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Examining Household Demographics on Income Inequalities in Urban Areas of Lusaka: A Case Study of Kuku Compound of Lusaka District

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between household demographics and income inequalities in Kuku Compound, Lusaka District, Zambia. It specifically examines how household size, education levels, and gender patterns influence income distribution. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected from 100 households through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained via semi-structured interviews with community leaders. Stratified random sampling ensured representation of diverse household structures. Data were analyzed using STATA for descriptive statistics and complemented by thematic analysis. Findings reveal that 72% of households have six to eight members, resulting in high dependency ratios and income strain. Most households (90%) earn between K1,001 and K3,000

monthly, reflecting low-income homogeneity and limited opportunities, mainly in the informal sector (92%). Education emerged as vital for reducing inequality, with 71% of respondents emphasizing its importance and 77% supporting free education. Gender also plays a significant role, as female-headed households face barriers to income access 81% of women reported no income sources. Joint financial decision-making was found to enhance household income management (57%). The study concludes that household size, education, and gender dynamics jointly shape income inequality in Kuku Compound. It recommends policies promoting education access, women's economic empowerment, and income-generating initiatives to reduce inequality and enhance welfare in urban informal settlements.

Keywords: Demographics, Income Inequalities, Household Size, Education Level, Gender Patterns

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Income inequality is a global challenge affecting both developed and developing countries. It refers to the uneven distribution of income among individuals or households, where some earn substantially more than others. The World Bank (2024) uses the Gini coefficient to measure inequality, with higher values indicating greater disparities. Globally, the richest 10% of the population earn over 50% of total income, while the poorest 50% earn less than 10% (World Bank, 2023). This widening gap is driven by unequal access to education, differences in employment types, and household characteristics such as family size. Families with fewer members and higher education levels tend to have higher incomes, whereas larger, less-educated families often face persistent poverty and inequality (UNDP, 2023). In Africa, income inequality remains a major obstacle to sustainable development. The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2023) reports that while the continent's economy has grown, wealth is not evenly distributed. Africa's average Gini coefficient stood at 43.3 in 2022, higher than the global average of 38.6. Many African households are large, have limited educational opportunities, and experience high unemployment, particularly in urban areas. Informal employment is widespread, offering low wages and minimal job security (ILO, 2023). These factors collectively exacerbate inequality across the continent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, inequality is especially pronounced. The region contains some of the world's poorest nations, and urbanization has intensified due to migration from rural to urban areas. However, job creation and infrastructure development have not kept pace with population growth. The World Bank (2022) estimates that over 60% of urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa live in informal settlements with poor access to education, healthcare, and employment. In cities such as Lusaka, sharp contrasts exist between affluent neighborhoods and low-income settlements. Many residents in informal areas have limited education and unstable, low-paying jobs, deepening the income gap (World Bank, 2022). Zambia mirrors this regional pattern, with high income inequality

particularly evident in urban centers like Lusaka District. According to the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats, 2023), the Gini coefficient for Zambia was 57.1 in 2022, reflecting severe inequality. While some Lusaka residents live in affluent suburbs, many others reside in informal settlements such as Kuku Compound, where poverty, unemployment, and limited educational attainment are widespread. ZamStats (2023) data show that more than 70% of urban workers in Zambia are employed in the informal sector, including street vending, construction, and domestic work. These jobs typically offer low wages, instability, and limited benefits, further widening income disparities.

Family size is another important factor influencing income distribution. Larger families require more resources to meet their basic needs, but in low-income areas, employment opportunities are limited. UNICEF (2023) found that households in Lusaka with more than five members are significantly more likely to live below the poverty line. High dependency ratios within large families intensify financial pressures and reduce household resilience to economic shocks. This relationship between family size and income levels highlights the demographic dimensions of inequality. Education is a critical determinant of income levels. Individuals with higher education qualifications have better chances of securing stable and well-paying jobs. However, access to quality education remains a challenge in Zambia. UNESCO (2023) reports that while the country has achieved near-universal primary school enrollment, only 42% of students complete secondary education, and even fewer advance to higher education. In low-income areas of Lusaka, dropout rates are high due to financial constraints and early pregnancies. Consequently, households with low educational attainment are often confined to low-income occupations, which perpetuates intergenerational inequality. Gender patterns also play a role in shaping income disparities. Female-headed households in Zambia, particularly in urban informal settlements, often face limited access to formal employment, credit facilities, and business opportunities. Cultural norms and structural inequalities restrict women's participation in higher-income activities, leading to gender-based economic disparities. Empowering women through education, entrepreneurship, and access to financial services could significantly reduce income inequality.

In urban areas such as Lusaka's Kuku Compound, these factors household size, education, gender roles, and informal employment interact to shape patterns of inequality. The majority of residents depend on informal work with low earnings, and large households often struggle to afford education or healthcare. Consequently, income inequality is reinforced by both structural and demographic factors. Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers and development practitioners seeking to promote equitable growth. By examining how household demographics affect income distribution in areas like Kuku Compound, this study aims to identify the most vulnerable groups and propose targeted interventions. These may include expanding access to education, supporting women's economic empowerment, and promoting income-generating initiatives in informal settlements. In conclusion, income inequality in Lusaka and Zambia at large is deeply influenced by household size, education levels, gender patterns, and the nature of employment. Addressing these interlinked factors requires comprehensive policy reforms

