experience multiple forms of parental neglect, including physical, educational, and emotional neglect. The majority of respondents recognized the prevalence of these forms of neglect, as reflected in mean scores of 7.14, 7.25, and 7.42, respectively. This widespread recognition underscores the potentially serious impact of neglect on students' academic performance and emotional development. However, the variability in responses, as indicated by the standard deviations, shows that while many parents are aware of these issues, a significant portion of the population may not fully grasp their severity.

Building on existing empirical research, numerous studies have highlighted the prevalence and impact of parental neglect in various contexts, revealing both consistent patterns and some divergent findings. Physical neglect, characterized by inadequate provision of basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter, was a common issue in resource-constrained settings. Research by McSherry (2007) has shown that children in low-income households are disproportionately affected by physical neglect due to socio-economic challenges. This aligns with the current research findings in the Sagnarigu Municipality, where poverty exacerbates parents' inability to meet their children's basic needs. However, studies by Hildyard and Wolfe (2002) suggest that physical neglect could also stem from parental disengagement in affluent contexts, irrespective of economic constraints.

Educational neglect, demonstrated by a lack of parental involvement in children's academic activities, has been linked to poor academic performance. Research by





Dubowitz et al. (2014) has established a direct correlation between parental educational neglect and academic underachievement. Similarly, neglected students in the Sagnarigu Municipality lack supervision, guidance, and resources, hindering their academic success. Cultural factors, as highlighted by Spera (2005), may influence variations in educational neglect, with some communities prioritizing informal education or livelihood skills over formal education.

Emotional neglect, characterized by a lack of affection, support, and attention, has been recognized as detrimental to children's psychological well-being. Studies by Glaser (2002) have shown that emotionally neglected children are at higher risk for mental health issues. In the Sagnarigu Municipality, students reported feelings of abandonment and low self-worth, reflecting the negative impact of emotional neglect. Cultural norms around emotional expression in parenting, as discussed by Lancy (2014), may influence the perception and reporting of emotional neglect, with some societies valuing emotional stoicism. The findings align with existing literature on parental neglect, emphasizing the universal nature of its categories and consequences. However, contextual factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural practices, and community norms play a crucial role in understanding variations in these experiences.

In interviews with key informants, including Headteachers (HT), Assembly Members (AM), and a Social Welfare Officer (SWO), as well as in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students, several dimensions of parental neglect were highlighted. These included physical, emotional, educational, and medical neglect.

The Social Welfare Officer emphasized that neglect often stems from broader issues such as broken homes and domestic violence, which constitute physical neglect.

She pointed out that these circumstances can indirectly lead to other forms of neglect, particularly emotional and educational neglect. She explained:

"My sister, I must tell you, there are a lot of issues broken homes, financial difficulties, and domestic violence, where a parent is a victim. These indirectly affect children. Some become emotionally traumatized to the point that they lose their passion for schooling" (SWO).

In an interview with the headteacher of one of the sampled schools, several additional forms of parental neglect were revealed, extending beyond the commonly recognized categories of physical, emotional, and educational neglect. The headteacher highlighted medical and social neglect, noting that these forms manifest in poor nutrition, lack of school supplies, emotional support, and family/social acceptance.

He explained:

"Students suffer from physical neglect due to economic hardships, educational neglect where parents fail to provide school materials, and emotional neglect from a lack of affection. Medical neglect is also common, as children do not receive proper healthcare. Additionally, social neglect is evident, with parents not engaging in their children's social activities, leading to some children experiencing rejection in one way or another." (HT5)

Focusing specifically on physical neglect, another headteacher emphasized that the lack of basic necessities such as school uniforms, books, and food remains a major



challenge in the municipality. This underscores both physical and educational neglect as the primary concerns.

"Some children come to school without uniforms, books, or food. We organized extra classes, and only two students could afford to buy the necessary books." (HT6)

Similarly, another headteacher pointed out the presence of neglect in poor hygiene and malnutrition among children, largely due to economic challenges. He also noted that social isolation often exposes children to negative influences such as substance abuse and crime.

"Economically, parents may not provide for their children's basic needs, leading to malnutrition and poor hygiene. Socially, children may be isolated, pushing them towards substance abuse and crime." (HT8)

An assembly member from one of the catchment areas echoed similar concerns, emphasizing how physical and emotional neglect affect children's overall development:

"Junior high school students suffer from various forms of neglect. Physical neglect is an issue; children lack proper nutrition, clothing, and education. Educational neglect is also common, with parents not providing necessary school supplies or ensuring regular attendance. Emotional neglect is evident in how unhappy some children look, and sometimes they dress poorly. These forms of



neglect can significantly impact students' development and academic performance." (AM3)

Another assembly member provided a broader perspective, consolidating physical, emotional, and educational neglect into a multifaceted issue. He emphasized the lack of basic needs and emotional support as critical concerns in the community:

"Junior high school students in this community suffer from several forms of parental neglect. This includes physical neglect, such as inadequate provision of food, clothing, and healthcare. Educational neglect is also prevalent, with parents not providing the necessary school materials or ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Emotional neglect is a significant issue as well. Children often lack emotional support, guidance, and counselling from their parents. Some parents don't even offer advice to their children, which I find particularly worrying." (AM2)

4.3.4 Frequency of Parental Neglect Occurrence

Examining the rate at which various forms of neglect occur within the Sagnerigu Municipality, respondents consistently identified parental neglect as a widespread and frequent issue affecting children in diverse ways. Multiple sources, including school authorities, community leaders, and students, emphasized the prevalence of these issues, underscoring the severe impact on children's well-being.





The findings in Figure 6 revealed that physical neglect was the most common form of neglect in the municipality. A significant 53.3% of respondents reported that physical neglect occurs "always," while 37.3% noticed it "occasionally." Only 4% and 5.3% of respondents, respectively, felt it "rarely" or "never" occurs. Physical neglect typically involves inadequate access to safe spaces, food, and clothing. Educational neglect was another serious concern, with 45.3% of respondents indicating that it "constantly" affects children, while 49.3% said it happens "sometimes." Educational neglect typically involves inadequate access to education, health care, and social services. Emotional neglect was the least common form of neglect, with 38.7% of respondents indicating that it "constantly" affects children, while 33.3% said it happens "sometimes." Emotional neglect typically involves inadequate access to emotional support, love, and attention.

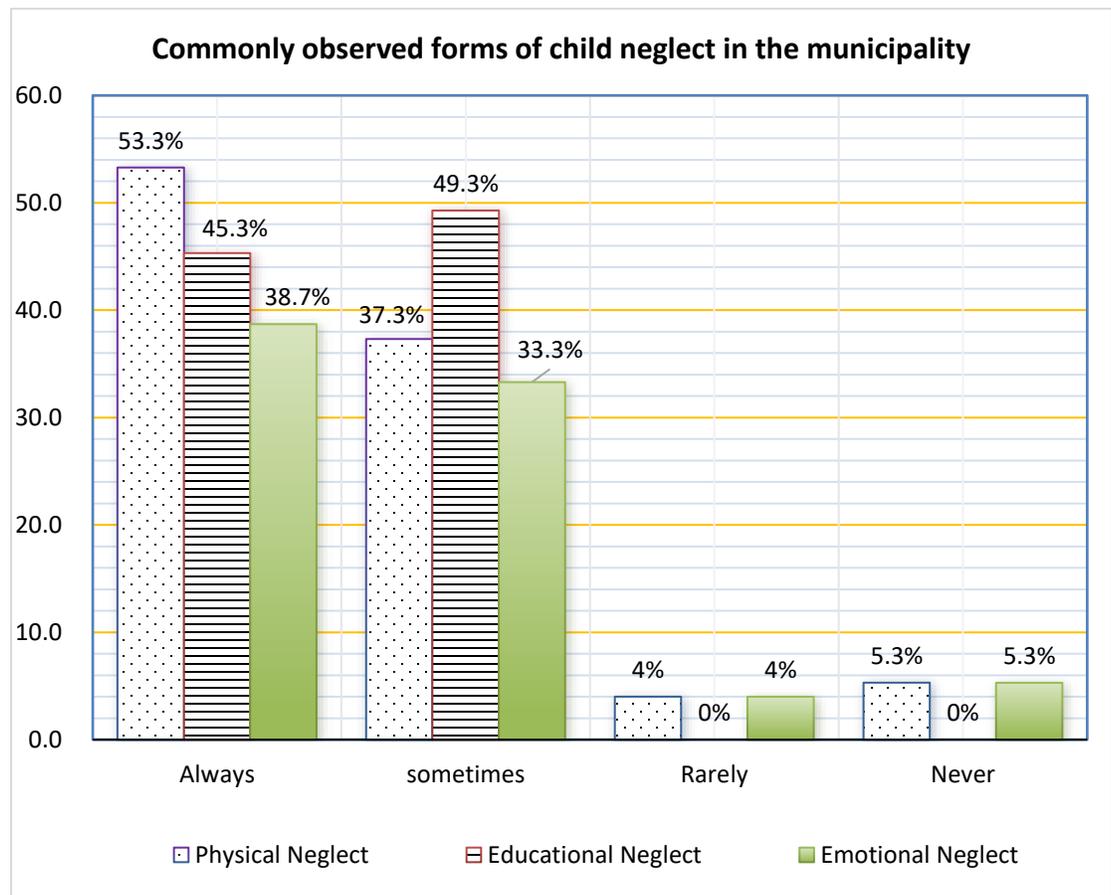


Figure 5: Commonly observed forms of child neglect in the Municipality

Source: Field Survey (2024)

During an interview with the Social Welfare Officer, while the exact frequency of each form of neglect was not specified, the officer emphasized that parental neglect is a frequent issue in the community, witnessed almost daily:

"Almost every day, I witness parental neglect." (SWO)

This common understanding was echoed by one of the headteachers, who confirmed that neglect, in its various forms, frequently occurs in the school, often on a daily or weekly basis. The school administration constantly attempts to address these challenges:

"I hear about it quite often, almost every week. It's a frequent problem here. On a daily basis, we try to solve some of the problems in the school." (HT1)

Similarly, another headteacher expressed that nearly every school in the municipality faces multiple cases of parental neglect regularly, with many students affected by these issues:

"There are a lot of such cases in my school. A lot of children are facing those challenges, and sometimes, especially in the most severe cases, teachers have no option but to intervene in some way." (HT5)

An assembly member from the Gurugu electoral area shared a similar sentiment, noting that cases of parental neglect are so common that he could not enumerate all the instances he had personally witnessed:



"They are many. I have witnessed a lot, I can't even count. If I were to start, we would not finish this interview. But take it from me, as a leader in this community, I am currently overwhelmed with cases of irresponsible parenting." (AM3)

Assembly members from other electoral areas within the municipality echoed this view, revealing that various instances of parental neglect are regularly reported, either by community members or even the children themselves. They stressed that this issue affects a significant number of families:

"It is indeed sad to think of. Cases of parental neglect are quite common here. We hear about these issues regularly through reports from community members, and sometimes even from the children themselves. It's a serious problem that affects many families." (AM4)

Interestingly, none of the respondents denied the existence of educational neglect in the municipality, which highlights a lack of parental involvement in children's education. This neglect has an immediate negative effect on their academic performance. Although emotional neglect was perceived as less common, 38.7% of respondents said it "always" occurs, while 33.3% felt it happens but "not always." This was concerning, as it suggests that many children in the municipality are not receiving the emotional support necessary for healthy development. Such emotional neglect can lead to issues like loneliness, low self-esteem, and behavioral disorders. The study findings are consistent with prior research. For instance, emotional neglect is crucial for child development and has been extensively studied in various contexts. Research by Glaser (2002) and Dubowitz et al. (2005) found



that emotionally neglected children often show symptoms of depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal, similar to the outcomes observed in Sagnarigu; and Maguire-Jack and Font (2017) highlighted the cyclical nature of emotional neglect, linking it to behavioral disorders like aggression and attention deficits, aligning with potential issues in Sagnarigu. However, the findings contradict Lancy's (2014) study, which sees cultural norms influence perceptions of emotional neglect; and Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) study that emphasized the importance of consistent emotional support for secure attachments, which was lacking in cases of neglect, as seen in the Sagnarigu findings.

4.3.5 Adequate Provisions of Children Basic Needs by Parents

In response to whether children's basic needs within the Sagnarigu Municipality were adequately met, as shown in Figure 7, it was estimated that only a small fraction of children's needs were sufficiently fulfilled by their parents. A mere 13.3% of participants believed that their children's requirements were being met, highlighting a significant deficiency in parental responsibilities or the financial difficulties that families in this community face. This low percentage underscores the gaps in parental care and support, stressing the need for enhanced social services and community support mechanisms.



