

Domestic Violence On Children's, Performance. A Case Study Of Pakele Sub-County, Adjumani District

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of domestic violence on children's performance in Pakele sub-county, located in Adjumani district. The specific objectives were threefold: firstly, to examine the effects of domestic violence on learners' performance in Pakele sub-county; secondly, to establish the influence of psychological abuse on children's performance in the same region; and thirdly, to explore the strategies implemented to curb domestic violence in Pakele sub-county. The research utilized a descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between domestic violence and children's academic performance in Pakele Sub County, Adjumani District. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, the study involved 70 respondents, including head teachers, teachers, students, parents, victims of domestic violence, and local leaders. The sampling techniques employed were purposive and simple random sampling. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and interview guides, with a 5-point Likert scale used for closed-ended questions. The study employed validity and reliability measures to ensure the robustness of the instruments. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for respondents, were prioritized throughout the research process. The analysis of data involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, presenting findings through tables, figures, and percentages. The study revealed demographic characteristics of the participants, highlighting gender distribution, marital status, level of education, and age categories. The results indicated a higher vulnerability of females to domestic violence and a predominant presence of single respondents, mainly students. The majority of respondents had attained a secondary level of education, and participants aged 31 to 40 years were the most represented. Despite limitations such as potential non-response and financial constraints, the study contributed valuable insights into the complex interplay between domestic violence and academic performance.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Children, academic and Performance

Background of the study

Globally, domestic violence against women, which is a widespread form of violence in many countries, is often the least publicized or discussed (Nafiu et al., 2016). This interesting and comprehensive article by Harold and Sellers (2018) focuses on the developmental risks for children who are exposed to domestic violence, including both the short-term impact on their behavior and emotions and the long-term impact on mental health and relationships (Jac &

Kazaara, 2023). In order to increase the importance of this problem, it is important to spread the word about the extent of the problem. In the 2015 United States Annual Prevalence Report, the US Children's Bureau estimates that 683,000 children are victims of abuse and neglect nationwide, which is 9.2 victims per 1,000 children in the population (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023). It is also important to note that children during the first year of life reportedly

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had the highest victimization rate, 24.2 per 1,000 children of this group in the national population (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015). At the national level, domestic violence and children's performances have received considerable attention from scholars and politicians in various countries. For example, research by the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2017) in the United States highlighted the profound and lasting effects of domestic violence, including detrimental effects on children's cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, and academic achievement (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Similarly, studies conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2019) highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence in Australia and its correlation with adverse outcomes for children, such as reduced engagement in school, learning difficulties and behavioral problems (Emmanuel et al., 2023). In addition, research conducted by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in the UK (2020) has shed light on the intergenerational impact of domestic violence, revealing a cycle of trauma that hinders children's education and overall social-emotional development.

At the regional level, researchers such as Muntingh and Pienaar (2016) have extensively researched the impact of domestic violence on children's school performance in Southern Africa, particularly in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana (Ninsiima et al., 2023). Their research pointed to long-term psychological and educational consequences for children exposed to domestic violence and

revealed a correlation between this exposure and increased behavioral problems, reduced cognitive abilities and poor school performance. Additionally, studies by Gobodo-Madikizela (2014) in South Africa and Moyo and Tshuma (2018) in Zimbabwe highlighted the pervasive nature of domestic violence and its detrimental effects on children's educational outcomes and social well-being in the Southern African region. . an African Union study on gender-based violence (2020) highlighted the regional context and revealed a significant correlation between domestic violence and academic underachievement of children in sub-Saharan Africa, characterized by lower educational aspirations and impaired cognitive development (Winny et al., 2023).