that improve access to quality education, create decent job opportunities, and support small-scale entrepreneurs, especially women. By tackling these root causes, Zambia can make significant progress toward achieving inclusive growth and reducing urban poverty.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Income inequality in Lusaka's urban areas remains a major concern, with wealth concentrated among a small elite while most residents, especially in informal settlements like Kuku, live in poverty. About 62% of Lusaka's population resides in informal settlements marked by overcrowding and poor access to sanitation, healthcare, and formal employment (International Growth Centre, 2022). Although Lusaka significantly contributes to Zambia's GDP, informal employment dominates, with only 27% of workers in formal jobs. The average household income in Lusaka Province is K5,644.80, yet most Kuku residents earn between K1,000 and K3,000 monthly (JCTR, 2023). This income gap makes it difficult for families to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and education, largely due to demographic factors like education level, employment type, and family size (UN-Habitat, 2023). Despite available data, limited research has examined how these household demographics directly influence income inequality in informal urban settings like Kuku. Existing studies by the Zambia Statistics Agency (2022) and the International Growth Centre (2017) provide demographic insights but do not explore their deeper causes or effects on inequality. This study therefore seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how household size, education, and employment patterns shape income disparities in Kuku Compound, contributing to a localized understanding that can inform effective policy measures to reduce urban income inequality in Lusaka.

1.2.1 General Objective

To Examine household demographics on income inequalities in urban areas; A case study of kuku compound of Lusaka district, Zambia.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the correlation between household size and the degree of household income inequality.
2. To analyze the correlation between household size and the degree of household income inequality.
3. To examine the effect of gender composition of the household head on household income disparities.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

This study is guided by Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961), which links education, skills, and experience to economic productivity and income. Investments in education and training increase employability and earnings. The theory is relevant to Kuku Compound, Lusaka, as household education levels and employment types influence income inequality. It also informs policy solutions, such as improving access to education and formal jobs, helping explain why some households earn more than others (Odhiambo, 2022; Chikopela & Banda, 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Household size and household income inequalities

Household size, defined as the number of individuals living together and sharing resources, is a key determinant of

income inequality (Esteve *et al.*, 2024). Larger households tend to have lower per capita incomes due to more dependents, such as children and elderly relatives, who do not contribute to earnings. This increases financial burdens related to food, housing, and healthcare, particularly in low-income households, intensifying income disparities compared to smaller households. The dependency ratio, which measures the number of dependents per 100 working-age individuals, is closely linked to income inequality, as households with more dependents face greater economic strain (Alvaredo *et al.*, 2018).

Empirical research across Africa supports this relationship. Odusola *et al.* (2017) found that larger households in Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania experience higher income inequality. Similarly, Chowa *et al.* (2017) observed that in Ghana, larger households have fewer resources and opportunities, widening the gap between rich and poor. Education and employment levels mediate these effects: households with higher education and stable employment are less affected by large household size. Lloyd-Sherlock *et al.* (2019) note that while larger households can provide support to older members, they also increase their economic burden, raising poverty risk due to lower per capita incomes. Regional and institutional reports reinforce these findings. The African Development Bank (2011) highlights that larger households struggle to access education and employment, reinforcing inequality. The International Growth Centre (2017) notes that in developing countries, households with many dependents rely on a limited number of earners, increasing financial pressure. The African Capacity Building Foundation (2012) emphasizes the need for policies tailored to larger households, given their higher dependency, lower incomes, and reduced access to services.

In Zambia, household size significantly affects income inequality. Zambia Statistics Agency (2022) data show that urban households earn nearly double rural households, but larger households face additional barriers to education, healthcare, and employment, contributing to income disparities. The Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (2018) shows that households with more than five members are more prone to poverty, with rural households larger (5.3 members) and poorer (64.3% poverty rate) than urban households (4.3 members; 34.6% poverty rate), reflecting the intersection of size, location, and vulnerability (Central Statistical Office, 2020).

Household size also influences consumption and savings patterns. Larger households often experience income volatility, leading to higher precautionary savings and reduced consumption, which can slow economic growth (Cust *et al.*, 2023). Digital finance has potential to alleviate consumption inequality by improving financial access, but employment, education, and social protection remain critical factors.

Overall, larger households face higher financial burdens and lower per capita income, exacerbating income inequality. Policies should target these households through improved access to education and employment, financial support, and social protection programs, addressing household size alongside broader structural factors to promote equitable economic development in Zambia and other African contexts (International Growth Centre, 2017).

2.2 Education attainment on household income distribution

Education plays a crucial role in shaping income distribution among households, particularly through its influence on employment opportunities, skills development, and earning potential. Research consistently shows that individuals with higher education levels generally earn more than those with lower education levels, as education equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to access better-paying jobs and secure stable employment (Lee & Lee, 2023; Makhoulouf & Lalley, 2023; Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). Households led by individuals with tertiary education typically enjoy higher incomes and financial stability, while those headed by individuals with only primary or secondary education face limited opportunities, contributing to income inequality.

The quality of education also significantly affects income distribution. In countries with strong education systems, even individuals from low-income backgrounds can improve their financial prospects, whereas in regions with poor education quality, higher education may not translate into well-paying jobs, perpetuating inequality (Lee & Lee, 2023; Makhoulouf & Lalley, 2023). Moreover, disparities in education funding exacerbate this problem, as insufficient investment in schools, teachers, and learning resources limits the ability of disadvantaged households to compete for high-paying opportunities (Hassan *et al.*, 2022).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, household heads with higher education levels are more likely to access formal employment or entrepreneurial opportunities, both of which provide stable and better-paying income sources (African Development Bank, 2021; Odhiambo, 2024). Conversely, those with lower education are often confined to informal sector work, which is low-paid, insecure, and lacking social protection, reinforcing income inequality (Mulenga, 2015; Kachingwe *et al.*, 2017). Gender disparities in education further contribute to inequality, as women in many African countries have less access to higher education, limiting their economic opportunities relative to male-headed households (Asongu *et al.*, 2020).

Regional and urban-rural differences also influence the relationship between education and income. Urban areas often provide better access to high-paying jobs for educated individuals, while in rural areas, even educated individuals may struggle due to fewer employment opportunities (Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, education enhances access to financial services, allowing educated households to invest in businesses or income-generating activities, further widening the gap with less-educated households (Asongu *et al.*, 2020).