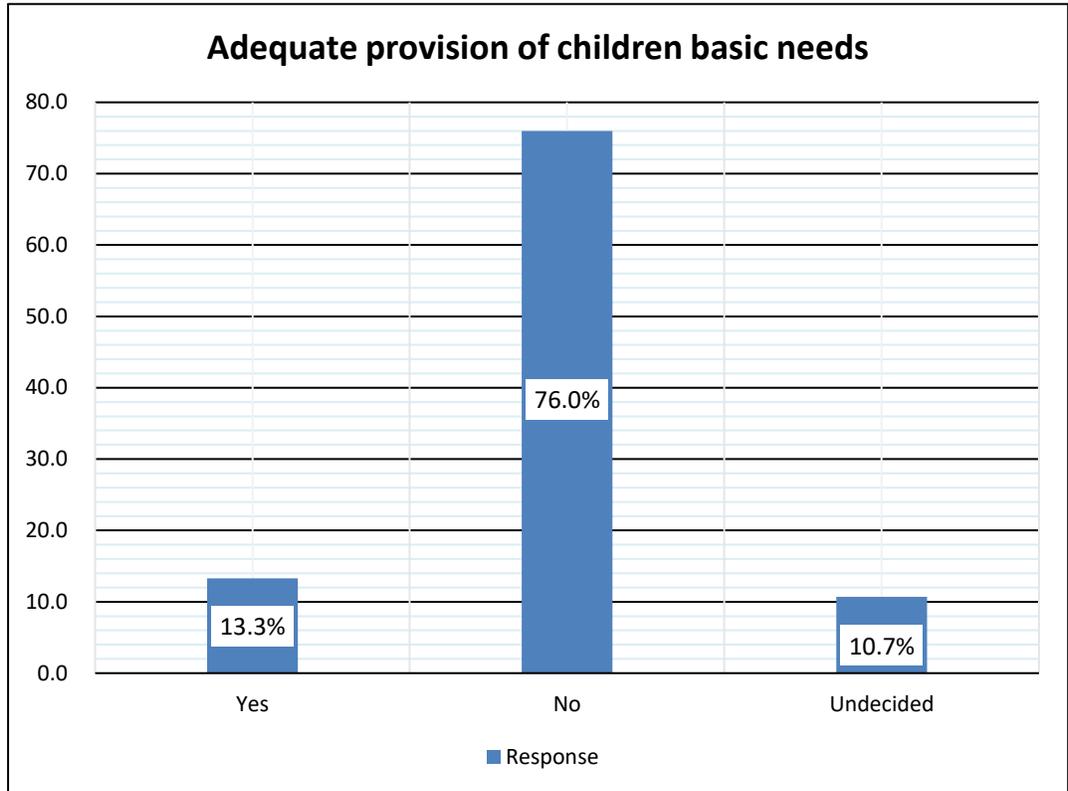


Figure 6: Adequate provision of children basic needs

Source: Field Survey (2024)

An overwhelming majority (76%) of respondents affirmed that children’s basic needs were not being adequately met by parents. This is a serious concern as a lack of essentials like food, clothing, and shelter can significantly harm a child’s physical and mental health. Meanwhile, 10.7% of respondents remained neutral on the issue.

In a focus group discussion with students, it was noted that financial constraints, a lack of understanding of modern educational needs, and large family sizes contributed to the perceived neglect of basic needs and education. Many students expressed the belief that without external intervention to educate their parents on



child care and protection, their situation would not improve, and they would likely experience the same neglect as their older siblings. One participant shared:

"For me, I can say my parents try their best to meet my needs, but sometimes it's not enough, especially when it comes to school materials. I think it's because they have many other responsibilities and financial challenges. When my sister was in Form Two, my parents asked her to stop school and learn sewing so she could make money to help pay our school fees. At that time, my brother and I were in a private school." (FGDS1)

The results align closely with previous research on the impact of financial and educational constraints on childcare and protection, especially in settings with limited resources. For instance, UNICEF (2018) which highlights financial constraints as a major obstacle to meeting children's basic needs and educational needs, especially in low-income areas. In Sagnarigu, students' neglect were attributed to their families' struggle to prioritize their needs due to limited resources. Similarly, Kabeer (2015) notes that in contexts with widespread poverty, large family sizes often exacerbate resource scarcity, leaving children from larger households disproportionately deprived of adequate care and education. This observation directly aligns with the concerns raised by students in the focus group. The study's findings are consistent with Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), who emphasize the importance of parental education and awareness in determining children's academic success. The focus group responses highlighting outdated parental perspectives on education further support



this idea, suggesting a mismatch between parental attitudes and current educational standards. This aligns with the results of Jeynes (2007), indicating that parental involvement and comprehension of contemporary educational methods have a substantial impact on children's academic achievements. However, the focus group's discussion on intergenerational neglect, where students anticipate facing the same neglect as their older siblings, provides a distinct perspective that somewhat challenges studies highlighting the possibility of resilience and transformation in families with limited resources. For example, Evans and Becker (2009) observe that despite financial and educational limitations, some parents make deliberate sacrifices to disrupt cycles of neglect, a phenomenon not extensively represented in the findings from Sagnarigu. Additionally, the students' view that external interventions are essential contradicts Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory, which suggests that family environments can adjust to external challenges without needing external assistance, as long as there are adequate community resources and cultural resilience.

Another student added:

"I agree. My parents provide the basics like food and clothing, but I often go without some educational materials. I believe it's mainly because of the lack of money and the high cost of living. I just wish they had more money so I could get what I need. But if you mention money for school, you'll lose your teeth for sure. They think giving us money will spoil us..." (FGDS2)

Another participant reflected on a lack of understanding from parents:

"In my case, it's not just about money. I feel like my parents don't fully understand what I need for school, like textbooks or support for extracurricular activities. It might be because they didn't have the same opportunities growing up." (FGDS3)

On the social dimension, one student explained how the size of their family affected the fulfillment of basic needs:

"For me, it's the size of the family. We are a big family, and I know my parents try, but with many siblings, it's hard for them to give each of us everything we need. I think that's one of the reasons." (FGDS4)

A student also shared an emotional sentiment:

"Sometimes it's not just about money, but what they think is more important than other things. Even when my parents have money, they focus on paying off debts, so my school needs become less important." (FGDS5)

These findings from the focus group discussions align with the opinion shared by a headteacher, who attributed the issue to unfavorable economic conditions. The headteacher explained that overloaded commitments prevent many parents from fulfilling their responsibilities:



"Many parents here face economic challenges that prevent them from adequately supporting their children. They struggle to provide for even basic needs, let alone educational or emotional support. Most parents prioritize basic necessities but often fall short in supporting their children's education and emotional well-being. The economic situation makes it difficult for them to cater for all needs. While some parents try their best, the majority are unable to provide comprehensive support due to financial constraints and a lack of resources." (HT8)

An assembly member echoed similar sentiments, stating that poverty is a significant factor in parents' inability to meet their children's needs:

"I can say with authority that while some parents can meet their children's needs, many struggle due to financial constraints, lack of resources, and other socio-economic challenges. Many families live in extreme poverty, making it difficult for parents to provide adequate care and support for their children." (AM4)

Research Question 3: What are the causes of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

4.4 Factors Responsible for Parental Neglect

In exploring the factors contributing to neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality, respondents consistently identified multiple forms of parental neglect, including

physical, educational, emotional, medical, and social dimensions. Poverty emerged as the dominant factor, with other contributors such as polygamy, divorce, substance abuse, and cultural norms also playing significant roles. These factors directly affect children’s academic performance, physical health, and emotional well-being, resulting in a lack of proper care and support.

The findings in Figure 8 reveal that the majority of respondents (73.3%) cited poverty as the primary cause of neglect. Unemployment (61.3%) and large family sizes (60%) were also recognized as major contributors. These elements place immense pressure on parents' limited finances, making it difficult to provide each child with the necessary care and attention.

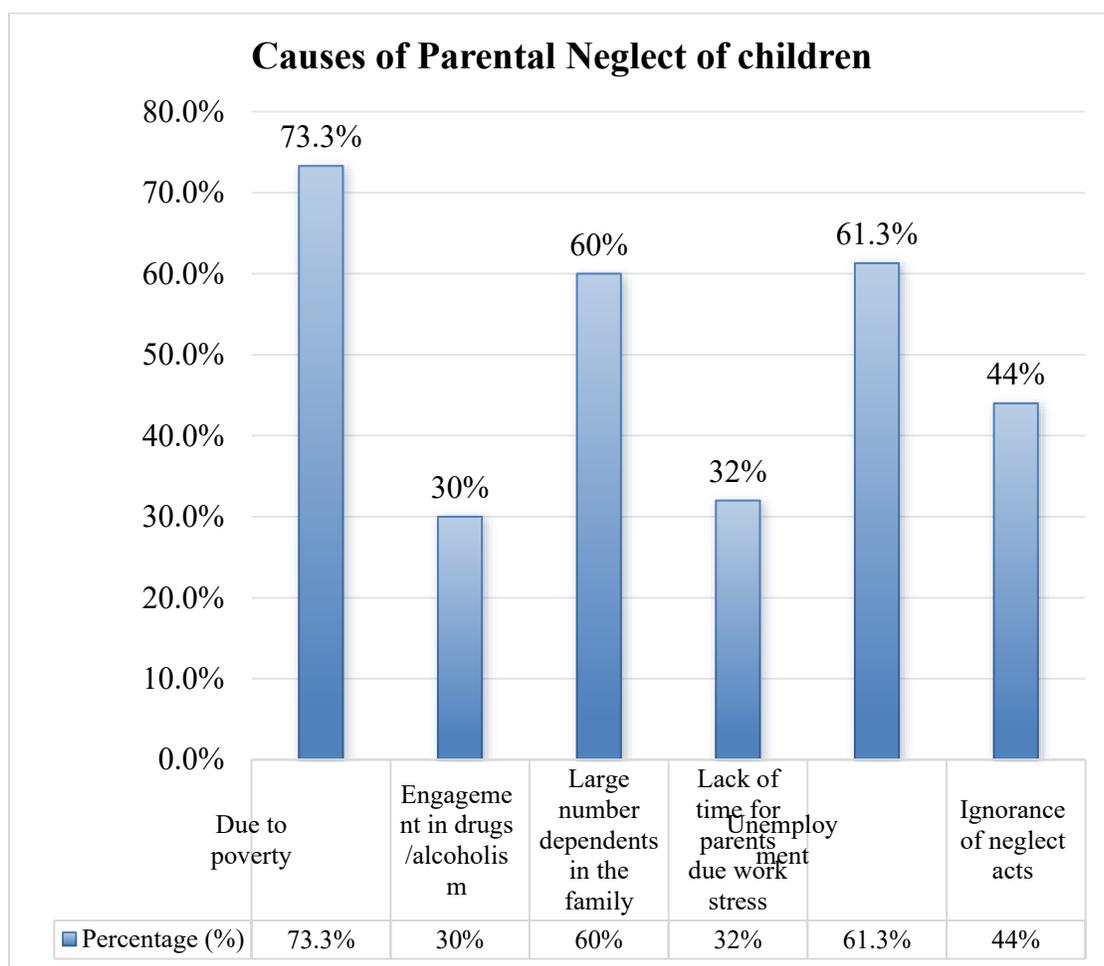


Figure 7: Causes of Parental Neglect of Children

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Ignorance of what constitutes neglect (44%) and substance misuse (30%) were further identified as exacerbating the problem. Work-related stress (32%) was highlighted as another factor that prevents parents from fully attending to their children's needs. These findings largely confirm previous studies that link work-related stress to diminished parental involvement and neglect. Research, such as Kohn and Schooler (1983), has consistently shown that work-related stress can have a negative impact on parents' ability to effectively engage with their children. Their study revealed that high levels of stress from work are associated with decreased emotional availability and quality of parenting, as stressed parents often lack the time, energy, and patience needed to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. This aligns with the findings from the Sagnarigu study, where participants linked financial pressures and long work hours to emotional neglect, as overwhelmed parents struggled to provide adequate care. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2017) discovered that parents facing job strain often experience higher levels of mental health issues, which can in turn affect their parenting practices. The research suggests that work-related stress, especially when combined with poor working conditions or job insecurity, can lead to parental burnout, resulting in a reduced ability to provide effective caregiving. This is consistent with the results from the Sagnarigu study, where work stress was identified as a contributing factor to emotional and physical neglect, particularly when parents struggled to balance work and parenting responsibilities.





However, the findings offer additional insights into the perceived causes of work-related stress. While existing literature often highlights the direct impact of job demands and financial insecurity, Schieman et al. (2009) suggest that stress was significantly influenced by the social support available to parents. They argue that social networks and community resources help mitigate the negative effects of work-related stress on family life. Additionally, while Cheng et al. (2014) confirm the link between work stress and neglect, they propose that parental coping strategies, such as effective time management or seeking assistance from extended family, can help alleviate the adverse effects of work stress. This contrasts somewhat with the perspective of the focus group in Sagnarigu, who believed that external interventions were essential for improvement. While some studies advocate for parental resilience and coping mechanisms, the students in Sagnarigu expressed the need for external support to address their challenges.

Interviews with key informants corroborated these findings, with poverty being acknowledged as a significant and unrelenting factor in parental neglect. A social welfare officer emphasized that financial difficulties hinder many families from meeting their children's basic needs:

"One major factor is poverty. Many families struggle to make ends meet, and parents may be unable to provide for their children's basic needs due to financial problems." (SWO1)

School authorities echoed similar concerns, citing economic challenges, divorce, polygamous marriages, and early marriages as factors contributing to neglect:

"Factors include economic challenges, divorce, polygamous marriages, and early marriages. These situations often lead to parents being unable to provide adequate care and support for their children." (HT1)

Another headteacher elaborated on the complexity of the issue, pointing out the impact of polygamy, large family sizes, and divorce:

"If you study the trend, you'll see that many factors contribute to parental neglect in this municipality. Polygamy and large family sizes mean parents are tempted to neglect some of their children. Divorce is also common, and when parents separate, it's the child who suffers. Poverty is a big issue, as parents without work or income find it challenging to care for their children. Some parents also disown their responsibility when they perceive their children to be deviant." (HT2)

In addition to economic hardships, a lack of parental knowledge about child development was identified as a contributing factor. One headteacher pointed out:

"Parental lack of knowledge and understanding about the child's developmental needs is a significant factor. Sometimes parents are too strict without knowing where to draw the line, which can be just as harmful as neglect." (HT7)

Other respondents highlighted substance abuse, illiteracy, and unemployment as significant factors. A headteacher explained:



"In this community, poverty is a big issue, and parents struggle to provide basic needs. Substance abuse, especially drug use, also plays a role, as some parents are not present or engaged. Illiteracy among parents exacerbates these challenges." (HT4)

Community leaders and school authorities alike acknowledged the profound impact of unemployment. One headteacher commented:

"Parental neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality happens for many reasons. Economic problems like poverty and high unemployment force parents to focus on surviving, which leaves little room for them to properly care for their children. Cultural beliefs, big families, substance abuse, and domestic violence further compound the problem." (HT5)

Assembly members also cited certain occupations, such as night watchmen, and broken homes as contributing factors to neglect. One assembly member noted:

"Some parents, due to their work, such as being night watchmen, cannot care for their children. Additionally, broken homes contribute to neglect, as parents are not together, leading to challenges in child care." (AM1)

The assembly members also emphasized that poverty, substance abuse, mental health issues, and lack of awareness and education about proper parenting practices contribute to neglect:



"Poverty is a major factor. Families struggle to make ends meet, and this affects their ability to care for their children. Substance abuse and mental health issues are also common, alongside a lack of awareness and education about parenting. Cultural and societal norms perpetuate these behaviors." (AM2)

In conclusion, the combined effects of poverty, unemployment, large family sizes, substance abuse, cultural beliefs, and a lack of parental education and awareness were identified as the key drivers of neglect in the Sagnerigu Municipality. Addressing these issues will require a multifaceted approach, including economic support, parental education, and stronger social services.

