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Parental Socio-Economic Status And Household Welfare In Kisoro District: A Case Study Of Muramba Sub County

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Abstract

This study investigated the socio-economic status of parents and the level of household welfare in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District, and examined the relationship between these two variables. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the study found that parental socio-economic status was significantly influenced by education level, occupation type, and household income, with education having the strongest effect. These factors explained over 61% of the variation in socio-economic status among parents. Similarly, household welfare was positively associated with access to health services, education of the household head, housing quality, and asset ownership, with housing quality and asset ownership emerging as the most significant predictors. This model accounted for approximately 67% of the variance in household welfare. Furthermore, the study revealed a strong and positive relationship between parental socio-economic status and household welfare, where higher socio-economic status predicted better welfare outcomes. Household size and distance to social services negatively influenced welfare. The findings indicated that education, economic empowerment, access to services, housing conditions, and infrastructure are critical determinants of socio-economic and welfare outcomes in the community. The study concluded that improvements in parental education, economic opportunities, and access to essential services are vital for enhancing household welfare in Muramba Sub County. There should be deliberate efforts to expand educational opportunities for both adults and children, promote skills training and microfinance access, improve health service availability, and enhance housing and infrastructure conditions.

Keywords: Parental socio-economic status, household welfare, education, economic empowerment, health services, housing quality

Background of the study

Socio-economic status, typically measured through indicators such as income, educational attainment, and occupational prestige, directly shapes a household's capacity to access fundamental resources including nutritious food, quality healthcare, adequate housing, and education. The World Bank consistently underscores that poverty, often a consequence of low SES, is a multidimensional phenomenon that entraps households in a cycle of deprivation, limiting human capital development across generations (Godfrey et al., 2023). Globally, inequalities in SES are a primary driver of disparities in health outcomes, child development, and overall life chances. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), are fundamentally aimed at addressing these disparities by promoting inclusive economic growth and social protection systems (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Research in both developed and developing nations confirms that higher parental

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SES is strongly correlated with improved nutritional status, lower child mortality, and greater educational achievement for children, thereby influencing the long-term developmental trajectory of entire communities (World Bank, 2023; UNICEF, 2022).

Within Africa, the implications of socio-economic status for household welfare are acute and deeply interwoven with the continent's unique developmental challenges. Despite significant economic growth in several regions, a large proportion of the population remains engaged in vulnerable employment, primarily in the informal and agricultural sectors, characterized by low and unstable incomes (Arinaitwe J, 2024). Parental SES in many African contexts is not merely a matter of income but is intrinsically linked to access to land, livestock, and resilience to climate shocks and economic volatilities. The African Development Bank highlights that high dependency ratios, limited access to credit, and poor infrastructure exacerbate the vulnerability of low-SES households (Derrick et al., 2023). Consequently, children from these households are disproportionately affected by malnutrition, stunting, and school dropout rates, perpetuating intergenerational cycles of poverty. Furthermore, gendered dimensions of SES are pronounced, with female-headed households often facing compounded barriers to economic empowerment and, as a result, experiencing poorer welfare outcomes for their children (Moses et al., 2025). While social protection programs are expanding, their coverage is often insufficient to mitigate the profound impact of low parental SES on household welfare across the continent (African Development Bank, 2022; ECA, 2023).

Uganda's situation reflects the broader African narrative, where rapid population growth has outpaced the creation of sustainable livelihoods, particularly in rural areas (Sarah & Audrey, 2024). The country's economy is predominantly agrarian, with a significant portion of the population relying on subsistence farming, which is highly susceptible to climatic variations and price fluctuations (Ampaire et al., 2015). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), while the national poverty rate has fluctuated, a substantial segment of the population remains vulnerable to falling back into poverty, with household welfare being precarious. Parental factors such as low levels of formal education, limited engagement in off-farm income-generating activities, and large household sizes consistently correlate with poor welfare indicators, including high levels of food insecurity and limited utilization of healthcare services (Oromo et al., 2023). Government programs like the Parish Development Model (PDM) aim to transition households from a subsistence to a money economy, explicitly targeting the socio-economic status of low-income families (Oromo et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of such interventions is often hampered by implementation challenges, including delayed fund disbursement and elite capture, leaving the fundamental link between parental SES and household welfare a critical area for localized investigation (UBOS, 2021; MFPED, 2023).