Studies emphasize that labor market segmentation, where formal employment is largely reserved for highly educated individuals, perpetuates income inequality. Households with educated members can diversify income through formal jobs and entrepreneurship, while those with limited education remain confined to low-income informal work (Kachingwe *et al.*, 2017). Effective policies to reduce income inequality should prioritize equitable access to quality education, skills development, and support for disadvantaged households to participate in higher-paying economic activities.

In summary, education not only enhances individual earning potential but also influences household income distribution.

Its impact is mediated by the quality of education, access to employment, gender, regional disparities, and labor market structures, making it a key determinant in reducing income inequality globally and in Sub-Saharan Africa (African Development Bank, 2021).

2.3 Gender composition on household income inequalities

Household gender patterns significantly influence income inequality worldwide. Chancel (2022) notes that women earn substantially less than men, receiving only about 35% of global labor income. This disparity arises from traditional household roles where women engage in unpaid domestic work, limiting their time for paid employment and career advancement, particularly affecting single-mother households or those with unemployed men. The World Inequality Report (2022) emphasizes that women's lower labor market participation and concentration in low-paying jobs exacerbate household income disparities, highlighting the need for policies promoting equal access to education, training, and employment opportunities (Chancel *et al.*, 2022).

Similarly, Dastagir (2023) discusses "invisible labor," where women's unpaid domestic responsibilities hinder their earnings potential. This pattern perpetuates income inequality across generations, affecting overall household income and economic productivity. Sherwood (2018) adds that the emotional burden of household chores negatively impacts women's health and limits their professional growth, reinforcing income disparities. Studies in Africa by Raimi and Phiri (2024) and Mose *et al.* (2024) show that improved gender equality and targeted gender-focused foreign aid reduce household income inequality by enabling women to engage more fully in paid work. Workneh (2020) and Elu and Price (2017) argue that limited access to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making power perpetuates poverty and income inequality within households.

Technological innovations like mobile money can enhance women's participation in business and politics, mitigating the negative effects of income inequality (Asongu & Ngoungou, 2019; Peter & Yolande, 2020). However, high inequality can undermine the benefits of governance and economic policies aimed at promoting women's inclusion (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2020^[4]; Asongu & Okolo-Obasi, 2020). In Sub-Saharan Africa, traditional gender roles continue to restrict women's economic participation, limiting household earnings and contributing to inequality (Zawaira, 2023; Ngulube & Thelma, 2024; Mwansa & Munthali, 2018).

In Zambia, women's labor market participation significantly reduces household income inequality, as their earnings are often more equitably distributed within households (Kadzamira & Mkandawire, 2020; Chisadza *et al.*, 2022). Munalula-Ndulo (2019) emphasizes that equitable division of labor and effective household asset management empower women to contribute to household income, reducing inequality. Andersson *et al.* (2020) highlight that gender-neutral participation in agriculture improves household income distribution and welfare. The Zambian National Gender Policy (2021) supports these findings, advocating for gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and the dismantling of social and cultural norms that perpetuate income disparities.

Overall, research demonstrates that household gender patterns through labor market participation, division of unpaid domestic work, access to education, and decision-making power play a pivotal role in shaping income inequality. Policies promoting gender equality, targeted foreign aid, technological inclusion, and cultural change are critical for reducing household income disparities and fostering broader economic development. (Zambian Ministry of Gender, 2021, p. 25).

2.4 Personal Critique of the Literature

The literature shows that larger households, unequal education, and traditional gender roles contribute to income inequality. However, most studies are broad and lack focus on local urban informal areas like Kuku Compound in Lusaka. There is a gap in understanding how household size, education differences, and gender roles interact to shape income disparities at the community level, highlighting the need for localized research.

2.5 Literature gap

Although global and Sub-Saharan African research has explored income inequality, few studies focus on how household size, education, and gender patterns affect income distribution in urban informal settlements like Kuku Compound, Lusaka. Existing literature often addresses national trends but overlooks community-level dynamics, such as high dependency ratios in large households and unequal education within families. Gender patterns, including household decision-making, unpaid care work, and unequal employment access, are also under-researched in Zambia. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining how household size, education levels, and gender roles collectively influence income inequality in Kuku Compound. By focusing on this localized context, the research seeks to provide insights into the key drivers of inequality in low-income urban communities and inform targeted strategies to reduce disparities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach with a cross-sectional design, combining quantitative data (income, household size, education, gender) and qualitative insights (perceptions of inequality from community members and leaders) to understand income disparities in Kuku Compound (Dumitrescu & Hurlin, 2024). The cross-sectional design allows data collection at one point in time, capturing the current situation and relationships between household factors (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022). An exploratory approach will identify patterns and underlying factors linking household size, education, and gender to income inequalities before hypothesis testing (Van Ham *et al.*, 2021; Kouadio *et al.*, 2024).

3.2 Target Population

The study targets household members, heads, and community leaders aged 15–70 years in Kuku Compound, Lusaka District. This includes formal and informal employees and self-employed individuals who are aware of household income sources. Kuku Compound, characterized by high-density, low-income living with diverse employment types, provides a suitable setting for studying household-level income disparities (Zambia Statistics

Agency, 2022; African Development Bank, 2021; Kachingwe *et al.*, 2017).

3.3 Sampling Design

Stratified random sampling will be used, dividing the compound into zones and randomly selecting households from each zone. This ensures representation across different household structures and socioeconomic statuses, improving statistical efficiency and reducing sampling error (Robilliard, 2023; Cornia *et al.*, 2016; Dabla-Norris *et al.*, 2015).