4.5 Level of Adequacy in Providing Parental Care

In assessing perceptions of adequate parental care within the community, the data strongly indicate a significant deficit. A dominant 88% of respondents rated parental care as inadequate to highly inadequate as highlighted in Figure 9. This perception highlights critical areas for intervention, including the need for increased community support, enhanced public education about parental responsibilities, and more accessible social support services for parents facing challenges in fulfilling their duties. The feedback underscores the urgent need to address these inadequacies to improve the overall well-being and development of children in the community.



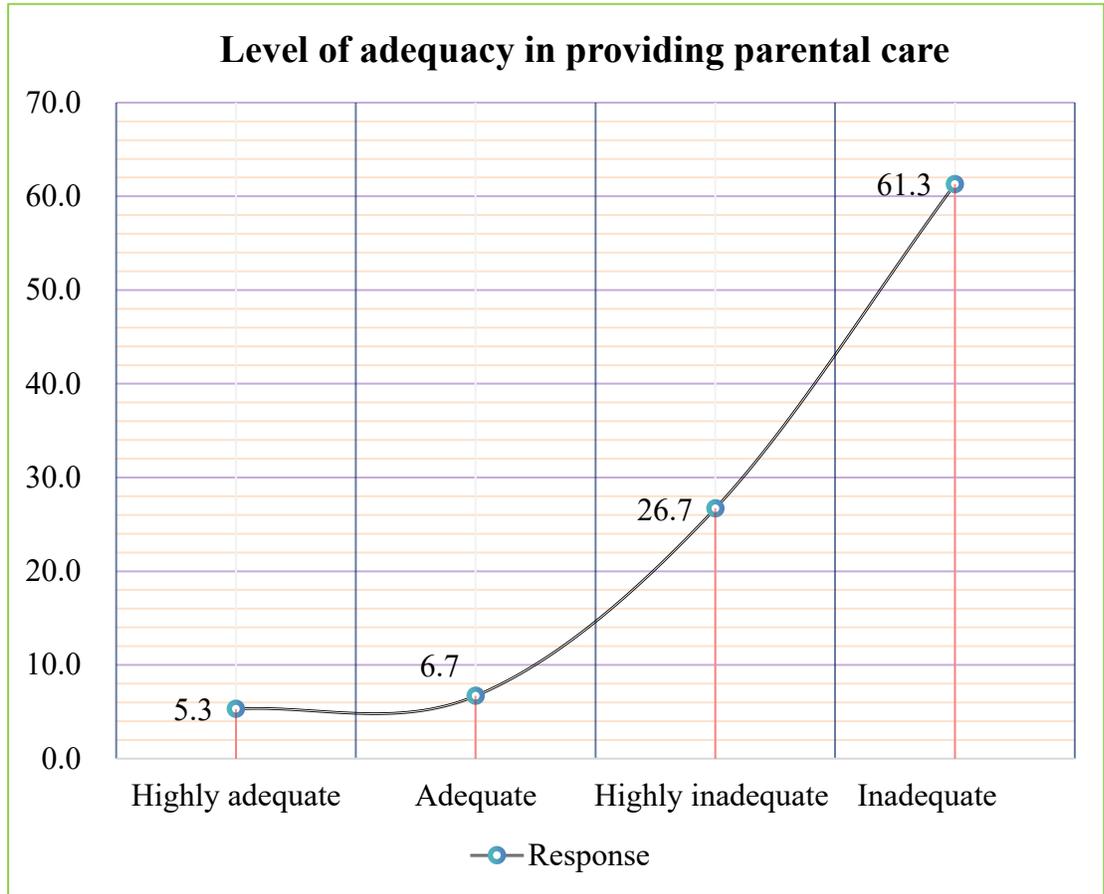


Figure 8: Level of Adequacy in Providing Parental Care

As illustrated in Figure 9, only 5.3% of respondents perceived the parental care provided in the municipality as very good, suggesting that a minimal number of individuals believe parents are meeting all of their children's needs to an exceptional degree. A slightly larger percentage, 6.7%, viewed the level of parental care as sufficient. This leaves the majority of respondents, 26.7% and 61.3%, expressing concern, rating the care provided as highly inadequate and inadequate, respectively. These figures reflect a grave concern among community members regarding the lack of critical care and support for children, indicating that most people feel parents are not providing adequate care for their children. This alarming response points to a serious issue within the municipality, where many children are

perceived to be receiving less care than necessary for their healthy growth and development.

Interviews with key informants corroborated these quantitative findings, with many expressing a consensus on the inadequacy of parental care in the Sagnarigu Municipality. A social welfare officer estimated that:

“In terms of percentage, I would say only 30% of children's needs are catered for.”

One headteacher elaborated further:

“Many parents here face economic challenges that prevent them from adequately supporting their children. They struggle to provide for even basic needs, let alone educational or emotional support. Most parents prioritize essential necessities but often fall short in supporting their children's education and emotional well-being. The economic situation makes it difficult for them to meet all needs. While some parents try their best, the majority are unable to provide comprehensive support due to financial constraints and lack of resources.”(HT7)

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between parental neglect and academic performance of JHS students in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

4.6 The Impact of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance



Research question three investigates the impact of insufficient parental involvement and support on the educational outcomes of junior high school students in the Sagnerigu Municipality. This study aims to identify how parental neglect may influence various aspects of students' academic performance, including their grades, engagement, and overall school experience. To explore this relationship, both correlation and regression analyses were conducted.

4.6.1 Perception of Respondents on Neglect and Academic Performance

When asked whether child neglect affects academic performance, an overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) agreed that neglect has a detrimental impact on children's academic achievement, as illustrated in Figure 10. Only 4% of respondents believed that neglect does not affect academic performance. This strong consensus underscores the clear connection between parental involvement and academic success in children. Children who experience any form of neglect are more likely to struggle with absenteeism and perform poorly academically. Consequently, these findings highlight the necessity of addressing parental neglect to improve educational standards within the community.



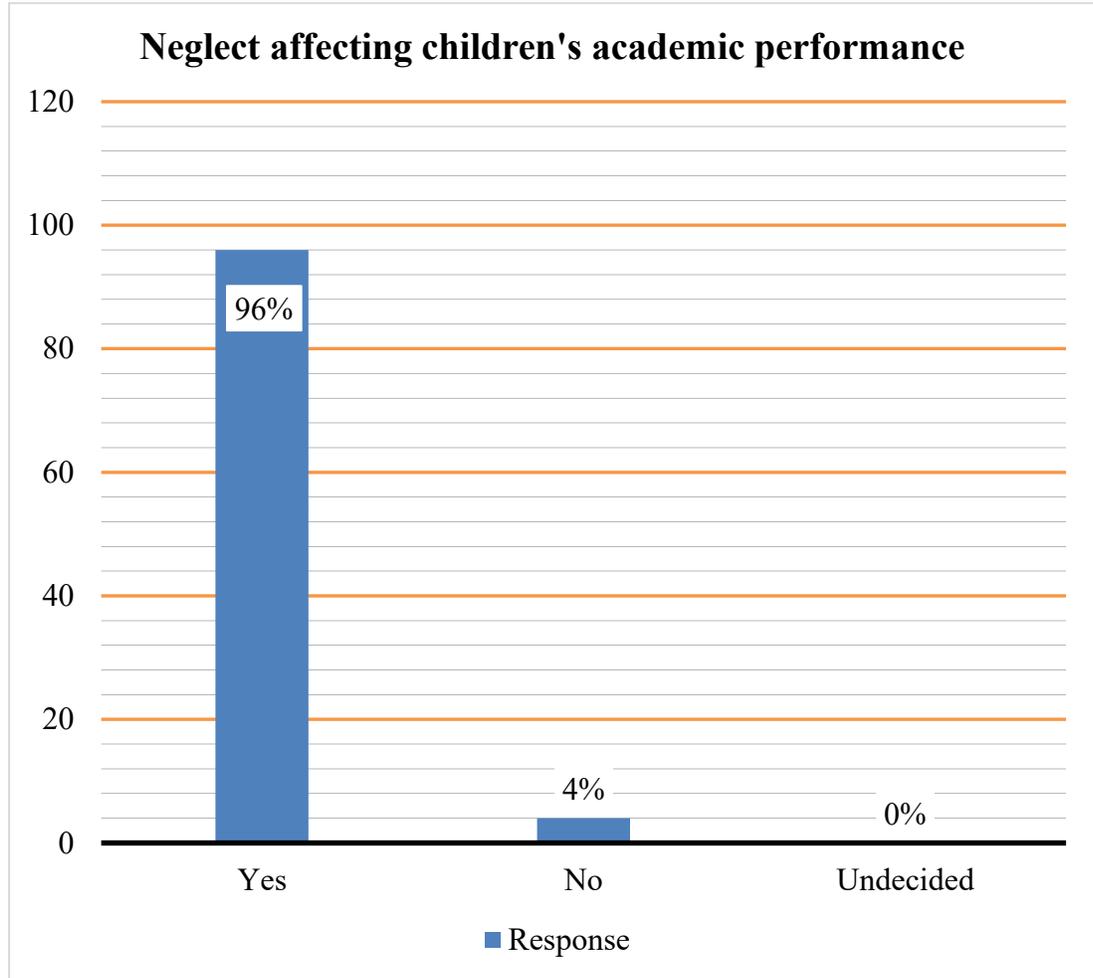


Figure 9: Neglect Affecting Children’s Academic Performance

Source: Field survey (2024)

Affirmatively, interviews with key informants indicate that parental neglect has a varied impact on students' academic performance. While some students may not show immediate academic decline, others suffer significantly, with some even resorting to drug abuse due to the lack of emotional support at home. This situation underscores the complex interplay between emotional neglect and behavioral issues, including academic underperformance. This finding concurs with a study conducted by Maughan and Rutter (2001), which confirmed the negative relationship between parental emotional neglect and children's academic

performance. Their research indicated that children who experience emotional neglect often exhibit lower academic performance, increased behavioral problems, and reduced self-esteem. This was consistent with the findings in Sagnarigu, where the absence of emotional support was identified as a significant factor contributing to academic struggles and behavioral issues, including drug abuse.

In contrast, Elder and Conger (2000) explored the notion that while parental neglect, particularly emotional neglect, negatively impact academic performance, not all children are affected in the same way. They argued that some children, especially those with strong social support networks or personal coping strategies, may be able to mitigate the effects of neglect on academic performance and behavior. This finding contradicts the results from Sagnarigu, where emotional neglect was associated with a consistent pattern of academic underperformance and behavioral issues, with some students turning to drug abuse. Elder and Conger found that some students in neglectful environments were able to succeed academically, suggesting that the impact of emotional neglect can vary significantly depending on the context and individual circumstances. This differs from the more uniform impact observed in the Sagnarigu focus groups, where neglect seemed to directly lead to negative outcomes without considering potential resilience factors.

Therefore, while the Sagnarigu findings align with existing literature on emotional neglect and its effects on academic performance and behavior, they also suggest a more widespread and consistent impact of neglect in this specific setting, where emotional and behavioral challenges overshadow the potential for academic success. These differences are attributed to variations in the socio-economic structure, available support systems, or cultural beliefs about neglect within the



community, which were not as prominently highlighted in the studies by Maughan and Rutter (2001) or Elder and Conger (2000). The absence of resilience factors or coping mechanisms, as observed in the Sagnarigu Municipality, indicate the necessity for targeted interventions addressing both emotional support and academic development in such high-risk environments.

One headteacher remarked,

"Yes, parental neglect significantly affects children's academic performance. Many students from neglected homes lack the necessary support for their education. They often come to school without basic materials such as books and uniforms, which affects their ability to concentrate and participate in class. Additionally, without parental involvement, students are less likely to complete assignments or prepare adequately for exams."

Another headteacher added,

"In my experience, children who experience neglect at home tend to perform poorly in school. They frequently exhibit absenteeism, low motivation, and poor academic engagement. Without guidance and encouragement from parents, it is difficult for them to stay focused on their studies, and this reflects in their academic performance."

The Assembly Member and the Social Welfare Officer also expressed similar views during their interviews. The Assembly Member stated,



"Absolutely, parental neglect is one of the leading causes of poor academic performance in our community. When parents are uninvolved or neglect their children, the kids miss out on moral and emotional support. This neglect leaves them vulnerable to external distractions, such as peer pressure and social vices, which further detracts them from their academic efforts."

The Social Welfare Officer emphasized,

"Children whose parents neglect them are more likely to perform poorly in school. Many of these children face emotional and psychological challenges, which interfere with their ability to concentrate and learn. Often, these children also lack the resources they need for effective learning, such as school supplies, proper nutrition, and a conducive environment for studying at home."

