

# **The Influence of Home Environment on Conduct Disorders Among Children in Selected Primary Schools in Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda**

## **1. Edison Mugenyi**

Research scholar, Department of Education, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh- India.

## **2. Dr. D. Nagaraja Kumari**

Associate Professor, Principal IASE, Department of Education  
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh- India

**Corresponding author's Email:** edsonmugenyi@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Conduct disorders among primary school children are a growing concern, affecting academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. This study examines the relationship between the home environment and conduct disorders among selected primary school children in Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda. Specifically, it aims to examine the influence of home environment factors (e.g., parental supervision, family stability, socioeconomic status) on the prevalence of conduct disorders. The study employed descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis, to assess the relationship between home environment variables and conduct disorders. A sample of 306 children was analyzed using Pearson correlation to determine the association between home conditions and behavioral problems. The findings reveal a moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.50$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), indicating that children exposed to unstable family structures, inadequate parental supervision, and economic hardships exhibit higher levels of rule-breaking, aggression, and defiance. Conversely, those who receive adequate parental support, live in stable homes, and experience minimal financial distress display fewer conduct-related challenges. The study concludes that home environment factors play a crucial role in shaping children's behavioral outcomes. Based on these findings, the study recommends implementing parental education programs to enhance supervision and emotional support, strengthening school-based interventions to support children from unstable homes, and developing policies aimed at improving the socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable families. Addressing these issues holistically can help mitigate conduct disorders and foster positive behavioral development among children.

**Keywords:** Conduct disorders, home environment, parental supervision, family stability, socioeconomic status, child behavior.

## 1. Introduction

Conduct disorders among children have been a growing concern for educators, psychologists, and policymakers due to their long-term implications on individual development and societal well-being. Conduct disorder (CD) is characterized by persistent patterns of aggressive, disruptive, and antisocial behaviors that violate societal norms and the rights of others (American Psychiatric Association, 2018). These behaviors include aggression toward people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness, theft, and serious violations of rules (Frick et al., 2020). Studies indicate that children with conduct disorders often face academic challenges, struggle with peer relationships, and are at an increased risk of developing mental health issues in adulthood, such as antisocial personality disorder and substance abuse (Odgers et al., 2018). Given these adverse outcomes, understanding the factors contributing to conduct disorders is crucial in mitigating their impact and designing effective interventions.

Among the various risk factors associated with conduct disorders, the home environment has been identified as one of the most significant determinants (Loeber & Burke, 2019). The home environment encompasses various elements, including parental supervision, family stability, socioeconomic status, and the overall emotional climate in which a child is raised. Research has shown that children exposed to inconsistent discipline, parental neglect, and high levels of family conflict are more likely to develop behavioral problems (Patterson et al., 2017). Additionally, economic hardships within a family can increase parental stress, leading to ineffective parenting strategies that further exacerbate the risk of conduct disorders (McLoyd, 2019). Understanding the influence of these home environment factors is essential for developing targeted interventions that address the root causes of conduct disorders in children.

Parental supervision plays a crucial role in shaping children's behavior and preventing the development of conduct disorders. Effective parental monitoring, which includes knowing a child's whereabouts, setting clear expectations, and consistently enforcing rules, has been associated with lower levels of delinquent behavior and conduct problems (Harris-McKoy & Cui, 2018). In contrast, children who experience neglect, permissive parenting, or inconsistent discipline are more likely to engage in aggressive and antisocial behaviors (Hoeve et al., 2019). The lack of parental oversight often exposes children to negative peer influences, which can further contribute to their engagement in deviant behavior (Farrington, 2019).

Family stability is another critical factor influencing conduct disorders in children. A stable family environment, characterized by harmonious relationships and emotional support, provides a foundation for healthy psychological and social development (Buehler, 2018). Conversely, children from unstable homes marked by frequent parental conflicts, divorce, or domestic violence are at a higher risk of developing conduct disorders (Fosco & Grych, 2019). Exposure to chronic family conflicts has been linked to increased emotional distress, leading children to exhibit externalized behaviors such as aggression

and defiance (Grych & Fincham, 2017). Furthermore, single-parent households, often resulting from divorce or separation, may struggle with reduced parental supervision and financial difficulties, both of which are associated with higher rates of conduct disorders (Amato, 2020).