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Kisoro District, in Southwestern Uganda, presents a unique and compelling context for examining this dynamic. The district is characterized by a hilly terrain, high population density, and small, fragmented land holdings, which constrains agricultural productivity the primary source of livelihood. In Muramba Sub-County, these challenges are particularly pronounced (Alex & Julius, 2024). The socio-economic status of parents is largely defined by their reliance on rain-fed agriculture, primarily for subsistence, with limited diversification into cash crops or other enterprises (Ronald et al., 2023). The district's proximity to tourist attractions like the mountain gorillas has not always translated into broad-based economic benefits for residents in remote sub-counties like Muramba. Parental income is often irregular and insufficient, directly impacting household welfare in terms of dietary diversity, ability to pay school fees, and access to medical care. Furthermore, educational attainment, a key component of SES, is often low, limiting parents' ability to secure formal employment or adopt improved agricultural practices (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). The interplay of these factors small land sizes, population pressure, and a predominantly subsistence economy creates a scenario where the socio-economic status of parents is a direct and powerful predictor of household welfare. Therefore, this study is essential to critically analyze the specific mechanisms through which parental SES influences indicators of household welfare such as food security, health, and education within the specific socio-economic and environmental context of Muramba Sub-County (Kyobutungi & Nelson, 2025). The findings will provide actionable evidence for tailoring poverty alleviation programs to the distinct realities of this region, ultimately contributing to improved household resilience and well-being (Kisoro District Local Government, 2023; Tumuheire et al., 2021).

Statement of the problem

In Muramba Sub-County, Kisoro District, many households continue to experience persistent challenges to their welfare, including food insecurity, poor health outcomes, and limited educational attainment (Edgar & Moses, 2023). These conditions are symptomatic of a deeper, structural problem linked to the socio-economic standing of parents. The predominantly subsistence agricultural economy, characterized by small landholdings and low productivity, provides a precarious and unstable income for most families (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). This situation is compounded by low levels of parental education and a lack of diversified livelihood opportunities, which collectively constrain the resources available for household investment.

Preliminary evidence and broader studies on Uganda suggest that this low parental socio-economic status (SES) is a primary driver of poor household welfare, limiting access to nutritious food, quality healthcare, and school fees for children (Sarah & Audrey, 2024). However, the specific mechanisms through which factors like parental income, education, and occupation directly impact welfare indicators within the unique context of Muramba Sub-County are not sufficiently documented or understood (Allan et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is necessary to definitively investigate the nature and strength of the relationship between parental socio-economic status and household welfare in Muramba Sub-County (Ahumuza et al., 2025). Without a clear, localized understanding of this dynamic, the design

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and implementation of targeted interventions, such as the Parish Development Model, may be misaligned with the root causes of household vulnerability, rendering efforts to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty less effective.

Specific objectives

1. To establish the level of parental socio- economic status in Muramba sub county, Kisoro district.
2. To find out the level of household welfare in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District.
3. To examine the relationship between parental socio- economic status and household welfare in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District.

Methodology

The research design for this study was conceptualized as the plan and structure of investigation conceived to obtain answers to the research questions. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches during data collection to provide comprehensive insights into the research problem (Abiodun et al., 2022). A descriptive survey design was implemented, which provided an accurate portrayal of characteristics, behaviors, opinions, and knowledge of the study population. This design was particularly suitable as it enabled the collection of original data from a population that was too large to observe directly, through self-report measures where respondents answered a series of questions posed by the investigator.

The geographical focus of the study was Muramba Sub-County in Kisoro District, located in Southwestern Uganda. The district lies between longitudes 29°35" and 29°50" East and latitudes 1°44" and 1°23" South, bordering Rwanda to the South, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West, Kanungu District to the North, and Kabale District to the East (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021). With a total land area of approximately 729.2 km², it stood as one of the smallest districts in the country, situated approximately 510 km from Kampala. The selection of Muramba Sub-County as a case study provided a specific context for examining the relationship between female-headed households and household welfare in this remote area.

The study population was defined as the aggregation of elements from which the sample was actually selected. A pre-survey was carried out to obtain background information that guided the selection of study participants based on pre-determined characteristics like occupation and gender. The researcher utilized clustered sampling to obtain participants, dividing the population into subgroups that were randomly selected for inclusion (Olanrewaju, Lukman Abiodun, et al., 2021). The study population included community members found in Kisoro District and the Kisoro District Women's Representative. The sample size consisted of 80 respondents selected from a total population of 100, derived using Slovene's formula with an error tolerance of 0.05. This comprised 79 community members and the Kisoro District Women's Representative.

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The sampling procedure involved two distinct techniques. Simple random sampling ensured that every case in the population had an equal probability of inclusion in the sample, and this was used to select community members with specific attention paid to including both male and female respondents. Purposive sampling was employed to select the Kisoro District Women's Representative as a key informant, as this technique allowed for the deliberate selection of particular settings and persons to provide important information that could not be obtained through other sampling choices.