These responses highlight a common consensus among the participants that parental neglect has a direct and negative impact on children's academic performance. They stress the importance of parental involvement in ensuring children's educational success.

4.6.2 Academic Performance of Students by Level of Neglect

To clearly understand the influence of parental neglect on students' academic performance, parental neglect was categorized into three levels: minimal (strong parental support), moderate (partial neglect), and severe (high neglect) using indicators which was rated by either 'Yes, No, or Always' and Frequently,



Sometimes, or Never. The analysis of academic scores of students within these categories reveals a clear negative correlation between the extent of neglect and student performance

Table 10: Students Academic Performance

Level Parental Neglect	Frequency	Average Academic Score (%)
Minimal (Strong Parental support)	7	70% - 100%
Moderate (Partial Neglect)	10	50% - 69%
High (Severe Neglect)	5	10% - 49%

Source: Pupils Terminal Records

The result in table 10 indicate that students who benefit from strong parental support (minimal neglect) achieved the highest academic results, with their average scores ranging from 70% to 100%. On the other hand, those subjected to moderate neglect tend to score lower, typically between 50% and 69%. The most academically disadvantaged were pupils experiencing severe neglect, whose scores generally ranged from 10% to 49%. This pattern suggests that as parental involvement decreases, student achievement declines significantly.

One notable finding was that moderate neglect is the most prevalent, with nearly half of the students (10 out of 22) falling into this category. However, the gap in academic performance is more pronounced between students experiencing



moderate and severe neglect than between those with minimal and moderate neglect. This indicates that while limited parental involvement allows students to attain some level of academic success, extreme neglect leads to a significant decline in performance.

Thus, these findings emphasize the crucial role of parental support in children education. Students with engaging parents are more likely to excel, whereas those who lack such support face considerable academic difficulties. This underscores the importance of promoting greater parental involvement to enhance student outcomes and improve overall educational performance.

4.6.3 Correlation between Parental Neglect and Academic Performance

As indicated in Table 8, the analysis shows that all forms of parental neglect physical, educational, and emotional negatively affect academic performance. Physical neglect significantly linked to lower academic performance ($r = -0.219$, $p = 0.010$), but the most significant factor is educational neglect ($r = -0.407$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the critical role of parental involvement in education. This means that as educational neglect increases, academic performance decreases. Emotional neglect also negatively affects performance ($r = -0.229$, $p = 0.007$). Moreover, the strong relationship between educational and emotional neglect ($r = 0.630$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that they often occur together, compounding their negative effects.





Table 4: Correlation between Parental Neglect and Academic Performance

		Correlations			
		Physical Neglect	Educational neglect	Emotional neglect	Academic Performance
Physical neglect	Pearson Correlation	1	-.366**	.052	-.219*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.010
	N	136	136	136	136
	<hr/>				
Educational neglect	Pearson Correlation	.366**	1	-.630**	-.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	136	136	136	136
	<hr/>				
Emotional neglect	Pearson Correlation	.052	-.630**	1	-.229**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	136	136	136	136
	<hr/>				
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.219*	-.407**	-.229**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.000	.007	
	N	136	136	136	136
	<hr/>				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Source: Field Survey (2024)

These findings suggest that efforts to boost students’ academic performance should focus on mitigating educational and emotional neglect, as addressing physical neglect alone may not be sufficient for meaningful improvements.

Table 5: Model Fit Summary and ANOVA Results

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6326.457	3	2108.819	9.098	.000b
	Residual	30595.360	132	231.783		
	Total	36921.816	135			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	Model
1	.414a	.171	.153	15.224	.778	1

a. Dependent Variable: academic performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional neglect, Physical neglect, Educational neglect

Source: *Field Survey (2024)*

As in Table 9, the overall regression model was found to be significant, $F(1,132) = 9.098$ and a $p < 0.000$. This suggests that the combined effects of physical neglect, educational neglect, and emotional neglect are statistically significant in predicting academic outcomes. The results further revealed that 17.1% of the variance in academic performance explained by the three types of parental neglects (Adj.R2=0.153). The actual regression is shown in Table 9.





Table 6: Regression Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	51.608	8.984		5.745	.000
1 Physical neglect	-.743	.881	-.078	-.844	.000
Educational neglect	-3.054	.946	-.384	3.230	.000
Emotional neglect	-.076	.896	-.009	-.084	.000

Source: *Field survey (2024)*

The analysis as shown in Table 10, revealed that various forms of parental neglects had significant negative relationship on academic performance, for physical neglect $b = -0.743$, $t = -.844$, $p < .000$. It was revealed one-unit increase in physical neglect would result in an expected decrease in academic performance by 0.743. The p-value of 0.000 suggests that the relationship is statistically significant, meaning physical neglect had an influence academic performance.

For educational neglect $b = -3.054$, $t = -3.230$, $p < .000$ reveals that for every one-unit increase in educational neglect, academic performance decreases by 3.054 points. The p-value of 0.000 shows that there was a statistically significant relationship, making educational neglect a key factor negatively affecting academic performance.

Emotional neglect the $b = -0.076$, $t = -.084$ shows a negligible positive effect on academic performance. It further indicated that every unit increase in emotional neglect would result in a decrease in students' academic performance by $-.009$. However, the p-value of 0.000 indicates statistical significance.

4.6.3 Common Attributes of Neglected Children in School

The result in Table 11 shed light on the detrimental impacts of child neglect on the children social and academic development, being observed among neglected children.

Table 7: Commonly Observed Attributes of Neglected Children

Attributes of Neglected Children	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low class attendance	37	49.3%
Poor class performance	53	70.7%
Absenteeism	31	41.3%
Peer isolation	18	24.0%
Lack confidences	25	33.3%
Lack concentration in class	38	50.7%
Grade repetition	21	28.0%
Drop -out from school	35	46.7%
Inability to complete home work	21	28.0%

Source: *Field Survey (2024)*



It was discovered that the most commonly cited attribute was poor performance in class (70.7%), which was followed by inattentiveness in class and low attendance with 50.7% and 49.3%, respectively. Furthermore, the psychological impact of neglect was noted in social characteristics of children, such as loss of confidence (33.3%) and peer isolation (24%); eventually reflecting in absenteeism, grade repetition and drop-out, respectively, with 41.3%, 28% and 46.7% responses.

Similarly, in a Key Informant Interview (KII) with one the headteachers on the general observation of neglected children, he stated:

"Neglected children often display several observable attributes that are concerning. Low class attendance is prevalent, with many students frequently absent from school. This absenteeism directly correlates with their poor class performance. I've noticed that these students tend to struggle with concentration in class, which affects their ability to engage with the material. As a result, many of them experience grade repetition and some even drop out of school altogether. Additionally, these children often face peer isolation, leading to a lack of confidence in social interactions and diminished motivation to participate in group activities. Completing homework is also a significant challenge for them, as they may not have the necessary support at home to help them with their studies." (KII-HT1)

Also, in that regard the Assembly Member explains:

"The attributes of neglected children are quite evident in our community. I often observe low class attendance and high rates of absenteeism, which hinder their academic progress. These children generally lack confidence,



making it difficult for them to engage with their peers, leading to social isolation. Poor concentration in class is another critical issue, contributing to their inability to perform well academically. Unfortunately, many of them end up repeating grades or dropping out altogether. The inability to complete homework is a frequent complaint from teachers, indicating a lack of support and resources at home."(KII-AM)

As well as official of the social welfare department observed:

"From my perspective, neglected children exhibit a range of observable attributes that significantly impact their educational journey. Low class attendance and absenteeism are common, and these issues result in poor academic performance. I've seen children who struggle with concentration in class, which affects their learning. They often lack confidence and feel isolated from their peers, making it hard for them to form friendships. This isolation can lead to grade repetition or even dropping out of school. Additionally, many of these children find it challenging to complete their homework due to the lack of parental guidance and support."(KII-SWO)

Research Question 5: What are the support services for learners experiencing parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

4.7 Strategies to Reduce Parental Neglect of Children

The researcher, in addressing question four of this study, sought to uncover the local and national strategies that could be implemented to mitigate parental neglect of children in the Sagnarigu Municipality. Emphasis was placed on participants' awareness of existing local and national initiatives aimed at addressing child



neglect, their level of utilization of these strategies, and the perceived effectiveness of such interventions in reducing instances of neglect within the municipality. The analysis thus explores these dimensions to identify actionable solutions for curbing child neglect.

4.7.1 Awareness and Initiatives to Address Child Neglect

Ascertaining respondent's awareness of any available local or national initiative in place to help address neglect issues, figure 11 show that 54.7% of the respondents were not aware of any local or national campaigns aimed at stopping or reducing child neglect.

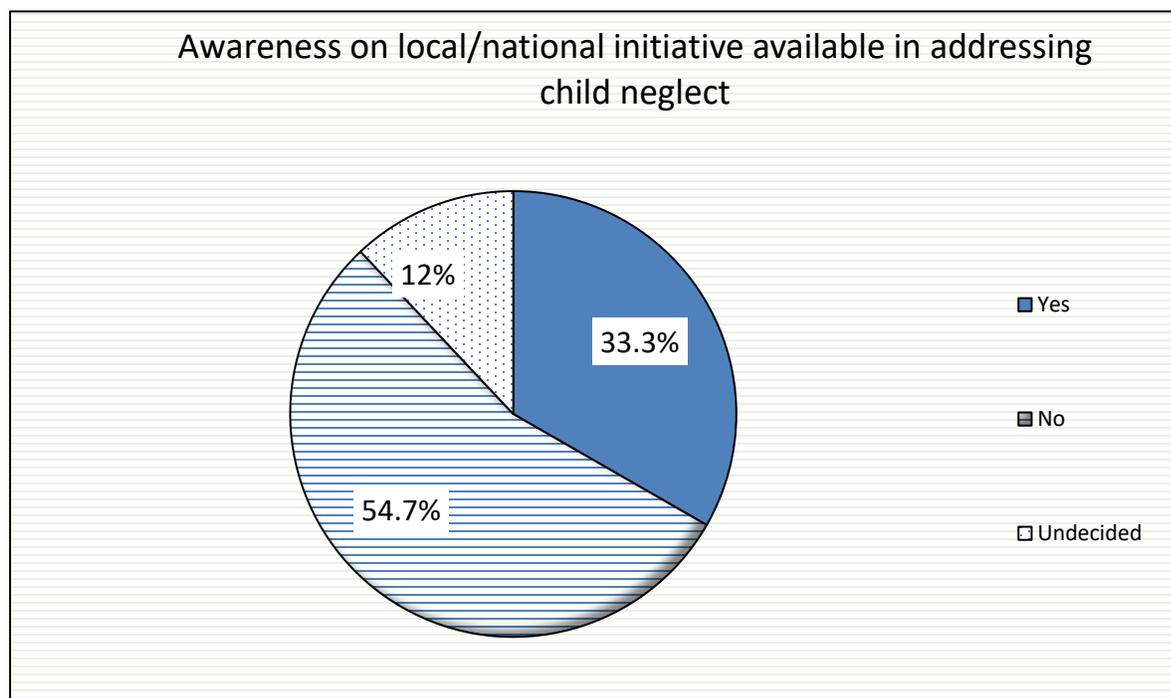


Figure 11: Awareness on Local/National Initiative Available in Addressing Child Neglect



Source: *Field Survey (2024)*

While 12% of respondents remained neutral, only 33.3% indicated they were aware of such programs. This suggests that although national programs exist to effectively address child neglect, they are not widely known or accessible.

The findings are in line with broader literature, indicating that national programs aimed at preventing child neglect are often not well-known or easily accessible. A study by Duncan et al. (2012) examined the effectiveness of national programs designed to reduce child neglect in low-income areas and found that although these programs existed, they often did not reach the most vulnerable populations due to limited accessibility and low awareness. This aligns with the findings in Sagnarigu, where participants noted that the lack of knowledge about child care and protection programs was a significant barrier preventing parents from addressing neglect.

Another study by Lynch et al. (2015) investigated child neglect prevention programs in various countries and found that in many instances, the effectiveness of these programs was hindered by cultural barriers and a lack of community involvement. Similar to the situation in Sagnarigu, Lynch et al. (2015) discovered that parents often did not engage in child protection programs because they were either unaware of them or felt that the programs did not cater to their specific cultural or socioeconomic circumstances. This finding echoes the concerns of Sagnarigu participants that external interventions to educate parents about child care and protection are necessary but are often lacking or not tailored to local realities.



However, interviews with school authorities, community leaders, and social welfare officers revealed that various programs have been initiated both nationally and at the community level, including interventions from NGOs that address parental neglect and child abuse. These interviewees expressed concern that while such initiatives exist, they are insufficient and not widely publicized within local communities. A Municipal office officer stated:

"Locally, no, but nationally yes. I am aware of a program called GACA, which stands for Ghanaian Against Child Abuse. It was introduced about 4 to 5 years ago to address child abuse. Since parental neglect is closely related to child abuse, GACA is one of the initiatives the government has put in place to combat this issue."

Headteachers, who are more directly involved in dealing with child neglect, also provided insights:

"Yes, there are several initiatives and programs aimed at addressing parental neglect in Ghana. The Ghana Education Service (GES) organizes seminars to educate both parents and teachers on their roles in children's lives. These seminars raise awareness and provide strategies to prevent neglect. Additionally, PTA meetings and symposiums foster better communication between parents and schools. National programs, such as those run by the Department of Social Welfare, focus on child protection and family support. NGOs like Child Rights International provide various forms of assistance to neglected children and their families. In schools, guidance and counseling officers support students affected by neglect."