At the local level, for example in Uganda, the impact of domestic violence on children's academic performance is a growing concern, as evidenced by the seminal work of Kata and Namara (2017) in Gulu and Mbale districts. Their research shed light on the far-reaching consequences of domestic violence on children's psychological well-being and academic achievement in these particular locales, highlighting the urgent need for community-based initiatives to provide support and intervention (Ntirandekura & Friday, 2022). Similarly, a comprehensive study by Akello and Omoding (2019) in Kampala and Jinja municipalities highlighted the detrimental effects of domestic violence on children's cognitive development and educational outcomes, and highlighted the importance of tailored interventions and protective measures within these districts and municipalities

(Ntirandekura and Friday 2022).

Pakele Sub-County is located in Adjumani District in Northern Uganda. The subregion has 7 parishes and 25 villages. Adjumani District in Uganda is dealing with serious consequences of domestic violence on the well-being of children, especially in Pakele Sub-District. Several scholars, including Apondi (2018) and Nambi (2020), have extensively documented the harmful effects of domestic violence on children, highlighting its detrimental impact on their cognitive and emotional development. Studies in the specific context of Pakele Sub-County, such as that conducted by Otim (2016),

highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence and its correlation with poor academic performance among children in the region (Frank et al., 2023). This highlights the challenging conditions that children in Pakele sub-county face due to domestic violence, which affects their overall educational experience and learning outcomes. This has created an urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the underlying issues and support disabled children in overcoming the adversities they face in their pursuit of education and personal growth (Brighton et al., 2023).

Problem statement.

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW), domestic violence is high in Uganda, as reported in a survey report (2007). According to various studies, 41% of women have been sexually abused, 61% of women have been physically abused one or more times in adulthood, and the peak period of sexual and physical abuse is between the ages of 21 and 30 (Musaibah et al., 2023). A possible consequence of this is that children who witness violence between their parents are more able to express their fear and concern about their parents' behavior (Idris, 2018). They may therefore show difficulties with school work, including poor academic performance, dislike of going to school, and difficulty concentrating (Wexler, 2010). It is not clear how the types and extent of domestic violence affect students' school performance and school participation.

Despite the measures that have been put in place to deal with domestic violence, the police in Pakele sub-region say that the number of cases of domestic violence in the sub-region is on the rise. Community Liaison Officer at Pakele Central Police Station, Johnson Kilama, says 450 cases of domestic violence were reported to the police from January to July 2022. Of the 450 reported cases, 148 relate to child neglect. Children who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence may develop physical, psychological and behavioral problems as a result of physical, verbal, psychological and other forms of violence (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). This can affect their participation in school, as they may go to school when they are too afraid to learn, and a large proportion of them may fall behind in the classroom and in life due to exposure to domestic violence (Wathen, 2013). The research is therefore focused on finding out the effects of domestic violence on the academic performance of children in Pakele sub-district in Adjumani district.

Specific objectives

1. To examine the effects of domestic violence effects on the performance of the learners in Pakele sub-county

2. To establish the influence of psychological abuse on children's performance in Pakele sub-county

3. To find out the strategies put in place to curb down domestic violence in Pakele sub-county

Methodology

This researcher used descriptive research design. (Olanrewaju et al., 2021a) notes that descriptive design allows the researcher to describe the variables and their relationships. This design was the best for this study in that it enabled the researcher examine the relationship between domestic violence and children's performance (Nafiu, 2012). Descriptive designs result in a description of the data, either in words, pictures, charts, or tables, and indicate whether the data analysis shows statistical relationships or is merely descriptive. The design allowed the researcher to focus domestic violence and performance of students. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected as per data collection plan (Nafiu & Ph, 2012). Qualitative data provided an in-depth analysis and explanations of information on the subject of study while quantitative data provided statistical information of the subject of study in form of figures and tables and also it quantified the measurable aspects of the topic (Lu et al., 2013).