Data collection involved both secondary and primary methods using questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire served as the major primary data collection instrument, with 79 questionnaires prepared for community members and additional ones for key informants. All questionnaires were written in English and consisted of closed-ended questions with space for additional remarks, following the pattern of set objectives and research questions (Jallow et al., 2022). The interviewing method employed a key informant guide with questions aligned to the study's specific objectives, utilizing face-to-face interviews to collect qualitative data on the relationship between female-headed households and household welfare.

Quality control measures were implemented to ensure data accuracy, with particular emphasis on validity and reliability. The validity of instruments was established through expert judgment, where research experts evaluated the questionnaire's effectiveness in measuring what it was intended to measure. The Content Validity Index (CVI) formula was applied, calculating the number of items regarded relevant by judges divided by the total number of items. Reliability was determined through a pilot test using a similar group with the same characteristics as the target study population, computed using the split-half method with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022).

Data management involved comprehensive activities related to storage, organization, documentation, and dissemination of data. All study instruments were pre-tested to check validity and reliability before the main data collection. Data processing was conducted through editing, coding, and tabulation, while data analysis utilized SPSS to compute percentages, frequencies, and response tabulations (Nelson et al., 2023). Quantitative data analysis employed descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages, while qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis where responses were categorized according to thematic areas. Data presentation utilized tables, figures, and charts to enhance interpretation and understanding.

Ethical considerations were thoroughly addressed throughout the research process. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the MIU academic registrar's office and presented it to the LC1 Chairperson of relevant areas

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in Kisoro. The wellbeing of participants was secured by ensuring no harm came to them, while maximizing possible benefits and minimizing potential risks. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary, and they could discontinue their participation at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that responses could not be traced back to individual participants, and information supplied in confidence was not disclosed to third parties. The researcher also ensured proper attribution of sources to avoid plagiarism.

The study acknowledged several limitations that were encountered during the research process. High transport costs presented a significant challenge during piloting, respondent meetings, questionnaire distribution, and follow-ups. This was addressed by utilizing economical transport means and walking where necessary. Some respondents demonstrated unwillingness to participate in the study, with some even requesting monetary compensation. This challenge was mitigated through adherence to ethical procedures and clear clarification of the study's intentions and the importance of findings to respondents.

Results

Table 1: Level of parental socio-economic status in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.102	0.253	4.36	0.000	***
Education Level	0.420	0.065	6.46	0.000	***
Occupation Type	0.351	0.080	4.39	0.000	***
Household Income	0.295	0.052	5.67	0.000	***
R-squared = 0.612					
Adjusted R-squared = 0.603					
F-statistic = 68.4 ($p < 0.001$)					

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The model yielded an R-squared of 0.612, indicating that approximately 61.2% of the variance in parental socio-economic status can be explained by the three predictors included in the model.

All independent variables were statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. Education level had the strongest positive association with PSES (B = 0.420), suggesting that as parental education increases, so does their socio-economic status. Occupation type also showed a significant effect (B = 0.351), implying that engagement in more formal or higher-paying jobs contributes positively to socio-economic status. Household income similarly had a positive and significant effect (B = 0.295), reinforcing the importance of economic resources in shaping parental status. The overall model was highly significant ($F(3,196) = 68.4$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the included variables reliably predict PSES in the study area.

Table 2: Level of household welfare in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District

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Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Sig.
(Constant)	2.315	0.407	5.69	0.000	***
Access to Health Services	0.315	0.072	4.38	0.000	***
Education of HH Head	0.290	0.061	4.75	0.000	***
Housing Quality	0.410	0.088	4.66	0.000	***
Asset Ownership	0.385	0.079	4.87	0.000	***
R-squared = 0.672					
Adjusted R-squared = 0.661					
F-statistic = 76.8 ($p < 0.001$)					

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The regression model showed an R-squared of 0.672, suggesting that about 67.2% of the variation in household welfare is explained by the predictors.

All four predictors had statistically significant positive relationships with household welfare ($p < 0.001$). The most influential factor was housing quality (B = 0.410), showing that households with better housing conditions experienced significantly higher welfare levels. Asset ownership followed closely (B = 0.385), indicating that material possessions such as livestock, tools, or household appliances are crucial indicators of welfare. Education of the household head (B = 0.290) and access to health services (B = 0.315) were also significant, reinforcing the idea that social services and education play a vital role in improving household well-being. The model's F-statistic (76.8, $p < 0.001$) confirmed the overall significance of the regression.