(HT8)

Another headteacher added:



"Yes, there are national policies and programs like the Social Welfare Unit, DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit), and counseling services in schools. These programs are designed to reduce parental neglect and support children in the municipality." (HT)

Several other headteachers echoed these sentiments, mentioning initiatives such as providing free uniforms to needy children, dipping into the capitation grant for learning materials, and philanthropists offering financial or material support. Assembly members also shared their knowledge of local efforts:

"Currently, the Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly is involved in addressing these issues. In the past, an NGO called PPAG actively worked to support neglected children. However, they stopped due to financial constraints. The Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly is still working hard, but I wonder if they have enough resources to cover the entire municipality." (AM3)

Another assembly member added:

"Yes, there are several initiatives and programs aimed at addressing parental neglect in Ghana. Programs implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection focus on child welfare and protection. Locally, NGOs and community-based organizations provide support to vulnerable children and their families through educational assistance, provision of basic necessities, and counseling services." (AM1)

This implies that while both local and national programs exist to address child neglect, the level of awareness and access to these services remains low, and existing interventions are seen as insufficient by community stakeholders of the Sagnarigu Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana.





4.7.2 Utilization of Remedial Support/Counseling Services to Deal with Cases of Neglect

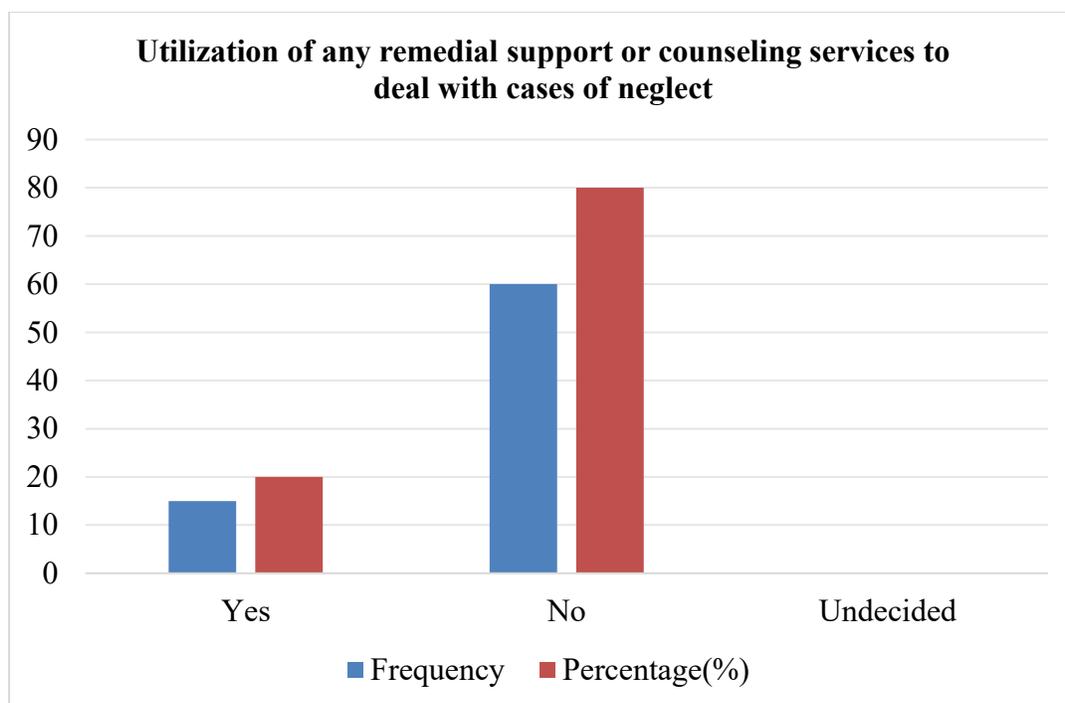


Figure 12: Utilization of Any Remedial Support or Counseling Services to Deal with Cases of Neglect

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The results in 12, reveals a large disparity in the use of counseling or remedial support services for cases of child neglect. Among the entire respondents, only 20%

have indicated ever using these services, while 80% had never used them. This suggests that people are either unaware of these programs or are unable to access them, or feel stigmatized for seeking help. The fact that none of the respondents were uncertain indicates that despite the occurrence of neglect incidents, most individuals are not making use of assistance available, which is clearly a cause for concern.

The findings are supported by previous empirical studies, collectively indicating that stigma, lack of awareness, and access barriers contribute to the underutilization of child neglect programs. Smith et al. (2014) conducted a study on the challenges of utilizing child protection services in low-income areas and found that a considerable number of families, despite experiencing neglect, refrained from seeking assistance due to perceived stigma and fear of judgment. They noted that this fear of social stigma, coupled with a lack of trust in the system and limited awareness of available resources, hindered many individuals from utilizing child protection programs. This is consistent with the results where respondents acknowledged neglect occurrences but did not seek help indicating that stigma and lack of awareness are significant barriers.

Similarly, Kaufman and Neumark (2016) explored the utilization of community support services in cases of child neglect and discovered that many families either lacked knowledge about existing programs or faced difficulties accessing them due to logistical challenges such as distance, transportation issues, and socio-economic constraints. This was particularly evident in rural areas where services were either underfunded or poorly promoted. The findings of the study mirror the situation in Sagnarigu, where participants mentioned neglect incidents but did not seek



assistance, suggesting a similar lack of knowledge or accessibility to available services. These findings are also in line with Jones and Williams (2018), who discussed the repercussions of underutilized child welfare services in rural and economically disadvantaged communities. They found that in many instances, individuals experienced a sense of learned helplessness, where they either did not know where to seek help or believed that seeking assistance would not lead to any meaningful change. This corresponds with the data from Sagnarigu, where participants expressed the view that unless external intervention specifically focused on educating parents about child care and protection was implemented, the situation would persist.

4.7.3 Effectiveness of Services Ever Utilized in Addressing Neglected Cases

The effectiveness of intervention services ever utilized participants was solicited across respondents using both quantitative and qualitative means, using a scale that ranged from "very effective" to "very ineffective." The key informants, including headteachers, assemblymen, and social welfare officers.

Figure 13 shows a discouraging findings regarding the effectiveness of intervention services that were ever used by respondents. Only 6.7% of the participants viewed the services as "effective," and none of them considered them to be "very effective." The majority, 53.3%, said the services were "satisfactory," meaning that although they are offered, the needs of neglected children are not entirely met. The services were deemed "ineffective" by 26.7% of respondents, with 13.3% rating them as "very ineffective." These results suggest that substantial improvements are needed in both the quality and delivery of support services to better address child neglect cases in the municipality.

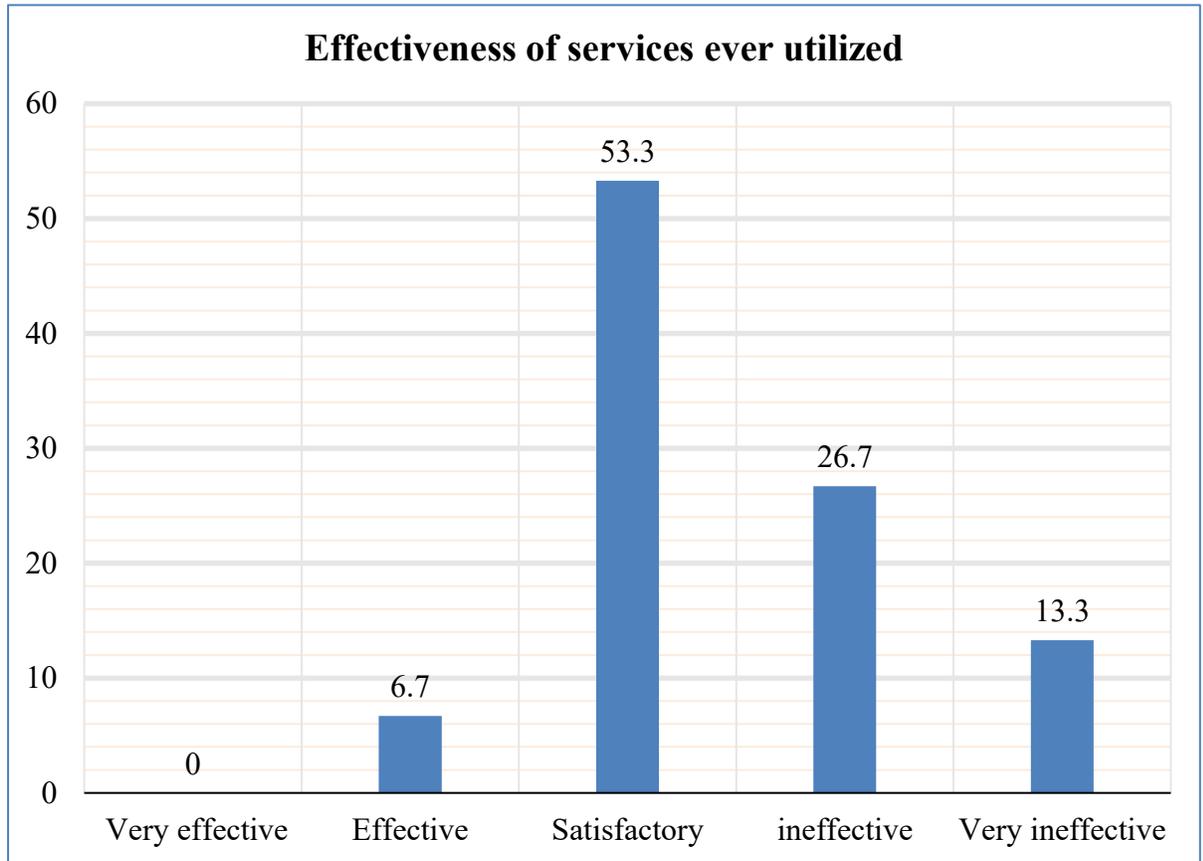


Figure 13 : Effectiveness of Services Ever Utilized

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The key stakeholders also provided significant insights based on their roles in the community and their experiences with child neglect cases and intervention services. Headteachers, being closely connected to children and their families, often encounter cases of neglect first-hand and are involved in referring students to relevant services. In an interview with the heads, their feedback indicated that while some services have made a difference, the overall impact of these interventions was far from ideal. A common sentiment among the headteachers was that the services were "satisfactory" but not fully effective. One headteacher stated:



"While the programs offer some relief, they are far from solving the root causes of neglect. The seminars and guidance from the Ghana Education Service (GES) do raise awareness, but they do not adequately address the financial and emotional challenges families face. In my view, the services are satisfactory but could be more effective with better funding and broader community engagement."

Another headteacher emphasized the limitations of the services:

"Most of the services provided by NGOs and government agencies are well-intended, but they fall short due to resource constraints. There is no follow-up to see if the interventions have a lasting impact. I would say they are effective in the short term, but long-term sustainability is an issue."

A few headteachers expressed disappointment with the programs, labeling them "ineffective" or "very ineffective." According to one:

"The counseling services offered are helpful to some extent, but in most cases, the students return to the same problematic environment at home. Without sustained financial or psychological support for the families, the neglect issues persist."

Assemblymen, who have direct ties to the communities and are often involved in local-level governance, provided a broader perspective on the reach and impact of intervention programs. Feedback from the interaction with them had mixed reactions, but leaned towards the "satisfactory" and "ineffective" ratings. One assemblyman noted:

"The programs run by NGOs and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection do help, but they are not enough to cover all the children in need. Many families in my community still struggle with poverty, and while interventions may



temporarily alleviate some issues, they don't offer long-term solutions. I would rate the services as satisfactory."

Another assemblyman was more critical, suggesting that some services had little effect on the ground:

"The initiatives that are in place are not well-funded, and that limits their effectiveness. While they provide temporary relief, the root causes of neglect, like poverty and lack of education, are not being addressed. I've seen many neglected children fall through the cracks because there simply aren't enough resources to go around. I would say the services are largely ineffective."

A more optimistic view came from one assemblyman who noted:

"Some of the NGOs have been very effective in providing immediate support, especially by offering school supplies and counseling services. However, the government programs lag behind in terms of timely and adequate assistance. If these programs could be scaled up, their effectiveness would improve."

The social welfare officers, who are tasked with implementing many of these intervention programs, shared a more critical view of the services' effectiveness. Despite their best efforts, they acknowledged the significant challenges that hinder the success of the interventions. One social welfare official who was engaged in the interview stated:

"In theory, the services we provide should be effective. We offer counseling, financial aid, and other support. But in practice, the impact is minimal because the resources we receive are not sufficient to cover all the families



in need. Additionally, there is a lack of follow-up. I would rate the services as ineffective."

She also highlighted that disconnect between available services and their actual utilization:

"One major issue is that many people don't even know these services exist, or they don't trust them enough to use them. The lack of awareness and the stigma associated with asking for help contribute to the ineffectiveness of the programs. While we try to reach out through community engagement, it's just not enough."

The responses across among all the key informants regarding the effectiveness of intervention services revealed a general sense of dissatisfaction. While the services provide some level of support, they are not widely known or accessible, and their long-term impact is questionable. Synonymous with the quantitative results in figure 13, the majority of the participants rated the services as "satisfactory" or "ineffective," indicating a clear need for improvement in the quality, funding, and implementation of these interventions.

4.8 Remedial Support and Counseling Services/Interventions to Assist Victims of Neglect

The research question five of this study sought to identify the most effective remedial support services that can assist junior high school students in the Sagnerigu Municipality who are suffering from parental neglect. The aim was to explore services that could address learning gaps, improve academic performance, and provide comprehensive support to help these students overcome challenges



associated with neglect. This analysis seeks to highlight the interventions that can significantly improve the educational outcomes of affected students.

The findings presented in Table 14 shows that all respondents (100%) recommended public education and awareness campaigns. These respondents emphasized the necessity of extensive awareness efforts to address child neglect and inform communities about how to combat it.