3.4 Sample Size Determination

A sample of 100 households was chosen to capture diversity while allowing in-depth analysis. Using Yamane's formula with an estimated population of 3,392 households in Kuku Compound, the sample size is adequate for subgroup analysis and manageable data collection logistics (Makhlouf & Lalley, 2023; Kouadio *et al.*, 2024).

3.5 Data Collection Method

Data will be collected via structured household surveys and semi-structured interviews with local leaders. Surveys will gather quantitative data on household income, size, education, and employment, while interviews will explore perceptions of inequality and income-generating strategies (African Development Bank, 2021; Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022). Secondary data from the Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Survey and IGC reports will supplement primary data (IGC, 2017; Kachingwe *et al.*, 2017; Shimeles & Chouchane, 2016).

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using STATA, employing descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, regression models, and Gini coefficients to examine income inequality. Qualitative interview data will be coded thematically using NVivo to identify patterns and contextual insights (Chancel *et al.*, 2022; Robilliard, 2023; Kouadio *et al.*, 2024). Integrating both data types ensures robust and socially grounded findings (Boschken, 2020; Odhiambo, 2024).

3.7 Triangulation

Methodological triangulation will combine surveys, interviews, and secondary data to strengthen validity and highlight consistent patterns or contradictions, enhancing reliability and depth in studying complex income inequalities (Dabla-Norris *et al.*, 2015; Cust *et al.*, 2023; Esteve *et al.*, 2024).

3.8 Limitations of the Study

Potential challenges include non-responsiveness due to income sensitivity, underreporting of informal income, and language barriers. Findings from Kuku Compound may not generalize to all urban areas in Zambia. Mitigation strategies include ensuring anonymity, using local language enumerators, and cross-validating with secondary data (Alvaredo *et al.*, 2018; Odusola *et al.*, 2017; Cornia *et al.*, 2016).

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The study adheres to ethical standards. Informed consent will be obtained, participation is voluntary, and respondents

can withdraw anytime. Data will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes (African Development Bank, 2021; Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022; Esteve *et al.*, 2024).

4. Findings and Results

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

All respondents in this study are members of households within Kuku Compound, Lusaka District. The survey indicates that 56% of respondents were female and 44% male, reflecting women's central role in household management and their greater availability during survey administration. Age analysis shows that 63% of respondents were between 15 and 40 years, while 37% were aged 41 to 70, highlighting a predominantly youthful population with potential for higher economic activity, though youth unemployment may be a concern.

Marital status findings reveal that 45% are single, 37% married, 11% divorced, and 7% widowed. The high proportion of single respondents aligns with the youthful demographic and suggests dependency on family support, which can influence household income and expenditure patterns.

Education levels in Kuku Compound are generally low. The majority (51%) have only a Primary or Basic School certificate, 27% completed Secondary School, 17% attained a Higher Education Certificate, and 5% hold a Diploma. Only 1% have a Bachelor's degree, and no respondents reported having a Master's or PhD qualification. This low educational attainment limits economic opportunities and affects household income levels, contributing to income inequality.

Overall, the survey highlights a community characterized by a youthful population, a slightly higher number of women, predominantly single household members, and low levels of educational attainment. These demographic factors are crucial in understanding household income distribution, economic participation, and the socio-economic challenges within Kuku Compound.

4.2 Household size on household income inequalities

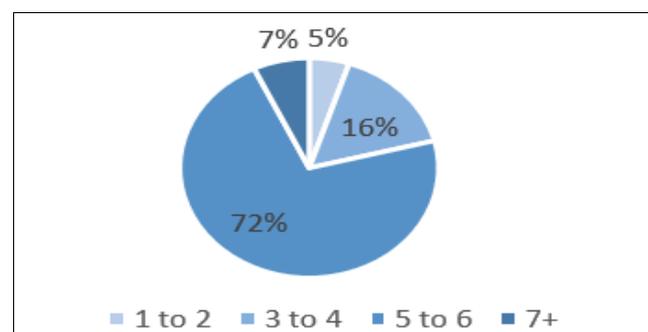


Fig 4.2.1: Household size

The survey findings indicate that 72% of households in Kuku Compound consist of five to six members, representing the largest group. About 16% have three to four members, while 7% include seven or more people. Only 5% of households are composed of one to two members. This demonstrates that most households are relatively large in size.

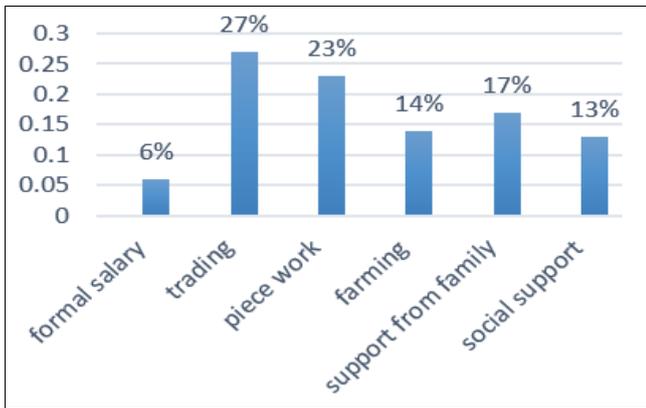


Fig 4.2.2: Household primary source of income

Survey results reveal that 27% of households in Kuku Compound rely on trading as their main source of income, followed by 23% who depend on piecework. Farming accounted for 14%, while 17% reported receiving support from family members. Social support represented 13%, and only 6% earned income from formal salaries.