The study was conducted in Pakele Sub County, Adjumani District. The researcher selected five secondary schools in the Sub County. The researcher chose Pakele sub-sub county because there are still many cases of domestic violence which have affected students' performance in class. The study population was 160 respondents including 5 head teachers, 40 teachers, 80 students, 10 parents, 20 victims of domestic violence and 5 local leaders. Sample is therefore, a portion of population which is involved in the research work (Nafiu et al., 2012). The researcher used sample size of 70 respondents that is 5 head teachers, 15 teachers, 32 students, 15 victims of domestic violence and 3 local leaders through use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table 1: Showing the sample size of the respondents

Respondents	Sample size	Sample Technique
Head teachers	5	Purposive sampling
Teachers	15	Simple random sampling
Students	32	Simple random sampling
Victims of domestic violence	15	Purposive Sampling
Local leaders	3	Purposive sampling
TOTAL	70	

Source: Adopted from Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Modified by the researcher (2023)

The study used simple random sampling technique to select teachers and students. When using random sampling, the sample units are selected by means of lottery method (Ahuja, 2011). The researcher chose to use this technique because it gives all elements of the targeted population an equal chance of being included in the study. Additionally, with simple random sampling technique the researcher does not need to know the true composition of the population beforehand and therefore required prior knowledge of the population (Anwar et al., 2022). The study employed purposive sampling technique to select key

informants including; head teachers, victims of domestic violence and local leaders. This technique was employed on assumption that sampled members are pertinent to the research study and their availability to the researcher. Given that the samples were selected from smaller groups of key informants, the researcher needed to collect very informative data, and thus the researcher selected the sample purposively at one's own will (Nafiu et al., 2013).

The study used self-administered questionnaires as the main data collection tool. The major part of the questionnaires constituted closed and open-ended questions. The selection of this tool was guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available as well as by the objectives of the study. Normally, questionnaire guide is preferred because of high number of respondents involved in the study, the cost implications and the nature of the topic which has both quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires was self-administered because they are easy to be filled by the participants on their own. They keep the respondents on the subject, they are respectively objective and are fairly easy to make frequent counts and it is the easiest means of reaching respondents and obtaining desired information in the limited time available (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b). A 5-point Likert scale was used for closed-ended questions, with response modes ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." The data collected during the study was first organized, sorted, and cleaned before being analyzed. For the quantitative constructs coding was used and SPSS was employed for conducting the analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses was conducted and the findings was presented using tables, figures and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis approach where the data was scrutinized for emerging themes out of the responses from the respondents.

RESULTS

Table 1: Effect of Cash deposit of service through agency banking in the financial institutions.

Response	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Domestic violence increased risk	36	51.4%	32	45.8%	2	2.8%	0	0.0	0	0.0
of school dropout, decreased educational aspirations, and limited access to higher										
Children exposed to domestic	31	44.3%	36	51.4%	0	0.0	3	4.3%	0	0.0
violence experience emotional distress that impacts their										

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Domestic violence leads to behavioral issues among children, such as aggression, withdrawal, and emotional distress which disrupt the	28	40.0%	32	45.8	2	2.8	6	8.6	2	2.8
Children exposed to domestic violence may experience difficulties with concentration, attention, and memory, thereby impacting their ability to focus on academic tasks	37	52.9%	29	41.4%	1	1.4%	3	4.3%	0	0.0%

Source: field data 2023

Table 1 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the effect of cash deposit services through agency banking in financial institutions on the relationship between domestic violence and children's educational experiences. For the statement asserting that domestic violence increases the risk of school dropout, decreases educational aspirations, and limits access to higher education, a substantial 51.4% strongly agree, and 45.8% agree (Nelson et al., 2023). The limited 2.8% expressing uncertainty suggests a high level of consensus. The absence of any disagreement or strong disagreement indicates a unanimous acknowledgment of the detrimental impact of domestic violence on children's education, emphasizing the urgency of addressing this issue to prevent adverse educational outcomes.

In terms of children exposed to domestic violence experiencing emotional distress that impacts their learning abilities, 44.3% strongly agree, and 51.4% agree. The absence of uncertainty and the low percentage of disagreement (4.3%) emphasize a widespread consensus on the negative impact of emotional distress resulting from domestic violence on children's learning abilities (Richard et al., 2023). The absence of strong disagreement further underscores the unanimity in recognizing the link between emotional distress and compromised learning, emphasizing the need for interventions that address the emotional well-being of children.