Table 12: Suggested Remedial Support and Counselling Services by Participants

Suggested Remedial Support Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public education and awareness creation	136	100.0
Mutual community support for poor families	102	75.0
Providing access to mental health service	11	8.1
Maintaining a supportive school environment	102	75.0
Reporting cares to DOVVSU/social welfare unit	82	60.3
Regular counselling service for children and families	107	78.7

Source: *Field survey (2024)*

A friendly school environment and mutual community support for low-income families were also recommended by 75% of respondents. These suggestions indicate a strong belief in community-based interventions to address the underlying causes of neglect. Additionally, 78.7% of respondents highlighted the importance





of providing regular counseling services for both children and families, underscoring the need for mental and emotional support. Interestingly, 60.3% of respondents also emphasized the importance of reporting cases of neglect to social welfare agencies or the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DoVVSU). However, only 8% specifically suggested expanding access to mental health services, possibly due to a lack of awareness about mental health's importance or distrust of mental health institutions.

These findings align with literature, for instance in a study by González et al. (2017) in a low-income community in Latin America, it was found that community-based interventions were effective in addressing neglect. The study highlighted the importance of strong community networks and educational systems, as advocated by parents and community leaders. This aligns with the feedback from 75% of respondents in the Sagnarigu Municipality, who suggested that a friendly school environment and mutual community support could help address neglect. The study emphasized the role of community engagement in reducing neglect, especially in areas with limited institutional support.

Similarly, McFarlane et al. (2015) found that community-based approaches alone may not effectively address neglect. This contrasts with 78.7% of Sagnarigu respondents emphasizing the importance of regular counselling for children and families. The contradiction may stem from a need for mental and emotional support, coupled with skepticism about service effectiveness due to cultural perceptions or lack of familiarity with mental health services, as seen in the low 8% suggesting expanded access to mental health services.

In interviews with key informants (KIs), a range of interventions were proposed to tackle parental neglect, focusing on both legal enforcement and community engagement. Many participants emphasized the need for stricter law enforcement. A Social Service Officer advocated for both national and local laws, including community by-laws, to hold parents accountable. She remarked:

"The first strategy is enforcing our laws. If the laws of the country are truly effective, I can sanction those engaging in parental neglect. During my sensitization drives, I also educate parents that neglect is against the law, and community members should sanction those found neglecting their children. Additionally, communities can enact their own by-laws, and people are more likely to respect these since they come from within. Chiefs can also initiate traditional laws to reduce neglect. For example, in some Upper East Region communities, chiefs have banned certain entertainment activities to curb teenage pregnancies." (SWO)

A headteacher suggested the need for guidance and counseling services at the school level, stating:

"At the school level, we need guidance and counseling interventions to support neglected students. Once identified, these students should be referred to guidance officers, who can collaborate with charitable organizations to offer assistance. Public education campaigns, especially through radio, should also inform parents of their responsibilities." (HT1)

Other key informants emphasized:

"Parents need to be made aware of the consequences of neglecting their children. This includes failing to provide basic needs and healthcare. Those



who intentionally neglect their children should be reported to law enforcement for behavioral reform." (HT3)

"Every school should have a guidance and counseling coordinator, and teachers should be trained to identify neglected students and refer them to social welfare services for further help." (HT6)

Moreover, community educational programs on parenting and child development were recommended. Strengthening collaboration between schools, local organizations, and authorities was considered vital for ensuring effective child protection. Economic support for parents, such as job training and poverty alleviation programs, was also suggested as a key intervention. One assembly member noted:

"NGOs play an important role in addressing parental neglect. Previously, NGOs provided financial assistance to parents, helping them start small businesses, which allowed them to care for their children better. I also believe the government should intervene by identifying neglected children in schools and offering targeted support." (AM4)

This was echoed by other assembly members, who reiterated the importance of economic support, public education campaigns, and stronger social welfare services. One member emphasized:

"Addressing parental neglect requires a combination of strategies. Economic support through job creation and financial aid can alleviate poverty-related neglect. Strengthening the social support system, enhancing collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and community leaders, and ensuring proper child protection measures are crucial." (AM3)



Overall, the recommendations focused on a multi-dimensional approach involving legal enforcement, economic support, public education, and enhanced social services. Early intervention programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment for parents, and creating safe spaces for children were additional strategies proposed to improve the care and protection of neglected children. One headteacher concluded:

"To address parental neglect, we need strong collaboration between schools, local organizations, and authorities. Establishing early intervention programs and accessible support systems will provide resources to at-risk families and ensure that child protection measures are effectively implemented." (HT9)

Equally, the focus group discussion with students revealed several key insights into the impact of parental neglect on their education and well-being as presented in the themes:

1. School Attendance and Reasons for Absence

A significant number of students reported that they had missed school on several occasions, primarily due to financial difficulties and family responsibilities. Some students had to stay home because their parents could not provide money for transportation or food. Others missed school to assist with family businesses or household chores, suggesting that economic challenges and parental expectations heavily influence school attendance, as one of the students affirmed:



“Yes, I have missed school a few times. Sometimes, my parents couldn't afford to give me money for transportation or food, so I had to stay at home.” (S1)

Another students added;

“I also missed school because I had to help my mother with her business. She needed my help, so I couldn't attend.”(S2)

2. Parental Support with Homework

The majority of the students mentioned that their parents did not help them with homework. While some noted that their parents were too busy, others felt that their parents were not familiar with the subjects taught at school. This lack of academic support at home often resulted in students struggling to complete their homework, further impacting their academic performance. The students in the FGD stated:

“No, my parents do not really help me with my homework. They are usually busy, and sometimes, I feel they do not know much about what we are learning in school” (FGDS10)

“My father tries to help when he has time, but it's not often. My mother doesn't help at all” (FGDS5)

3. Homework Completion and Challenges

Many students admitted that they do not always finish their homework. The primary reasons cited were the lack of understanding of the assignments and exhaustion from household chores. This indicates that the home environment may not always



be conducive to learning, and students may not have the necessary support systems in place to successfully complete their assignments. Some of the students mentioned:

“I don’t always finish my homework. Sometimes, I don’t understand the assignments, and there’s no one to help me at home.”(FGDS3)

“for me, I finish it most of the time, but there are days when I’m too tired from doing chores at home, so I can’t complete it.”(FGDS6)

4. Class Repetition and Causes

Some students revealed that they had repeated classes, with absenteeism being a major contributing factor. For instance, one student had to repeat a grade due to frequent absences, which made it difficult to keep up with lessons. This highlights the long-term academic consequences of missing school, often linked to parental neglect or economic constraints.

“Yes, I had to repeat Primary 4 because I was absent from school too much. I couldn’t keep up with the lessons.”(FGDS4)

“I haven’t repeated a class yet, but I was close to repeating once because I didn’t do well in my exams.”(FDGS1).

5. Lunch Breaks and Food Availability

A recurring theme was the lack of food during school lunch breaks. Many students shared that their parents did not always provide money for lunch, leaving them to go without food until they returned home. This suggests a broader issue of financial



hardship within the family, which directly affects the students' well-being and ability to focus during school hours.

“No, I don’t always have food during lunch. Sometimes, my parents don’t give me money, so I just drink water and wait until I get home.”(FGDS8)

“I bring food from home, but if there’s nothing at home, I go without lunch.”(FGD12)

6. Parental Attention and Care

When asked to rate the attention and care they received from their parents on a scale of 1 to 10, most students gave moderate ratings, averaging between 5 and 6. While they acknowledged that their parents cared for them, they felt that their parents were too preoccupied with work and other responsibilities to be fully involved in their lives, particularly in their education.

“I will say 5. They care, but they are always working, so they don’t really have time for me.” (FDGS3)

“Personally, I rate it 6. My parents try their best, but I feel like they are not very involved in my school life.”(FDGS5)

7. Comfort in Discussing Problems with Parents

A majority of students indicated that they did not feel comfortable discussing their problems with their parents. They were afraid that their concerns would be dismissed or perceived as complaints. This lack of open communication reflects a



gap in emotional support and understanding between parents and children, as interaction with the students in the FGD revealed:

“No, I don’t feel comfortable. I’m afraid they’ll just say I’m complaining or that I’m lazy.”(FGDS4)

“Sometimes, I can talk to my mother, but I find it hard to tell my father anything.”(FGDS4)

8. Communication between Parents and Children

The students generally described communication with their parents as limited and often centered on financial matters or household responsibilities. Personal conversations, especially those related to school, emotions, or personal development, were rare. This suggests that parents may not be fully aware of their children's challenges, both academically and emotionally.

“I can say our communication is not very good. My parents mostly talk about work and money. We don’t really have personal conversations like that- beyond giving instruction and commands.”(FGDS2)

However, one of the students, on the other hand, admitted:

“As for me the communication is okay, but we don’t talk much about my feelings or school issues.” (FGDS5)

9. Feeling Loved and Valued



While most students expressed that they felt loved by their parents, some questioned whether they were truly valued, particularly in the context of their efforts at school. A few students believed that their parents prioritized younger siblings or did not fully appreciate their struggles and achievements. The students expressed:

“I do feel loved, but sometimes I think they care more about my younger siblings than about me.” (FGDS10)

“I feel loved, but not always valued. I don’t think they see how hard I try in school.”(FGDS2)

10. Suggestions for Parental Care Improvement

When asked what their parents could do to improve, students highlighted the need for more quality time and support in their academic work. They wished their parents would be more involved in their education, provide encouragement, and reduce the amount of chores they were assigned, which often interfered with their ability to focus on school. Additionally, they expressed a desire for more financial support for basic school needs, such as lunch money and transportation as they variedly stated:

“I wish they would spend more time with us and help us with our studies. It would be nice if they could ask more about how we are doing in school.”(FGDS1)

“I’d like them to understand the difficulties we face and not just focus on us passing exams. They should encourage us more.”(FGDS4)



“I want them to pay attention to our school needs, like giving us enough money for lunch and transportation, and also listen to our problems.”(FGDS9)

“I will like my parents to reduce the chores I have to do at home, so I can focus more on schoolwork.”(FGDS6)

The responses from the focus group discussion in line with the others, indicate that parental neglect, both in terms of emotional support and academic involvement, is a major challenge for students. Financial difficulties, lack of communication, and limited parental engagement in education were common themes. These factors collectively contribute to academic struggles, absenteeism, and emotional distress among the students.

These findings underscore the importance of a holistic, community-based approach to reducing parental neglect and providing comprehensive support for affected children. Thus, addressing these issues will require a holistic approach that includes improving parental involvement, fostering better communication, and providing economic support for families in need.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings on the study of parental neglect and its impact on the academic performance of junior high school students in the Sagnerigu Municipality, highlighting the key findings and offering recommendations based on the study's outcomes. It reflects on the insights gained from the research and suggests avenues for future investigation. The findings of the study form the basis for the proposed recommendations, which aim to guide further exploration as well as address the issues identified.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- i. Assess the level of parental awareness of parental neglect of Junior High School students in the Sagnarigu Municipality.
- ii. Investigate the various dimensions (forms) of parental neglect Junior High School students suffer from their parents in Sagnerigu Municipality.
- iii. Identify the various factors that causes parental neglect of Junior High School students in Sagnerigu Municipality.
- iv. Examine the impact of parental neglect on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Sagnerigu Municipality.
- v. Suggest remedial and counseling support services to assist Junior High School students in the municipality suffering from parental neglect.



5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed several critical findings. First, the results became evident that parental neglect is a significant issue in the municipality, with 90% of respondents acknowledging its prevalence. The most common forms identified were physical, educational, and emotional neglect, which collectively hinder children's academic success. Educational neglect, which includes parents' failure to provide learning materials or monitor school attendance, was found to have the most substantial negative effect on students' academic performance. Emotional neglect also contributed significantly, leading to disengagement, absenteeism, and poor grades.

Explicitly, the study's analysis revealed that educational neglect had the strongest negative correlation with academic performance, followed by emotional and physical neglect. The regression analysis further indicated that 17.1% of the variance in academic performance could be attributed to the combined effects of these forms of neglect, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.

Furthermore, the study found that approximately 96% of respondents believed that parental neglect detrimentally affects academic achievement. Neglected students often struggle with school engagement, missing assignments, and behavioral issues, leading to lower overall academic outcomes. Teachers reported observing many neglected children arriving at school without proper materials, appearing emotionally distressed, or frequently absent, which affected their ability to perform well academically.

The root causes of parental neglect were primarily linked to socio-economic factors, with poverty being the most significant contributor, identified by 73.3% of



respondents. Other contributing factors included unemployment, large family sizes, and substance abuse, as well as family dynamics such as divorce and polygamy. These challenges make it difficult for parents to provide adequate care and support for their children, resulting in neglect.

Despite the existence of support services such as counseling and remedial programs, the study found a major gap in their effectiveness. Only 20% of respondents had accessed these services, and of those, 53.3% rated them as only "satisfactory." The lack of awareness and accessibility, combined with insufficient resources, has hindered the success of these interventions. A considerable portion of the respondents (26.7%) deemed the services ineffective, highlighting a gap in the availability and quality of support systems for affected children and their families.

5.3 Counselling Implications

1. Implement targeted counselling programmes for both students and parents to address the specific forms of child neglect (physical, educational, and emotional) and their impacts.
2. The Government of Ghana (GoG) through the Ghana Health Service and the MMDAs should provide financial counselling and resources to families to help alleviate economic stress, which can trigger neglectful behaviors.
3. The Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Service should set up counselling units in JHSs to offer academic counselling to neglected students to develop study skills and set educational goals, while also facilitating mentorship programs to reinforce the value of education.