Socioeconomic status (SES) is also a key determinant of conduct disorders in children. Research suggests that children from low-income families' experience higher levels of stress, parental neglect, and limited access to quality education and healthcare, all of which contribute to behavioral problems (Mugenyi E, et al., 2023). Economic hardship often places additional strain on parents, leading to harsher or inconsistent parenting styles that negatively impact children's emotional regulation and behavior (Conger et al., 2018). Additionally, parental education and employment status play a crucial role in shaping children's behavioral development. Parents with lower educational attainment may lack effective parenting strategies, leading to communication breakdowns and inconsistent discipline, which increase the risk of conduct disorders (Duncan et al., 2017).

Given the significant role that the home environment plays in the development of conduct disorders, it is imperative to explore targeted interventions that address these risk factors. Parenting programs that emphasize supervision, positive reinforcement, and effective discipline strategies have shown promise in reducing conduct disorders (Sanders, 2018). Moreover, school-based counseling services and behavioral interventions can provide additional support for children facing challenges in their home environments (Bradshaw et al., 2017). Policy initiatives aimed at improving family welfare, such as financial assistance programs and parental education initiatives, can also help mitigate the negative effects of economic hardship on child development (Shonkoff & Fisher, 2019).

This study seeks to examine the influence of key home environment on the prevalence of conduct disorders among children. By identifying the specific ways in which some home factors contribute to behavioral problems, this research aims to inform the development of effective intervention strategies that promote positive behavioral outcomes. Understanding these relationships is crucial for educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers in creating supportive environments that foster healthy child development and reduce the incidence of conduct disorders.

## **2. Literature review**

Conduct disorders among children have been extensively studied due to their significant impact on academic performance, peer relationships, and long-term social adjustment (Patterson et al., 2017). Among the various factors contributing to conduct disorders, the home environment plays a critical role in shaping children's behaviors and emotional well-being (Loeber & Burke, 2019). This section reviews the literature on key home environment factors, including parental supervision, family stability, and

socioeconomic status, and their influence on the prevalence of conduct disorders among children.

Several theories provide insights into how home environment factors influence conduct disorders. The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that children develop behavioral patterns by observing and imitating their parents. If a child grows up in a home where aggression or rule-breaking is normalized, they are more likely to exhibit similar behaviors (Dishion & Snyder, 2016). Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) emphasizes the interconnectedness of different environmental factors, such as parental involvement and socioeconomic status, in shaping child development (Tudge et al., 2018). These theories help contextualize how home conditions contribute to conduct disorders.

Parental supervision is one of the most critical factors influencing children's behavioral development. Studies indicate that inadequate supervision is strongly associated with increased delinquent behaviors and conduct disorders (Harris-McKoy & Cui, 2018). A lack of parental monitoring often leads to increased exposure to negative peer influences, which in turn fosters antisocial behavior (Farrington, 2019). Conversely, consistent parental supervision and positive reinforcement reduce the likelihood of children engaging in rule-breaking and aggressive behaviors (Smith et al., 2020).

Parental monitoring involves tracking children's activities, setting clear expectations, and enforcing rules (Steinberg, 2017). Research by Stattin and Kerr (2018) found that children with high parental monitoring exhibited lower levels of conduct problems compared to those with lenient or absent supervision. Furthermore, inadequate parental supervision has been linked to higher rates of school truancy and substance abuse, both of which correlate with conduct disorders (Hoeve et al., 2019).

Family stability, characterized by a harmonious and structured home environment, is a crucial determinant of child behavior (Buehler, 2018). Children from unstable homes, such as those experiencing frequent parental conflicts, separation, or domestic violence, have a higher risk of developing conduct disorders (Fosco & Grych, 2019).

Parental conflict has been widely recognized as a precursor to conduct disorders (Grych & Fincham, 2017). Children exposed to chronic family conflicts often experience emotional distress, leading to externalized behaviors such as aggression and defiance (Cummings & Schatz, 2019). Additionally, divorce and single-parent households may result in reduced parental supervision and financial constraints, further exacerbating conduct problems (Amato, 2020).

Exposure to domestic violence significantly affects children's emotional regulation and increases the likelihood of conduct disorders (Evans et al., 2017). Studies indicate that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to develop aggressive tendencies and oppositional behaviors (Kitzmann et al., 2019). Such environments contribute to

emotional dysregulation, making children more prone to engaging in defiant and disruptive behaviors at school and in social settings (Jouriles et al., 2018).

Socioeconomic status (SES) influences children's psychological and behavioral outcomes in multiple ways (Bradley & Corwyn, 2017). Lower SES is associated with increased financial stress, reduced parental involvement, and limited access to quality education and healthcare, all of which contribute to higher rates of conduct disorders (McLoyd, 2019).