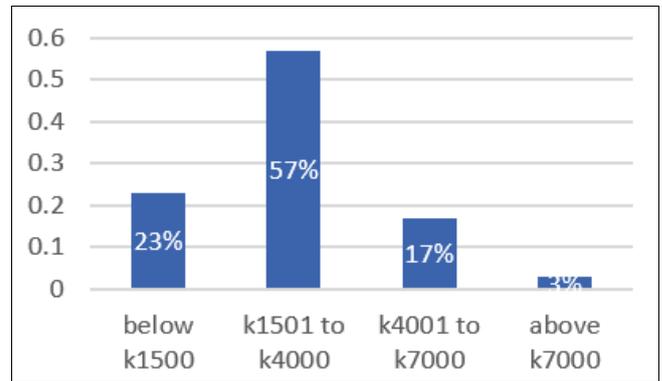


Fig 4.2.5: Household monthly income

Income distribution among households in Kuku Compound shows that 57% earn between K1,501 and K4,000 monthly, while 23% live on less than K1,500. About 17% earn between K4,001 and K7,000, and only 3% report earnings above K7,000.

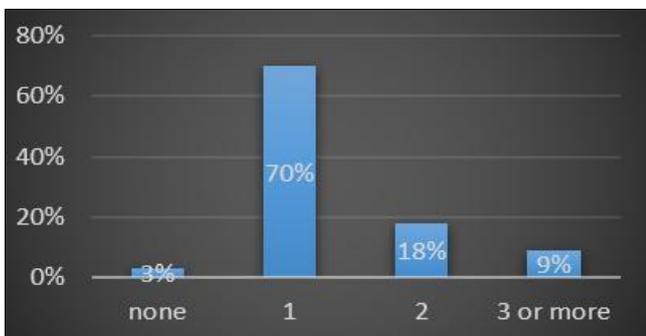


Fig 4.2.3: Household member contributing to household income

Findings show that in 70% of households within Kuku Compound, only one member contributes to household income. About 18% reported two contributors, while 9% had three or more. A small proportion, 3%, indicated that no member contributes income, relying entirely on external support.

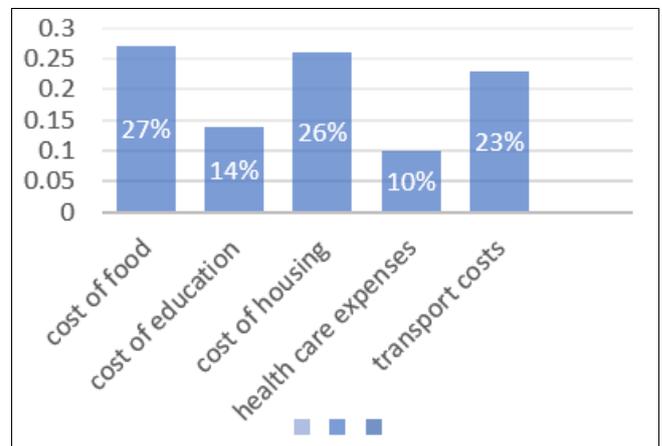


Fig 4.2.6: Financial challenges faced due to household size

Survey data shows that 27% of households in Kuku Compound identified food costs as their main financial challenge. Housing expenses followed closely at 26%, while 23% struggled with transport costs. Education expenses accounted for 14%, and healthcare costs represented 10%.

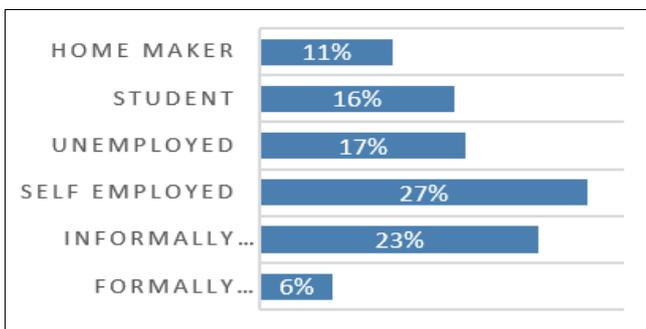


Fig 4.2.4: Current employment status

Employment data from Kuku Compound shows that 27% of respondents were self-employed, 23% were informally employed, and only 6% held formal jobs. Additionally, 17% reported being unemployed, 16% were students, and 11% were homemakers. The results highlight a dominance of informal and self-employment sectors within the community, reflecting limited access to formal labor markets.

4.3 Education levels and household income inequalities

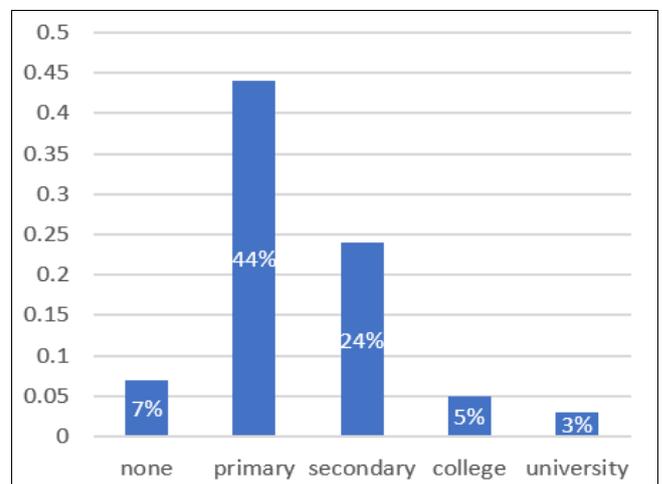


Fig 4.3.1: Highest household education level attained by main income earners

A large proportion of respondents, 44%, reported that their highest education level attained was primary school. Households with secondary education represent 24% of the sample. Notably, 7% of households reported having attained no formal education at all. At the higher education levels, only 5% of respondents had completed college, and a further 3% had attained university education. Notably, 7% of households reported having attained no formal education at all.