4. The Sagnarigu Municipal Education Directorate should establish group counselling sessions for neglected children to foster peer support and resilience against negative peer pressure, such as drug abuse and exploitation.
5. The Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly should support the Social Welfare Department to conduct community workshops to educate parents about the signs of neglect and the importance of meeting their children's emotional and educational needs.
6. Advocate for integrated counselling services that include individual, group, and family counseling to address the holistic needs of neglected children and their families.
7. The Sagnarigu Municipal Education Directorate should foster partnerships with local organizations to enhance counselling resources and support networks for junior high school and families to reinforce community responsibility for child welfare.

5.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, the study highlights the serious and pervasive nature of parental neglect in the Sagnarigu Municipality, revealing its significant impact on children's academic performance and overall well-being. Despite high awareness of the problem, critical gaps remain in tackling its root causes, including poverty, unemployment, and inadequate parental support. The findings suggest that addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, particularly in public education, community-based support, and enhancing the effectiveness of existing remedial services. A coordinated effort from schools, social services, and the wider



community is essential to ensure children receive the care and resources necessary for their development. By focusing on both the immediate needs of neglected children and addressing the socio-economic factors driving neglect, the Municipality can make meaningful progress in alleviating the issue of parental neglect and foster improved academic outcomes and emotional well-being for children.

5.5 Recommendations

The study concludes with several recommendations aimed at informing the development of policy and practice based on its findings:

1. Parents must attend parenting workshops to improve understanding of effective child-rearing practices and the importance of emotional and educational support for children. They should engage actively with schools and participate in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to foster communication and collaboration regarding children's needs.
2. The Government of Ghana (GoG) through the Ghana Education Service and should train junior high school teachers on how to identify signs of parental neglect and how to effectively refer affected students to appropriate support services. In the various junior high schools in Sagnerigu municipality, teachers must implement inclusive teaching strategies that accommodate students facing neglect, ensuring they receive the necessary academic support.
3. The Government of Ghana through the MMDAs should support the social welfare officers to strengthen their outreach programs to educate families about the consequences of neglect and available resources for support. They should



collaborate with schools to provide counselling and support services directly to neglected children and their families.

4. Ghana Education Service (GES) should develop and distribute educational materials that highlight the importance of regular school attendance and the implications of neglect on academic performance and encourage the establishment of school-based support systems that integrate counselling and mentoring for at-risk students.
5. The Government of Ghana in collaboration with local and international NGOs should design other policy makers should formulate and enforce policies that hold parents accountable for neglectful behaviors, including potential legal consequences as well as allocate funding to enhance social welfare resources and educational support services aimed at addressing parental neglect in the community.
6. Community Leaders should foster partnerships between local organizations, schools, and families to build a community support network that prioritizes child welfare and initiate community awareness campaigns to inform the public about the signs of parental neglect and available resources for intervention

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions are proposed for future research:

1. Research should be conducted to analyze differences in the prevalence and impact of parental neglect between urban and rural settings in Ghana, focusing on access to resources and support systems.



2. Examine the effectiveness of various intervention programmes, such as counselling in reducing the incidence of parental neglect and improving student outcomes in Sagnarigu Municipality.
3. Explore how community dynamics, cultural norms, and socioeconomic factors influence parental neglect, including perceptions of responsibility and available support systems in different neighborhoods.
4. Investigate the relationship between domestic violence and parental neglect, focusing on how family instability affects children's educational outcomes and emotional well-being.



REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Akudugu, M. A. (2019). *Understanding Research and Research Paradigms*. Accra: Gavos Education PLC Ltd.
- Alicia, R., & Pekarsky, A. (2022), *Overview of child neglect and abuse*. Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital, State University of New York Upstate Medical University. <https://doi.org/xxxxxx>
- Amy, M. (2022, May 31). What is child neglect? *Raising Kids*. <https://www.raisingkids.com/article/what-is-child-neglect>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs. Prentice Hall.
- Better Care Network (2014), *Remedial service and interventions for abused and neglected*. <https://bettercarenetwork.org> › services-and-interventions
- Berger, L. M., Carlson, M. J., & Bzostek, S. H. (2009). The Role of Nonresident Fathers in Children's Well-Being: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(3), 558-572. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00629>.
- Blumenthal, A. (2015). *Child neglect I: Scope, consequences, and risk and protective factors*. Montreal: Centre for Research on children and Families. Available at: <http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/141E.pdf>



- Bowlby, J. (Ed.). (1973). Attachment and loss. Separation: *Anxiety and anger* (Vol. 2). London: Harmondsworth
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Cameron, G., Freymond, N., Cornfield, D., & Palmer, S. (2007). *Positive possibilities for child and family welfare: Expanding the Anglo-American child protection paradigm*. In: Cameron G, Coady N, Adams GR (eds): *Moving Toward Positive Systems of Child and Family Welfare: Current Issues and Future Directions*, 1-79. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021). *Violence Prevention*. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/>
- Child Welfare League of America. (2015). *National standards for the treatment of children and youth*. Washington
- Commission Staff Working Party (2010). *Reducing Early School Leaving. Accompanying Document to the proposal for a council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving*.
- Cunningham, P., Shain, M., & Tilly, S. (2018). *The role of counseling in addressing childhood neglect: A case for integrated support services*. *Journal of Child Psychology*, 56(3), 125-139
- Daigle, L. E., & Muftić, L. R. (2016). *Victimology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.



Daniel, B., Taylor, J., Scott, J., Derbyshire, D., & Neilson, D. (2011). *Recognizing and helping the neglected child: Evidence-based practice for assessment and intervention*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Department of Social Services (2024). *Child Protective Services*. North Carolina.

Esmina, A., & Maja, B. (2020). *Child Neglect - Causes and Consequences*. Psychiatria Danubina, Vol. 32.

Fabes, R. A., Leonard, S. A., Kupanoff, K., & Martin, C. L. (2010). *Parental Coping with Child Negative Emotions: Relations with Children Emotional and Social Responding*. *Child Development*, 27, 907-920

Hammerstrøm, K. T., Biedilæ, S., Nakkerud, E., Axelsdottir, B., & Kornør, H. (2016). *School performance in children exposed to neglect, abuse or maltreatment and in orphans: A rapid systematic review*. Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Eastern and Southern Norway (RBUP)

· Harisha, R. P., & Padmavathy, S. (2013). Knowledge and use of wild edible plants in two communities in Malai Madeshwara Hills, Southern India. *International Journal of Botany*, 9, 64–72.

Harris, J. R., & Robinson, M. (2016). The Impact of educational neglect on Child Development. *Child Development Perspectives*, 10(3), 189-193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12197>

Herrenkohl, P. H., Hashmi P., & Lowenthal, L. (2021). Effect of child abuse and neglect on academic performance in schools in Canada. *Journal of Education*, 4(8), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5031>



- Hu, Y., Chen, X., & Gao, J. (2020). Community involvement and parental education: Their roles in child welfare. *International journal of social welfare*, 29(2), 205-214.
- Jane, W. M. (2020). *Influence of parental child neglect on education wastage among grade two children in Muvuti Sub-County, Kenya* (Master's project report, Kenyatta University). Kenyatta University Institutional Repository.
- Johnson, J., Smith, L., & Davis, R. (2020). Parental involvement in education: Impacts on student performance. *Educational review journal*, 12(3), 45-67.
- Jones, T., Smith, A., & Wilson, D. (2017). Economic stability and child well-being: Exploring the impact of financial resources on neglect. *Child development perspectives*, 11(2), 125-130.
- Kahn, H., Silva, M., & Yu, R. (2020). Customizing economic interventions for vulnerable families: A community-based approach. *Child welfare journal*, 99(4), 387-403.
- Kimatu, N. (2007). *Wastage in primary school education: The case of slum schools in Kibera Division, Nairobi*. (M. Ed Thesis. Kenyatta University).
- Kombo, D., & Tromp, D. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing. An Introduction*. Pauline Publications Africa. Nairobi –Kenya
- Lamont A., & Price-Robertson, R. (2013). *Risk and protective factors for child abuse and neglect*. Resource sheet,



<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/riskandprotective-factors-child-abuse-and-neglect>.

LaPrairie, J. L., Heim, C. M., & Nemeroff, C. B. (2012). The neuroendocrine effects of early life trauma. In C. A. Bremner & E. Vermetten (Eds.), *Stress and Development: Behavioral and Biological Consequences* (pp. 157–165). Cambridge University Press.

Lawson, H. A., & Lawson, M. A. (2020), Student engagement and disengagement as a collective action problem. *Journal of education sciences*, 10(8), 108-212.

Lerner, R. M., & Lerner, J. V. (2016). *The development of a community-based approach to preventing child neglect*. New York: Wiley.

Lieberman, A. (2022). *Be gentle with yourself: Advice for parents struggling after tragedy*. Child Trauma Research Program, University of California, San Francisco.

Loman, M., & Gunnar, M. R. (2010). Early experience and the development of stress reactivity and regulation in children. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 34(6), 867-876.

Loman, S. L., & Gunnar, M. R. (2010). The Effects of Early Deprivation on Brain and Behavioral Development. *Development and Psychopathology*, 22(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579409990372>

Luthar, S. S., & Eisenberg, N. (2017). Resilience among children in contexts of multiple risks: Lessons from research. *Child Development*, 89(5), 1554-1566.



- MacIntyre, D., & Carr, A. (2023). Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stay Safe primary prevention programme for child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 1307–1325.
- Milaniak, I., & Widom, C. S. (2015). Does child abuse and neglect increase risk for perpetration of violence inside and outside the home. *Psychology of violence*, 5(3), 246-255.
- Mönks, F. J., & Mason, E. J. (1993). Developmental theories and giftedness. In K. A. Heller, F. J. Mönks, & A. H. Passow (Eds.), *International handbook of research and development of giftedness and talent* (pp. 89–101). Pergamon Press.
- Muchugia, G. G. (2018). *The effects of external audit quality on the financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya* (Master's thesis, University of
- Okpechi, P. A. (2005). *Child Abuse and Academic performance of Secondary School Students of Central Senatorial District in Cross River State – Nigeria*,
- Pacheco, J. T. B., Irigaray, T. Q., Werlang, B., Nunes, M. L. T., & Argimon, I. I. D. L. (2014). *Childhood maltreatment and psychological adjustment: A systematic review*. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, 27(4), 815–824. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-7153.201427423>
- Perlman, S., & Fantuzzo, J. (2019). Timing and influence of early experiences of child maltreatment and homelessness on children's educational well-



being. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(6), 874-883
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2010.02.007>

Prevent Child Abuse America (2021). *Child Neglect Prevention*.

Pomeroy, E. C., Ward, M., & Rogers, K. (2019). The effects of psychological support on children from neglectful homes. *Child abuse review*, 28(3), 175-188.

Rashmi, P. (2020). *Child Neglect- Causes, Effects and Prevention*. FirstCry Parenting, <https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/child-neglect-causes-effects-and-prevention/>

Smith, A. B., & Fong, R. T. (2016). Understanding the subjective experience of neglect among children: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of family psychology*, 21(2), 233-245.

Smith, J., & Fagan, J. (2018). Legal accountability in child welfare: The case for stronger enforcement. *Journal of Law and Social Policy*, 32(1), 14-29.

Smith, R., Parker, C., & Lopez, M. (2019). Linking economic empowerment to child welfare: Implications for policy and practice. *Journal of family and economic Issues*, 40(2), 218-230.

Selvam, S. G. (2017). *Empirical Research: A Study Guide*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications.

Slade, E. P., & Wissow, L. S. (2007). The influence of childhood maltreatment on adolescents' academic performance. *Economics of Education Review*, 6(2), 604–614.



- Smith, M. G., & Fong, R. (2004). *The children of neglect: when no one cares*. New York and Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Taylor, R. M., S. & Mary, B. (2019). *Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Child Maltreatment*. Crime Victims' Institute.
- Tarabulsky, G. M., Pascuzzo, K., Moss, E., St.-Laurent, D., Bernier, A., Cyr, C., & Dubois-Comtois, K. (2008). Attachment-based intervention for maltreating families. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 9(4), 187-212.
- Thrupp, M. (2001). School-level education policy under new labour and New Zealand labour. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 49(2), 189-223.
- UNESCO, (2008). *Global Education Digest 2008, Montreal Canada: United States of America*.
- UNESCO, (2004). *A Statistical study of wastage in schools*. Paris. UNESCO.
- UNICEF, (2015). *Orphans: Statement on children deprived of parental care due to COVID-19* http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45279.html
- UNICEF, (2018). *Child protection guideline for health workers*.
- UNICEF. (2019). *The state of the world's children: Children, food, and nutrition*. United Nations Children's Fund.
- Virtual lab school (2023). *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect in School-Age Programs*. <https://www.virtuallabschool.org/school-age/child-abuse-prevention/lesson-1>



- Vulliamy, A. P., & Sullivan, R. (2020). Reporting child abuse: pediatricians' experiences with the child protection system. *Journal of child abuse & neglect*, 24(11), 1461-1470.
- World Health Organization, (1999). *Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention*. Geneva. Geneva, (document WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1).
- Wissow, L. S. (1990). "Neglect." *In An Approach to Child Abuse and Neglect*. Baltimore, MD.
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: *Child neglect*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_neglect
- Myjoyonline.com, 03-Apr-2013, more children are reporting parents to DOVVSU – Police
- Ziegler, K. (2012). The parental alienation syndrome: What is it and what data support it. *Child Maltreatment*, 3(2), 100–115.



APPENDIXES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter for Data Collection

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS STUDIES

TEL: +233-024-497-0564
E-Mail: asiimon@uds.edu.gh
Website: www.uds.edu.gh/FoE



P. O. Box TL1350
Tamale
Northern Region
Ghana, West Africa

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:

DATE: 27/11/2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

The student whose details appear below is a member of the Department of Educational Foundations Studies, pursuing Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Guidance and Counselling.