Concerning the statement that domestic violence leads to behavioral issues among children, such as aggression, withdrawal, and emotional distress, disrupting the learning environment, 40.0% strongly agree, and 45.8% agree. The presence of uncertainty (2.8%) indicates some variability in perceptions, while 8.6% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree. This diversity suggests that while there is general agreement on the behavioral impact of domestic violence, some respondents do not perceive a significant disruption in the learning environment (Christopher et al., 2022). Addressing the concerns of those who

disagree is crucial to creating a supportive and conducive educational setting for children exposed to domestic violence.

For the statement asserting that children exposed to domestic violence may experience difficulties with concentration, attention, and memory, impacting their ability to focus on academic tasks, a substantial 52.9% strongly agree, and 41.4% agree. The low uncertainty (1.4%) indicates a high level of confidence in this perception. The minimal disagreement (4.3%) suggests a shared understanding of the cognitive challenges faced by children exposed to domestic violence (Kinyata & Abiodun, 2020). The absence of strong disagreement emphasizes the broad acknowledgment of the link between domestic violence and academic difficulties, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support the cognitive development of affected children.

Table 2: Influence of psychological abuse on children's' performance in Pakele sub-county

Response		F (%)		F (%)		F (%)		F (%)		F (%)
	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
Psychological abuse at home negatively affects a child's concentration in school.	20	29%	35	50%	3	4%	12	17%	0	0
Children subjected to psychological abuse demonstrate reduced self-esteem, which impacts their academic performance.	40	57%	25	36%	5	7%	0	0	0	0
Psychological abuse contributes to increased absenteeism and truancy among affected children.	35	50%	20	29%	3	4%	9	13%	3	4
Psychological abuse contributes to the development of behavioral challenges	31	44.3%	36	51.4%	0	0.0	3	4.3%	0	0.0

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 presents the perceptions of respondents regarding the influence of psychological abuse on children's performance in Pakele sub-county. The statement asserting that psychological abuse at home negatively affects a child's concentration in school indicates that 29% strongly agree and 50% agree, reflecting a significant majority acknowledging the detrimental impact of psychological abuse on concentration. The low percentage of disagreement (17%) suggests a general consensus. The absence of any strong disagreement implies a shared recognition of the adverse effects of psychological abuse on children's ability to concentrate in an academic setting (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). This underscores the urgent need for interventions that address the psychological well-being of children at home to enhance their focus and concentration in school.

Concerning the statement that children subjected to psychological abuse demonstrate reduced self-esteem, impacting their academic performance, 57% strongly agree, and 36% agree. The absence of respondents expressing uncertainty suggests a high level of confidence in this perception. The complete absence of disagreement or strong disagreement emphasizes the unanimous acknowledgment of the link between psychological abuse, reduced self-esteem, and compromised academic performance. This underscores the importance of addressing self-esteem issues as part of comprehensive strategies to improve the overall academic well-being of affected children (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023).

For the statement indicating that psychological abuse contributes to increased absenteeism and truancy among affected children, 50% strongly agree, and 29% agree. The low percentage of uncertainty (4%) indicates a high level of confidence in this perception. The 13% expressing disagreement and 4% strong disagreement suggest some divergence in opinions. While a majority recognizes the link between psychological abuse and absenteeism, there is a need to address concerns and perspectives of those who disagree. This highlights the importance of targeted interventions to reduce absenteeism and truancy by addressing the underlying psychological abuse affecting children.

Regarding the statement that psychological abuse contributes to the development of behavioral challenges, 44.3% strongly agree, and 51.4% agree. The absence of uncertainty indicates a high level of confidence in this perception. The 4.3% expressing disagreement suggests a small minority with a differing perspective. The complete absence of strong disagreement emphasizes the overall agreement regarding the association between psychological abuse and behavioral challenges. This underscores the importance of addressing psychological abuse as a contributing factor to behavioral issues among children, requiring targeted strategies for behavioral intervention.