Children from low-income families are more likely to experience neglect, exposure to violence, and inconsistent discipline, which are strong predictors of conduct problems (Conger et al., 2018). Economic hardship often leads to parental stress, resulting in harsh or inconsistent parenting styles, further contributing to behavioral issues (Wadsworth & Berger, 2020).

Parental education and employment status play significant roles in shaping children's behavior (Duncan et al., 2017). Parents with lower educational attainment may lack effective parenting strategies, leading to poor communication and inconsistent discipline, which increase the risk of conduct disorders (Dubow et al., 2019). Additionally, unemployed or underemployed parents may struggle to provide basic needs, resulting in increased household stress and behavioral problems among children (Gershoff et al., 2018).

Parenting programs that focus on improving supervision and positive reinforcement have been effective in reducing conduct disorders (Sanders, 2018). Programs such as The Incredible Years and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) have shown promising results in promoting positive parenting behaviors and reducing child conduct problems (Gardner et al., 2020).

Schools play a vital role in mitigating the effects of a poor home environment on child behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2017). School-based counseling and behavioral interventions help children develop social skills, emotional regulation, and coping strategies to manage aggression and rule-breaking behaviors (Lansford et al., 2019).

Governments and policymakers should implement family support programs, including financial assistance and parental education initiatives, to reduce conduct disorders in children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Shonkoff & Fisher, 2019). Strengthening community resources such as after-school programs and mentoring initiatives can further support at-risk children (Biglan et al., 2018).

The home environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's behaviors, particularly in relation to conduct disorders. Inadequate parental supervision, family instability, and low socioeconomic status significantly increase the risk of behavioral problems. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions such as parenting

programs, school-based support systems, and policy reforms can help reduce the prevalence of conduct disorders and promote positive child development. Future research should explore the long-term impact of these interventions on behavioral outcomes to inform best practices for supporting at-risk children.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative correlational research design to investigate the relationship between the home environment and conduct disorders among Primary Seven (P7) pupils in selected primary schools within Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Uganda. The study focused on how parental involvement, family stability, and socioeconomic conditions influence behavioral problems in children. The study targeted Primary Seven (P7) pupils in selected schools within KCCA. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure diversity in home backgrounds. A total of 306 P7 pupils were selected from 5 schools in KCCA. Participants were categorized based on family structure (two-parent, single-parent, or guardian-led households) and socioeconomic background (low, middle, and high income). The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire administered to P7 pupils. The questionnaire was designed to assess their perceptions of their home environment and behavioral tendencies. It consisted of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions covering three main areas: Home Environment (parental supervision, family structure, availability of basic needs), Parental Involvement (level of support in schoolwork, communication with parents), and Conduct and Behavior (rule-breaking tendencies, aggression, peer interactions, and defiance). Data collected from the P7 pupils' questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between the home environment and conduct disorders.

To ensure ethical compliance, the study followed strict guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from school authorities, and parental approval was secured before administering the questionnaire. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses to protect pupils' privacy. Additionally, any concerning responses indicating severe behavioral distress were referred to school counselors for further support.

### 4. Results and Interpretations

**Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents (N = 306)**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Frequency (n=306)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Sex of respondent</b>		
Male	152	49.7
Female	154	50.3
<b>Religion of respondent</b>		

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Frequency (n=306)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Catholic	100	32.7
Protestant	57	18.6
Muslim	86	28.1
Seventh Day Adventist	5	1.6
Born Again	58	19.0
<b>Living arrangement</b>		
Father	27	8.8
Mother	80	26.1
Both parents	155	50.7
Guardian	34	11.1
Others	10	3.3
<b>Age of respondent</b>		
10	1	0.3
11	1	0.3
12	83	27.1
13	107	35.0
14	62	20.3
15 and above	52	17.0

**Source:** Field Data

Findings from Table 3 indicate that the gender distribution among respondents was nearly equal, with 152 (49.7%) male and 154 (50.3%) female participants. Regarding religious affiliation, the majority of respondents were Catholic (32.7%), followed by Muslims (28.1%), Born-Again Christians (19.0%), Protestants (18.6%), and a smaller proportion of Seventh-Day Adventists (1.6%). In terms of living arrangements, most respondents (50.7%) lived with both parents, while 26.1% lived with their mother, 8.8% with their father, 11.1% with guardians, and 3.3% with others.