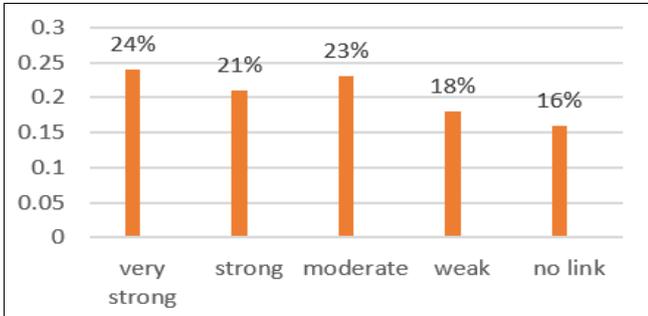


Fig 4.3.2: The link between one's education level and the type of jobs available

The findings reveal that 24% of respondents viewed the link between education level and type of job available as very strong, while 21% rated it as strong. Another 23% described it as moderate, whereas 18% and 16% perceived it as weak or nonexistent, respectively.

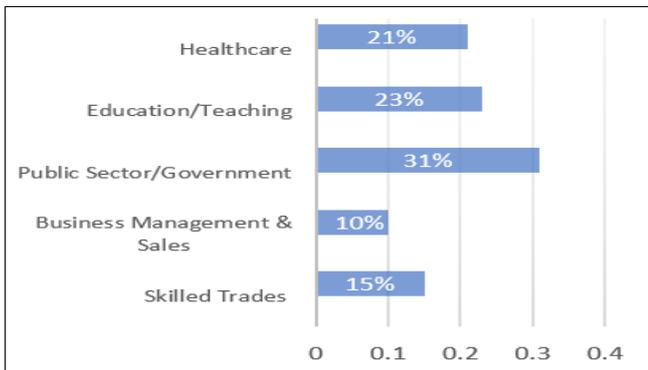


Fig 4.3.3: If educated what sector would you want to work in

The survey of 100 households in Kuku Compound revealed respondents' preferred sectors of employment if educated. The majority (31%) indicated a desire to work in the public sector or government, followed by education/teaching (23%) and healthcare (21%). Skilled trades and business management & sales were less preferred, at 15% and 10% respectively.

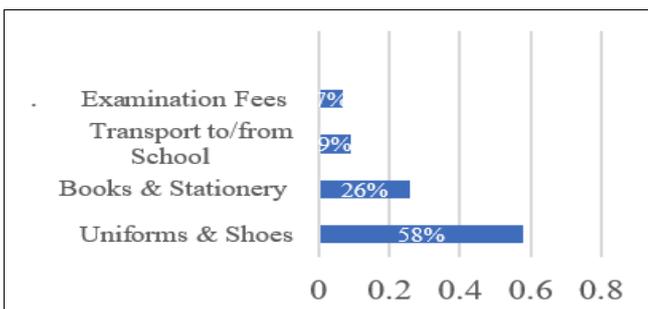


Fig 4.3.4: The most education-related expense that strains your household budget

The survey of 100 households in Kuku Compound identified the most significant education-related expenses straining household budgets. School fees emerged as the primary burden, cited by 58% of respondents. Following this, costs for school supplies accounted for 26%, while transportation (7%) and uniforms (5%) represented smaller portions.

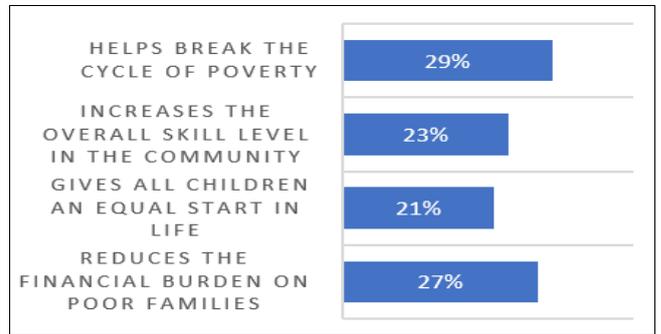


Fig 4.3.5: The most important way that free education reduces income inequalities

The survey explored how “free education” policies could reduce income inequality in Kuku Compound. The largest share of respondents (29%) believed free education helps break the cycle of poverty, followed closely by reducing the financial burden on poor families (27%) and increasing the overall skill level in the community (23%). Providing all children an equal start in life accounted for 21%.

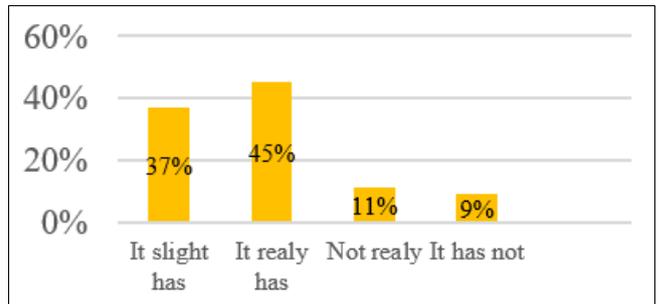


Fig 4.3.6: The members education level influence on job type

The survey investigated whether household members' education levels influence the type of work they do in Kuku Compound. A majority of respondents (45%) stated that education “really has” an influence, while 37% felt it “slightly has” an effect. Only 11% indicated it “does not really” influence work, and 9% believed it “has not” influenced employment.

4.4 Gender pattern and household income inequalities

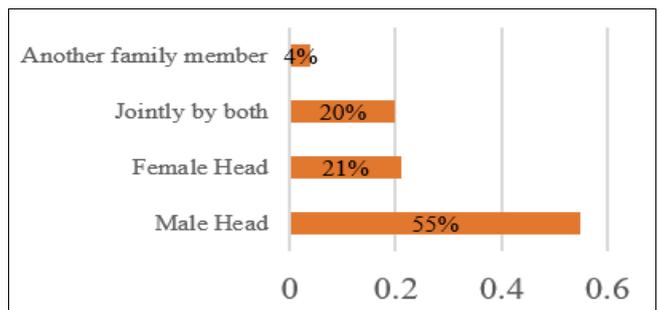


Fig 4.4.1: The one responsible for major financial decisions in the household

The survey examined who holds primary responsibility for major financial decisions in households in Kuku Compound. The majority (55%) reported that the male head of the household makes these decisions, while 21% indicated the female head, and 20% said decisions are made jointly. Only 4% stated that another family member is responsible.