She requires your kind participation through the information (data) you provide to enable her carry out a study on the research topic "Effects of parental neglect on the academic performance of junior high school students in the Sagnarigu Municipality"

I should therefore be very grateful if you could kindly offer her the needed assistance.

Name: Faustina Damnyag
Index Number: UDS/MGC/0007/22

Thank you
Yours faithfully,

Dr Simon Alhassan Iddrisu
(HoD, Educational Foundations Studies)



Appendix II: GES-SMEO Letter of Introduction

**GHANA
EDUCATION
SERVICE (GES)**



Municipal Education Office
Post Office Box 377 E/R
Sagnarigu

GPS: NS-009-775

Email: sagnarigumeo2019@gmail.com

Date: 34th July, 2024.

In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted

Ref. No. GES/NR/SMEO/MC.

Your Ref No.:

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MS. FAUSTINA DAMNYANG - UDS

Ms. Faustina Damnyang is an M. phil. Student from the University for Development studies.

She is requesting for Data/ information on parental child neglect in your school.

It would be much appreciated if you could give her the necessary support and co-operation.

Thank you.


MR. ALHASSAN ALIDU JNR.
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
SAGNARIGU

The Headteachers
To whom it may concern
Sagnarigu

Cc: Ms. Faustina Damnyang
UDS, Tamale



Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire has been designed to collect data to aid the researcher undertake a study on Effects of Parental Neglect on the Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in the Sagnerigu Municipality, in pursuit of M.Phil programme in Guidance And Counselling.

It is purely an academic exercise and as such you are assured of utmost confidentiality in the responses that you provide.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Please in this section tick (✓) the appropriate response

1. Formal employment: Yes [] No []
2. If 'Yes' Sector: Public [] Private [] Self Employed []
3. Sex. Male [] Female []
4. Marital status: married [] Single []
5. Age : a) 18 – 22 [] b) 23 – 27 [] c) 28 – 32 [] d) 33- 37 []
e) 38 years and above []
6. Level of Education a.) Middle School/JHS b). Secondary/SHS [] c.)
Diploma [] d.) First Degree [] e.) None []
7. Teaching experience : 0 - 10 years [] 11- 20 years [] 21 - 30 years
[] above 30 years []

SECTION B: The Prevalent Forms of Child Neglect

In the continuum of strongly agree to strongly disagreed, where Undecided = 0

Strongly agree =1 Agree =2 Disagree = 3 Strongly disagree = 4



Please indicate the level of your agreement or otherwise with each of the statement

Statement	Agreement Level				
	0	1	2	3	4
i. Physical Neglect					
It is common to find children with untreated injuries within the municipality					
A lot of children in the municipality wear any available clothing without real consideration of the weather condition					
I have often experience children coming to school on empty stomach; complain of hunger and try to steal or beg others food.					
ii. Educational Neglect					
It is common to the find students absenting themselves from school and the parent being unconcern.					
Most children in schools lack basic learning materials; pencils, books, erasers etc.					
Late attendance of students to school is common, and is not a much worry for parents within the municipality					
iii. Emotional Neglect					
I often notice students in school being in disturbed and disoriented mode					
There are a number of attention seeking students I know in my school					



In this sub-section, please tick in the box at the end of the statement to indicate your response

16. How often do you observe the following forms of parental neglect within the Sagnerigu Municipality?

Form of Neglect	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Physical Neglect				
Educational Neglect				
Emotional Neglect				

SECTION C: Factors That Causes Parental Neglect

In this section you are required to tick (√) or write briefly in the space provided to indicate your response appropriately.

17. Will you say parents within the Municipality adequately provide children with their basic needs?

YES [] **NO** []

18. If 'NO' please indicate why what the cause might be. *(You can tick more the one applicable option to this question)*

- a. Due to poverty []
- b. Engagement in drugs []
- c. Alcoholism []
- d. Large number of dependents in the family []
- e. Lack of time for parents due to work pressure []
- f. Unemployment []
- g. Ignorance of neglect acts []
- h. Others (specify)

.....





.....

19. How would you rate the adequacy level of parental care, in providing the basic needs of children within the Municipality? (*please tick only one appropriate option*)

- a. Highly adequate []
- b. Adequate []
- c. Highly inadequate []
- d. Inadequate []

SECTION D: Effects of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance

20. With your experience, would you say neglect have effects on the academic performance of children? **Yes** [] **No** []

21. If ‘Yes’ indicate by ticking against the appropriate attribute you have observed about perceived neglected child/children in your school.

- a. Low class attendance []
- b. Poor class performance []
- c. Absenteeism []
- d. Peer isolation []
- e. Lack confidences []
- f. Lack concentration in class []
- g. Grade repetition []
- h. Drop-out from school []

SECTION F: Strategies to Reduce Parental Neglect of Children

22. Are you aware of any specific local initiatives or national programs you believe are particularly effective in addressing neglect? **Yes** [] **No** []

23. If ‘Yes’, can you please name these/this program(s)?

.....
.....

24. In your opinion, what strategies or interventions would you suggest for preventing parental neglect? *(please write in the space below)*

.....
.....
.....

SECTION G: Remedial Support and Counseling Service for Neglected Children

25. Have you utilized any remedial support or counseling services to deal with case of neglect?

Yes [] No []

26. If 'Yes', what kind of service?

.....

27. If 'Yes', how would you rate the effectiveness of these services in addressing the needs of neglected children?

- a. Very effective
- b. Effective
- c. Satisfactory
- d. Ineffective
- e. Very ineffective

28. How do you believe society and the school can better support neglected children and ensure they receive the help they need to thrive?

- a. Public education and awareness creation []
- b. Mutual community support for poor families []
- c. Providing access to mental health service []
- d. Maintaining a supportive school environment []



e. Others (if any)

.....

Appendix V: Questionnaire for Parents

This questionnaire has been designed to collect data to aid the researcher undertake a study on Effects of Parental Neglect on the Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in the Sagnerigu Municipality in pursuit of M.Phil programme in Guidance And Counselling

It is purely an academic exercise and as such you are assured of utmost confidentiality in the responses that you provide.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Please in this section tick () or write the appropriate response in the space

1. Formal employment: Yes [] No []

2. If 'Yes' which organization?

.....Designation:.....

3. Occupation; if 'No' in (1)

.....

4. Sex. Male [] Female []

5. Marital status: married [] Single []

6. Age : a) 18 – 22 [] b) 23 – 27 [] c) 28 – 32 [] d) 33- 37 []

e) 38 years and above []



7. Level of Education a.) Middle School/JHS [] b.) Secondary/SHS [] c.) Diploma [] d.) First Degree [] e.) None []
8. Number of children:

SECTION B: The Prevalent Forms of Child Neglect

9. Have you heard and is aware of child neglect? Yes [] No []
10. Please indicate which of the following acts you would consider neglectful:
- a. Leaving a child unattended for a long time []
 - b. Failing to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter to a child []
 - c. Not providing medical attention for a child's illness or injuries
 - d. Exposure of the child to domestic violence or substance abuse []
 - e. Not checking to ensure the child attends school every day []

In the continuum of strongly agree to strongly disagreed, where Undecided = 0

Strongly agree =1 Agree =2 Disagree = 3 Strongly disagree = 4

Please indicate the level of your agreement or otherwise with each of the statement

Statement	Agreement Level				
	0	1	2	3	4
i. Physical Neglect					
11. It is common to find children with untreated injuries within the municipality					



12. A lot of children in the municipality wear any available clothing without real consideration of the weather condition					
13. I see the need to provide chop money for my child to school everyday					
14. I am aware some children go to school on empty stomach; complain of hunger and try to steal or beg others for food.					
ii. Educational Neglect					
15. It is common to find students absenting themselves from school and the parent being unconcerned.					
16. Most children in schools lack basic learning materials; pencils, books, erasers etc.					
17. Late attendance of students to school is common, and not a much worry for parents within the municipality					
iii. Emotional Neglect					
18. I often notice my child being in disturbed and disoriented mode					
19. There are a number of attention seeking children I know in my community					

In this sub-section, please tick in the box at the end of the statement to indicate your response

20. How often do you observe the following forms of parental neglect within the Sagnerigu Municipality?

Form of Neglect	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Physical Neglect				
Educational Neglect				



Emotional Neglect				
-------------------	--	--	--	--



SECTION C: Factors that Causes Parental Neglect of their Children

In this section you are required to tick (✓) or write briefly in the space provided to indicate your response appropriately.

21. Will you say parents within the municipality adequately provide children with their basic needs? YES [] NO []

22. If 'NO' please indicate what the cause might be. (*You can tick more than one applicable option to this question*)

- i. Due to poverty []
- j. Engagement in drugs []
- k. Alcoholism []
- l. Large number of dependents in the family []
- m. Lack of time for parents due to work stress []
- n. Unemployment []
- o. Ignorance of neglect acts []
- p. Others (specify)

.....
.....

23. How would you rate the adequacy level of parental care, in providing the basic needs of children with the municipality? (*please tick only one appropriate option*)

- e. Highly adequate []



- f. Adequate []
- g. Highly inadequate []
- h. Inadequate []

SECTION D: Effects of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance

24. With your observation, would you say neglect have effects on the academic performance the children? **Yes** [] **No** []

25. If 'Yes' indicate by ticking against the appropriate attribute you have observed about perceived neglected child/children community

- i. Low class attendance []
- j. Poor class performance []
- k. Absenteeism []
- l. Peer isolation []
- m. Lack confidences []
- n. Lack concentration in class []
- o. Grade repetition []
- p. Drop -out from school []

SECTION F: Strategies to Reduce Parental Neglect of Children

26. Are you aware of any specific local initiatives or national programs you believe are particularly effective in addressing neglect? **Yes** [] **No** []



27. If 'Yes', can you please name these/this program(s)?.....

28. In your opinion, what strategies or interventions would you suggest for preventing parental neglect? *(please write in the space below)*

.....

SECTION G: Remedial Support and Counseling Services for Neglected Children

29. Have you utilized any remedial support or counseling services to deal with case of neglect? Yes [] No []

30. If 'Yes', what kind of service?

.....

31. If 'Yes', how would you rate the effectiveness of these services in addressing the needs of neglected children?

- a. Very effective
- b. Effective
- c. Satisfactory
- d. Ineffective
- e. Very ineffective

32. How do you believe society and the school can better support neglected children and ensure they receive the help they need to thrive?

- a. Public education and awareness creation []
- b. Mutual community support for poor families []
- c. Providing access to mental health service []
- d. Maintaining a supportive school environment []



Others (if any)

Appendix VI: Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire has been designed to collect data to aid the researcher undertake a study on Effects of Parental Neglect on the Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in the Sagnerigu Municipality in pursuit of M.Phil programme in Guidance And Counselling

It is purely an academic exercise and as such you are assured of utmost confidentiality in the responses that you provide.

Section A: Demographics

1. Age:..... 2. Gender: Male Female 3. Class:
.....

Section B: Parental Neglect Indicators

4. Do your parents check your homework regularly? Yes No
Sometimes
5. How often do your parents attend PTA meetings? Always Rarely
Never
6. Do you often go to school without breakfast? Yes No Sometimes
7. How often do your parents discuss your school performance with you?
Frequently Rarely Never
8. Do you feel supported at home in your education? Yes No



Section C: Academic Performance

9. Please provide your last term's scores in the following subjects:

Mathematics: [.....], Science: [.....], English: [.....]

Social Studies : [.....]



Appendix VII: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students

This guide has been designed to collect data to aid the researcher undertake a study on Effects of Parental Neglect on the Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in the Sagnerigu Municipality in pursuit of M.Phil programme in Guidance And Counselling .It is purely an academic exercise and as such you are assured of utmost confidentiality in the responses that you provide.

1. Age : a) 10 – 15 [] b) 16 – 20 [] c) 21 and above []
2. Grade at school
3. Number of Siblings:
4. Presences of biological parents: Father and Mother [] Only Father []
Only mother [] None []
5. Have you ever failed to attend school? What was the reason?
6. Do your parents help you in homework?
7. Do you always finish your homework? If not, why?
8. Have you repeated any class? If so, what was the cause?
9. Do you usually have something to eat during lunch break at school?
10. On the scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall attention and care you receive from your parents?
11. Do you feel comfortable discussing your problems or concerns with your parents?
12. How would you describe the communication between you and your parents?
13. Do you feel loved and valued by your parents?
14. In your opinion, what would you wish your parents do to improve their care for you and your siblings?



Appendix VIII: Interview Guide for Key Informants

This interview has been designed to collect data to aid the researcher undertake a study titled *Effects of Parental Neglect on the Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in the Sagnerigu Municipality* in pursuit of M.Phil programme in Guidance And Counselling. It is purely an academic exercise and as such you are assured of utmost confidentiality in the responses that you provide. With your permission, I shall record this conversation so I can later transcribe the conversation for reporting in my research.

1. Have you ever heard of parental neglect of children in this Sagnarigu Municipality and what was the nature of the issue?
2. How often do you witness or hear parental neglect of children in this Municipality?
3. What dimensions (forms) of parental neglect do junior high school students suffer from their parents in this municipality?
4. What factors are responsible for parental neglect of children in this Municipality?
5. Are the majority of parents in this Sagnarigu Municipality able to adequately cater for all the needs of their children?
6. With your experience, would you say parental neglect have a significant effect on the academic performance of children and if so, how?
7. Is there a strong correlation between parental neglect of children and drug abuse and child prostitution in this municipality?
8. Are you aware of any specific local initiatives or national programmes you believe are in place aimed at addressing parental neglect of children in Ghana?



9. Is Social Welfare Department in the Sagnarigu Municipality well equipped and resourced to provide services to these vulnerable children?
10. In your opinion, what strategies or interventions would you suggest to address parental neglect of children in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
11. What specific counselling support services should be given to neglected children to support them to be able to attend and benefit from education in Sagnarigu Municipality?