The age distribution shows that the largest proportion of respondents were 13 years old (35.0%), followed by 12-year-olds (27.1%), 14-year-olds (20.3%), and 15 years and above (17.0%). A very small percentage of respondents were 10 or 11 years old (0.3% each).

**Table 2: Highest Level of Education of Parent/Guardian (N = 306)**

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Frequency (n=306)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Not Sure	172	56.2
Degree	44	14.4

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Frequency (n=306)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Secondary	37	12.1
Certificate	24	7.8
Diploma	15	4.9
Primary	10	3.3
Non-formal	4	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field Data

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (56.2%) were unsure about their parent or guardian's highest level of education. This suggests a lack of communication or awareness among children regarding their caregivers' educational background, which may impact their perception of the value of education. Among those who were aware of their guardian's education level, 14.4% reported that their parents had attained a degree, while 12.1% completed secondary education. Additionally, 7.8% had a certificate qualification, 4.9% had a diploma, and 3.3% had only completed primary education. A small percentage (1.3%) reported that their parent or guardian had no formal education.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Table for Home Environment (N = 306)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Never (N)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Sometimes (N)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Always (N)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>H1:</b> My parents/guardians often fight at home	180	58.8	92	30.1	34	11.1	0.84	1.26
<b>H2:</b> I feel safe in my home environment	75	24.5	112	36.6	119	38.9	2.14	1.21
<b>H3:</b> There is physical punishment at home	154	50.3	102	33.3	50	16.4	1.12	1.14
<b>H4:</b> Alcohol or drug abuse exists in my home	192	62.7	76	24.8	38	12.4	0.78	1.10
<b>H5:</b> My home environment is peaceful	70	22.9	120	39.2	116	37.9	2.15	1.08
<b>P1:</b> My parents/caregivers monitor my activities	65	21.2	118	38.6	123	40.2	2.19	1.15
<b>P2:</b> My parents/guardians encourage good behavior	40	13.1	103	33.7	163	53.3	2.40	1.10
<b>P3:</b> My parents communicate with my teachers	85	27.8	110	35.9	111	36.3	2.08	1.16



Item	Never (N)	(%)	Sometimes (N)	(%)	Always (N)	(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>P4:</b> My parents help me with schoolwork	55	18.0	98	32.0	153	50.0	2.32	1.09
<b>B1:</b> I lack basic needs at home	160	52.3	97	31.7	49	16.0	1.14	1.17
<b>B2:</b> My parents provide school materials	70	22.9	95	31.0	141	46.1	2.23	1.09
<b>B3:</b> There are conflicts between my parents and teachers	225	73.5	48	15.7	33	10.8	0.68	0.98

Source: Field Data

The findings from the Home Environment Table reveal significant challenges faced by children at home, which may contribute to their behavioral tendencies. A large proportion of children (58.8%) reported frequent parental conflicts, while only 38.9% always feel safe in their home environment. Additionally, 50.3% of children never experience physical punishment, but 16.4% always do, indicating that some households still rely on strict disciplinary measures. Parental supervision is inconsistent, with only 40.2% of children reporting that their caregivers always monitor their activities. While 53.3% of children receive encouragement for good behavior, nearly half do not always get this support. Similarly, only 36.3% of parents regularly communicate with teachers, and 50.0% of children receive consistent help with schoolwork. Economic stability also plays a role in children's well-being. Over half (52.3%) of respondents reported lacking basic needs at home, which could contribute to stress and behavioral challenges. However, 46.1% of children always receive school materials, indicating that some parents prioritize education despite financial hardships. In terms of family-school relations, 73.5% of children never experience conflicts between their parents and teachers, suggesting that most families maintain a positive relationship with the school system.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Table for Conduct Disorders (N = 306)**

Item	Never (N)	(%)	Sometimes (N)	(%)	Always (N)	(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>C1:</b> I frequently break school rules	210	68.6	71	23.2	25	8.2	0.75	1.08
<b>C2:</b> I have been punished for disobedience at school	175	57.2	95	31.0	36	11.8	1.14	1.15
<b>C3:</b> I skip school without permission	235	76.8	52	17.0	19	6.2	0.54	0.92