Fig 4.4.2: Who typically has better access to stable, well-paying jobs

The survey explored perceptions of access to stable, well-paying jobs in Kuku Compound. Thirty percent of respondents believed men have much better access, while 25% felt men have slightly better access. Only 22% viewed access as equal, and women were perceived to have slightly or much better access by 13% and 10% of respondents, respectively.

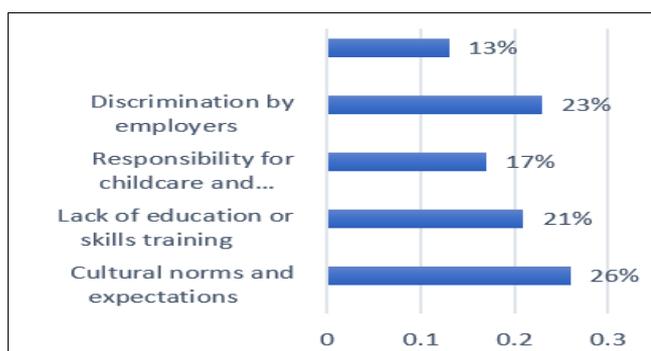


Fig 4.4.3: The biggest barrier preventing women from earning an income equal to men

Respondents identified cultural norms and expectations as the most significant barrier (26%), followed by discrimination by employers (23%) and lack of education or skills training (21%). Responsibility for childcare and domestic work accounted for 17%, while lack of access to capital for business was least cited at 13%.

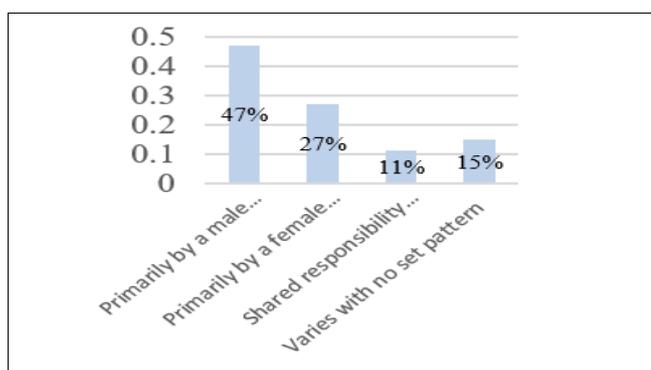


Fig 4.4.4: How everyday expenses (like food and groceries) are managed

The survey examined how everyday household expenses are managed in Kuku Compound. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) indicated that a male member primarily manages expenses, while 27% reported that a female member takes primary responsibility. Shared responsibility between men and women was noted by 11%, and 15% stated that management varies with no set pattern.

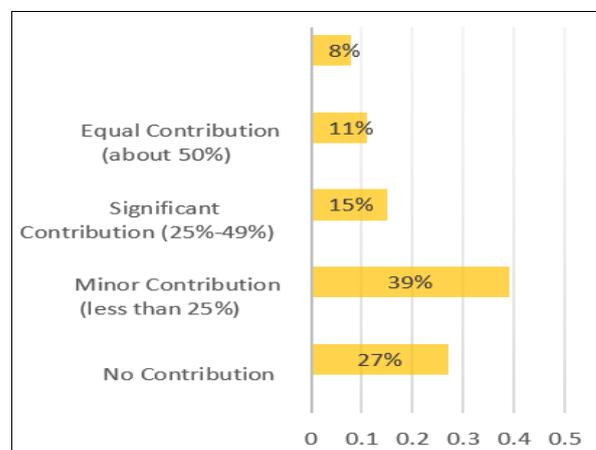


Fig 4.4.5: The contribution of female members to your household's total income

The survey assessed female members' contributions to household income in Kuku Compound. The largest share (39%) reported a minor contribution (less than 25%), while 27% indicated no contribution. Significant contributions (25%-49%) were reported by 15%, equal contributions (around 50%) by 11%, and primary contributions (more than 50%) by only 8%.

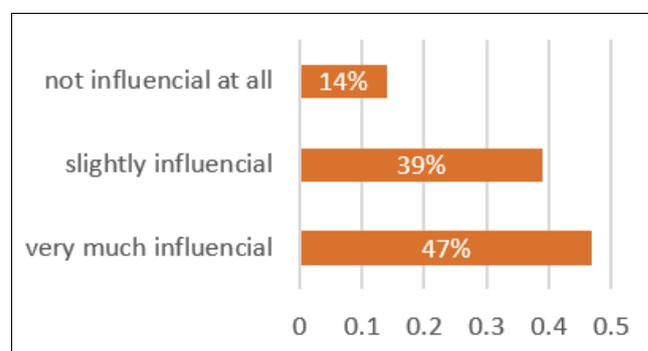


Fig 4.4.6: How gender of main income earner in a household influence economic opportunities

The survey examined how the gender of the main income earner affects household economic stability in Kuku Compound. A majority of respondents (47%) indicated that it is "very much influential," while 39% felt it is "slightly influential," and 14% believed it has no influence at all.

4.5 Discussion of Results

4.5.1 Household Size and Income Inequalities

The study of household size in Kuku Compound revealed that most households are large, with 72% comprising 6–8 members and 7% having more than 8 members, highlighting extended family structures and high dependency ratios. Smaller households (1–2 members) accounted for only 5%. Large household sizes directly impact income distribution, expenditure, and financial stability, as most households rely

on a limited number of earners 72% have only 1–2 working members, 18% have 2–3, 7% have 3–4, and 3% have none. Employment is predominantly informal or precarious, increasing economic vulnerability.