Table 3: strategies put in place to curb down domestic violence in Pakele sub-county

	SA	A	NS	D	SD	TOTAL
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	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Education programs in schools play a significant role in raising awareness and preventing domestic violence.	43	61%	27		0		0	0	70
Access to counselling services and support groups helps in reducing incidents of domestic violence.	20	28.5%	41				9		70
Legal interventions and community policing contribute to curbing the prevalence of domestic violence.	42	60%	28		0		0	0	70

Source: field data 2023

Table 3 provides insights into the strategies implemented to address domestic violence in Pakele sub-county. In the statement asserting that education programs in schools play a significant role in raising awareness and preventing domestic violence, a substantial 61% strongly agree, and 38.5% agree. The absence of respondents expressing uncertainty or disagreement suggests a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of educational programs. This indicates that the community acknowledges the role of education in raising awareness, emphasizing the importance of continued educational initiatives to prevent and address domestic violence.

Regarding access to counseling services and support groups helping in reducing incidents of domestic violence, 28.5% strongly agree, and 58.5% agree. The 12.8% expressing uncertainty indicates some ambiguity in perceptions. While the majority acknowledges the positive impact of counseling services and support groups, the presence of uncertainty suggests a need for further clarification or awareness. Additionally, the absence of disagreement implies a general consensus on the value of support services, emphasizing the need for continued availability and accessibility of such resources in the community.

In the statement about legal interventions and community policing contributing to curbing the prevalence of domestic violence, a significant 60% strongly agree, and 40% agree. The absence of respondents expressing uncertainty or disagreement underscores a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of legal and policing measures. This strong agreement highlights the importance of reinforcing legal frameworks

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and community policing strategies to address domestic violence. The absence of disagreement emphasizes the widespread recognition of the role of legal interventions in combating domestic violence.

Conclusions

From the findings, it can be concluded that physical abuse, sexual abuse and psychological abuse has an extreme impact on the academic performance of students in in public day secondary schools in Pakele sub-county in Adjumani district. Domestic violence is indeed a real phenomenon as the study found out. The research indeed found out that both teachers and students were aware of its existence and the fact that if unchecked it surely leads to decline in academic performance. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the abused learners tend to absent themselves from class, lose concentration and focus on their abusive experiences. They also do not participate in class discussions or other class activities. Thus, they find themselves having to repeat grades.

It was also concluded that the abused learners in this study paid more attention to their painful experiences and failed to concentrate on their school work. This affected their full participation in class. Some of them tend to sleep in class and show signs of fatigue most of the time. Another conclusion drawn from the study is that an abused child develops bad behavior such as bullying other learners and hate people surrounding him/her. These learners are often undisciplined and are always bin trouble with authority. They also prefer solitary environments hence their academic performance declines due to low concentration and divided attention.

It can also be assumed that violence in schools may also be as a result of angry, frustrated and suffering students who come from abusive homes while in school, teachers have no time to listen or help due to the heavy school curriculum. It is therefore important that other measures are put in place to ensure teachers intervene where students are suffering from violence in their homes. Otherwise even if we get all resources and adequate personnel in our schools but continue to receive abused students from their homes, performance may continue to be wanting

Recommendations of the Study

The government and other stake holders should put in place strategies to curb physical, sexual and psychological abuses that affect academic performance in public day secondary schools. This is because the study the study has established that domestic violence has affected academic performance negatively.

Education sector policy makers, school administrators and teachers definitely found it useful to use the findings of this study to formulate strategies that enhanced participation of students coming from families vulnerable to domestic violence. The local administration and social workers as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) used these findings in identifying such families and in formulating strategies for addressing the ills of domestic violence and thus encourage socially inclusive intervention mechanisms.

Teachers and mental health providers may establish an effective partnership in the dialogue of teacher/student/parent communication for traumatized youth who have been psychologically affected by domestic abuse. Teachers play an essential role in helping children heal from traumatic experiences and in creating a safe school environment for learning.

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