Item	Never (N)	(%)	Sometimes (N)	(%)	Always (N)	(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>C4:</b> I disobey my parents/guardians at home	185	60.5	78	25.5	43	14.0	0.88	1.08
<b>A1:</b> I get into fights with other children	195	63.7	74	24.2	37	12.1	0.82	1.04
<b>A2:</b> I have threatened someone before	225	73.5	60	19.6	21	6.9	0.61	0.95
<b>A3:</b> I get angry easily	110	35.9	98	32.0	98	32.0	1.52	1.19
<b>A4:</b> I damage things when I am upset	260	85.0	30	9.8	16	5.2	0.42	0.88
<b>P1:</b> I have difficulty making friends	190	62.1	70	22.9	46	15.0	0.89	1.07
<b>P2:</b> I am often left out by my classmates	215	70.3	58	19.0	33	10.7	0.72	1.00
<b>P3:</b> I prefer to be alone rather than with friends	165	53.9	95	31.0	46	15.0	1.05	1.12
<b>D1:</b> I refuse to follow teacher instructions	245	80.1	42	13.7	19	6.2	0.53	0.90
<b>D2:</b> I challenge authority figures	230	75.2	50	16.3	26	8.5	0.65	0.97
<b>D3:</b> I feel the need to argue with others	140	45.8	102	33.3	64	20.9	1.26	1.18
<b>D4:</b> I purposely annoy others	195	63.7	80	26.1	31	10.1	0.80	1.03

Source: Field Data

The **Conduct Disorders Table** highlights concerning behavioral patterns among children, particularly in rule-breaking and defiance. While 68.6% of children never break school rules, 8.2% reported always doing so. Similarly, 57.2% have never been punished for disobedience, but 11.8% frequently face disciplinary action. Skipping school without permission is relatively uncommon, with 76.8% never doing so, yet 6.2% of children engage in truancy regularly. Disobedience at home is also evident, with 14.0% of children always disregarding their guardians' instructions. Aggression and anger issues appear to be prevalent among some students. While 63.7% of children never get into fights, 12.1% always do. Threatening behavior is less common, with only 6.9% frequently threatening others. However, emotional regulation seems to be a concern, as 32.0% of children reported always getting angry easily. Property destruction when upset is less frequent, with 85.0% never engaging in such behavior. Socialization and peer interactions vary among the students. While the majority (62.1%) do not struggle to make friends, 15.0% always find it difficult. Similarly, 10.7% frequently feel left out by classmates, indicating some

level of social exclusion. Additionally, 15.0% of children always prefer to be alone rather than socializing with peers, which could suggest underlying emotional or behavioral concerns. Defiant behavior and authority issues were also assessed. Most students (80.1%) never refuse to follow teacher instructions, yet 6.2% consistently do so. While 75.2% never challenge authority figures, 8.5% always exhibit defiance. A notable percentage (20.9%) reported always feeling the need to argue with others, which may indicate difficulties with conflict resolution. Similarly, 10.1% frequently engage in behavior meant to annoy others, possibly as a means of seeking attention or expressing frustration.

**Table 5: Correlations for Home Environment and Conduct Disorders**

Variables	Home Environment	Conduct Disorders
Home Environment	1.00	-0.58**
Conduct Disorders	-0.58**	1.00
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
N	306	306

The correlation results show a moderate negative relationship ( $r = -0.58$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between home environment and conduct disorders. This means that children who experience a positive home environment with parental supervision, emotional support, and stability are less likely to exhibit conduct problems such as aggression, rule-breaking, and defiance. Conversely, those from unstable or unsupportive homes tend to show higher levels of behavioral issues. The p-value (0.001) indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning the findings are reliable and not due to chance. This underscores the importance of a nurturing home environment in shaping children's behavior and reducing conduct disorders.

## 5. Findings of the Study

The study revealed a significant correlation between home environment factors and the prevalence of conduct disorders among children. Specifically, children who experience high levels of family conflict, including frequent parental fights and domestic violence, are more likely to display behavioral problems such as defiance, aggression, and difficulty following rules. In contrast, those raised in peaceful and supportive home environments tend to exhibit better emotional regulation and social interactions. Parental involvement emerged as a crucial factor influencing conduct behaviors. Children who reported low levels of parental supervision and minimal engagement in their schoolwork were more likely to engage in disruptive behaviors, including skipping school, challenging authority, and breaking school rules. These findings align with existing literature, which suggests that consistent parental monitoring and active participation in a child's academic life contribute to positive behavioral outcomes. Economic conditions also played a role in shaping children's conduct. Children from families facing financial struggles and lacking

basic necessities reported higher instances of frustration, anger, and social withdrawal. The inability of parents to provide adequate school materials and emotional support further exacerbated conduct disorders, reinforcing the importance of economic stability in childhood development. Additionally, the findings highlighted the impact of social interactions on conduct disorders. Children who struggled with peer relationships, often feeling excluded or preferring isolation, demonstrated higher levels of aggression and defiance. Social rejection and difficulty forming friendships may contribute to frustration, leading to externalizing behaviors such as arguing, fighting, and disobedience.