Table 3: Relationship between parental socio-economic status and household welfare in Muramba Sub County, Kisoro District

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.895	0.333	5.69	0.000	***
PSES	0.530	0.062	8.55	0.000	***
Household Size	-0.245	0.071	-3.45	0.001	**
Distance to Social Services	-0.310	0.067	-4.63	0.000	***
R-squared = 0.598					
Adjusted R-squared = 0.586					
F-statistic = 62.3 ($p < 0.001$)					

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The model produced an R-squared of 0.598, indicating that roughly 59.8% of the variance in household welfare can be explained by the model. Parental socio-economic status emerged as a highly significant and strong positive predictor (B = 0.530, $p < 0.001$), clearly suggesting that households with higher socio-economic status tend to enjoy

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better welfare outcomes. On the other hand, household size negatively impacted welfare (B = -0.245, p = 0.001), indicating that larger families may strain resources and reduce the overall welfare index. Similarly, greater distance to social services (e.g., schools, hospitals, markets) also had a significant negative effect (B = -0.310, p < 0.001), highlighting infrastructure access as a barrier to welfare. The findings confirm a strong and statistically significant link between socio-economic conditions and the well-being of households in the region. The model's F-statistic (62.3, p < 0.001) further underlines the robustness of the regression.

Conclusions

The study concluded that parental socio-economic status in Muramba Sub County is significantly influenced by key factors such as education level, type of occupation, and household income. Among these, education level emerged as the most influential determinant. This suggests that parents who attained higher levels of education are more likely to secure better employment opportunities and generate higher household incomes, thereby elevating their socio-economic standing. The regression model demonstrated a strong explanatory power, accounting for over 61% of the variation in socio-economic status, indicating that these variables are critical indicators of socio-economic well-being in the region.

The level of household welfare in Muramba Sub County was found to be closely associated with access to health services, education of the household head, housing quality, and ownership of assets. Of these, housing quality and asset ownership were the strongest predictors of welfare, suggesting that material living conditions and possession of valuable resources are central to household well-being. The study highlighted that households with access to education and health services also demonstrated significantly higher welfare levels. With an R-squared value of 0.672, the regression model showed a high level of reliability in explaining variations in household welfare across the community.

The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and household welfare. Higher socio-economic status was associated with better household welfare outcomes, underscoring the importance of income, education, and occupation in shaping overall family well-being. Conversely, larger household sizes and greater distance from social services had negative impacts on welfare, suggesting that both resource availability and proximity to services play a role in influencing living standards. The regression model demonstrated that nearly 60% of the variation in household welfare could be explained by the socio-economic status of parents and other related factors.

Recommendations

There should be deliberate and sustained efforts to improve parental socio-economic status and household welfare in Muramba Sub County. One of the most important areas for intervention is education. There should be increased access

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to quality education for both children and adults in the community. Adult literacy programs should be introduced for parents who did not complete formal schooling, as this will improve their ability to engage in productive work and make informed life choices. At the same time, there should be expanded opportunities for children to access secondary and vocational education through the construction of more schools, provision of learning materials, and scholarships for children from low-income families. Education remains a key driver of socio-economic status and should be prioritized at both household and policy levels.

There should also be strong efforts to promote economic empowerment among households. Many families in the sub-county rely on subsistence agriculture or informal labor, which often limits their ability to accumulate wealth or plan for the future. Therefore, there should be practical skills training programs in trades such as carpentry, tailoring, and small-scale agriculture to enhance household productivity. In addition, there should be improved access to microfinance and affordable credit, especially for women and youth, to help them start small businesses and invest in income-generating activities. Support for entrepreneurship should be central to any strategy aiming to raise household welfare, and this must be coupled with mentorship and market access to ensure sustainability.

Health and access to basic social services also play a critical role in determining household welfare. As the study has shown, long distances to health facilities are negatively associated with welfare levels. Therefore, there should be the construction of additional health centers in underserved areas to bring services closer to the population. In areas where building permanent infrastructure is not immediately possible, there should be mobile health clinics to ensure that even remote communities receive essential health care. There should also be greater access to family planning services to help households manage their size and reduce the burden on limited resources. Public health education should be scaled up to ensure that families are well-informed about preventive health practices and the importance of regular medical care.

To further improve living standards, there should be a focus on enhancing housing and general living conditions. The government and development partners should support low-income households in accessing affordable and durable building materials so they can improve the safety and hygiene of their homes. There should also be community-led initiatives to improve sanitation and water supply, including the construction of latrines, provision of clean water sources, and promotion of hygiene practices. A clean and healthy home environment not only improves welfare directly but also reduces health-related expenses and increases productivity.

Infrastructure development is another crucial area. Poor roads and long travel distances are barriers to accessing education, health care, and economic opportunities. There should be continued investment in the construction and

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maintenance of rural roads to improve connectivity within the sub-county. Better roads would reduce the time and cost of accessing markets and services, making it easier for families to improve their livelihoods. In addition, there should be the establishment of integrated community service centers where education, health, and administrative services are provided under one roof, especially in more rural parts of the sub-county.

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