Income sources are concentrated, with 75% relying on salaried work, 15% on piecework, and 7% on small businesses. Despite this, most households earn between K1,001–K3,000 monthly (87%), while only 3% exceed K5,000, demonstrating limited economic diversity and entrenched inequalities. Income constraints exacerbate challenges: 45% cited insufficient income, 27% food insecurity, 18% high rent, and 10% lack of clean water. Larger households experience additional strain, with higher spending on dependents, living costs, utilities, and reduced savings.

High dependency ratios, unstable earnings, and unexpected expenses further widen income gaps, while low wages and underemployment amplify dissatisfaction. Overall, household size significantly magnifies income inequalities in Kuku Compound, as limited income opportunities struggle to meet the needs of large families. Policy interventions that expand employment, stabilize wages, reduce living costs, and strengthen household financial resilience are critical to addressing these disparities.

4.5.2 Education Levels and Income Inequalities

Education disparities in Kuku Compound strongly influence household income inequalities. Survey results show that 44% of respondents completed primary school, 24% secondary, 7% had no formal education, and only 5% and 3% completed college and university, respectively. Limited educational attainment constrains access to secure, well-paying employment. Respondents with higher education preferred formal self-employment (56%) and formal jobs (29%), while informal employment dominated for lower-educated households.

Financial barriers hinder education: 38% of households struggle due to multiple children in school, 26% face low or unstable incomes, 21% cite competing household expenses, and 15% highlight high costs for materials. Despite these challenges, education is widely recognized as a key avenue for reducing inequality. Respondents reported that education facilitates access to better-paying jobs (30%), reduces dependency (29%), increases awareness of opportunities and rights (27%), and develops self-employment skills (24%).

Households actively invest in learning: 60% consistently support education, 25% provide guidance, and 6% rarely engage. Free education is considered an equalizer, with 41% noting it ensures access for all children and 34% believing it narrows inequality gaps. Lifelong learning trends indicate 61% of households have 1–3 members returning to school, demonstrating commitment to long-term income improvement.

Employment outcomes remain skewed: 53% of household members are informally employed, 39% self-employed, only 5% hold formal jobs, and 3% are unemployed. The prevalence of informal and unstable employment underscores the link between low education levels and limited income opportunities. Expanding affordable education, promoting skill development, and increasing formal employment are essential strategies to reduce income inequalities in Kuku Compound.

4.5.3 Gender Patterns and Income Inequalities

Gender patterns in Kuku Compound influence household income and economic outcomes. Among 100 households

surveyed, 49% were male-headed, 21% female-headed, 33% joint-headed, and 7% extended family households. Male-headed households dominate and generally benefit from greater economic opportunities, while female-headed households often experience higher vulnerability. Joint-headed households demonstrate collaborative decision-making, which can improve income allocation and stability. Perceptions of income show strong gender differences: 47% believe male-headed households earn significantly more, 27% slightly more, 15% slightly less for female-headed households, and 11% perceive no difference. Similarly, 53% report that male-headed households have significantly better access to income-generating opportunities, reinforcing male economic advantage. Joint financial decision-making also positively influences household income, with 47% noting a strong effect and 24% a moderate effect.

Barriers to equitable income contribution include unequal job access (31%), lack of education (29%), cultural beliefs (26%), and caregiving responsibilities (14%), disproportionately affecting women. Employment trends reflect disparities: men are primarily in informal work (56%) and skilled trades (25%), with some in formal employment (16%), while women are concentrated in informal work, small businesses, caregiving, and only 9% in formal employment. Women contribute significantly to household income through trading (67%) and casual work (22%), but limited access to formal and high-paying jobs restricts financial stability.

These findings highlight structural and cultural constraints that exacerbate gender-based income disparities. Expanding women's access to formal employment, microfinance, and entrepreneurial support could enhance household economic resilience and reduce inequalities, promoting more equitable income distribution in Kuku Compound.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study has illuminated the multifaceted dynamics of household demographics and income inequalities in Kuku Compound, Lusaka, Zambia. The findings underscore that large household sizes, limited educational attainment, and gender disparities are significant contributors to the prevailing income inequalities in urban informal settlements. The predominance of large households, with 72% comprising six to eight members, which predominantly fall within the K1,001 to K3,000 monthly range. This income bracket reflects the challenges faced by residents in accessing stable and sufficient economic opportunities, particularly within the informal sector, where 92% of households are engaged.

Education emerges as a pivotal factor in mitigating income disparities, with 71% of respondents recognizing its critical role in enhancing economic prospects. The strong support for free education (77%) indicates a collective aspiration to bridge the educational divide and, by extension, reduce income inequalities.

Gender dynamics further complicate the income landscape, with female-headed households facing structural barriers that hinder their access to income-generating opportunities. Notably, 81% of women reported having no access to income sources, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to empower women economically.

Addressing these structural and demographic challenges necessitates comprehensive policy interventions that

promote educational access, economic empowerment, and gender equity. Such measures are essential for fostering sustainable economic development and reducing income inequalities in urban informal settlements like Kuku Compound.

5.2 Recommendations

- Enhancing educational access and quality should be a priority, policymakers should implement targeted initiatives such as scholarships, vocational training, and adult literacy programs to ensure equitable access for all household members, particularly in large families where dependency ratios are high.
- women's economic empowerment is critical, interventions should include microfinance schemes, entrepreneurial support, skills development, and equitable employment opportunities to enable women to participate meaningfully in household income generation. Supporting female-headed households will directly reduce vulnerability and promote household welfare.
- Social protection measures are essential for households with minimal or no income earners. Targeted cash transfers, can alleviate immediate financial pressures and promote resilience against poverty.

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