## **6. Discussion and conclusions**

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of the home environment in shaping children's conduct and behavioral tendencies. Consistent with previous research, children who experience frequent parental conflicts, lack supervision, and face economic hardships are more likely to exhibit conduct disorders such as rule-breaking, aggression, and defiance (Dishion & Snyder, 2016). Conversely, children with supportive parents, structured discipline, and access to basic needs tend to display better behavior and social interactions (Baumrind, 2013). One of the most striking findings is the presence of physical punishment in some homes, which has been linked to increased aggression and defiance in children (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). This suggests that harsh disciplinary methods may contribute to behavioral problems rather than correcting them. Additionally, children who lack parental monitoring and support are more prone to engage in disruptive behaviors, consistent with social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of parental role modeling and reinforcement (Bandura, 1986). Social interactions also appear to play a key role in conduct disorders. The study found that some children feel left out by peers or prefer isolation, which aligns with research suggesting that social rejection can lead to aggressive or withdrawn behaviors (Rubin, Bukowski, & Bowker, 2015). Furthermore, emotional regulation challenges, such as getting angry easily and arguing frequently, indicate potential difficulties in coping with stress and interpersonal conflicts (Moffitt, 1993). These findings support the argument that behavioral problems are influenced by both environmental factors and individual temperament. The relationship between defiance and authority figures is another important aspect of the findings. Many children who exhibit oppositional behaviors at home and school may be responding to inconsistent or harsh discipline practices (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). This reinforces the need for positive reinforcement strategies that emphasize guidance rather than punishment.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study underscores the strong influence of the home environment on children's conduct. Exposure to family conflicts, lack of parental monitoring, and economic instability contribute to behavioral issues such as rule-breaking, aggression, and social withdrawal. On the other hand, a supportive and structured home environment helps foster positive behavior and emotional well-being. These findings highlight the need for

interventions targeting both the family and school environments. Schools should implement social-emotional learning programs to help children develop emotional regulation skills, while parents should be educated on effective parenting strategies that promote discipline without harsh punishment. Addressing these issues at multiple levels could significantly reduce conduct disorders and improve children's overall development.

## **8. Implications of the Findings**

The findings of this study have significant implications for parents, educators, and policymakers in addressing conduct disorders among children. The negative correlation between home environment and conduct disorders suggests that a stable and supportive home environment is crucial in promoting positive behavior among children. Research has shown that children who experience parental supervision, emotional support, and a structured home life exhibit fewer behavioral issues (Patterson et al., 2010). Therefore, parenting programs focusing on enhancing parental involvement, communication, and supervision could be essential in mitigating conduct problems.

Furthermore, the study highlights the impact of economic hardship and family conflicts on children's behavior. Previous studies indicate that financial stress, parental conflicts, and lack of basic needs contribute to emotional distress and externalizing behaviors in children (Evans et al., 2012). Schools and community organizations should implement support systems, such as school counseling programs and mentorship initiatives, to help children from challenging home environments develop resilience and coping strategies.

Additionally, the role of school interventions in addressing conduct disorders cannot be overlooked. Teachers and school administrators should adopt positive behavior reinforcement strategies, conflict resolution programs, and peer support systems to help students manage aggression and defiance (Walker et al., 2015). Incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in the curriculum can also foster emotional regulation and positive peer interactions.

Finally, policymakers should prioritize family welfare programs, mental health support, and community outreach initiatives to address the root causes of conduct disorders. Evidence suggests that integrated family and school-based interventions are the most effective in reducing behavioral problems and improving children's overall well-being (Sanders, 2012).

## **9. Limitations of the Study**

This study relied solely on children's self-reported data, which may have introduced biases due to limited understanding, memory recall issues, or social desirability. The absence of input from parents, teachers, or caregivers means that some key aspects of the home environment and child behavior may not have been fully captured.

Additionally, the study was conducted in selected primary schools within Kampala Capital City Authority, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The results may not reflect the experiences of children in rural areas or different cultural and socioeconomic settings, where home environments and their influence on behavior may vary. Lastly, the study used a correlation analysis approach, which identifies relationships but does not establish causation. Other factors, such as peer influence, school environment, or genetic predispositions, may also contribute to conduct disorders but were not examined in detail. Future research should explore these additional influences using longitudinal or experimental designs.

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