

Cattle Rustling And It's Impact On Pupils' Access To Primary Education. A Case Study Of Selected Primary Schools In Apac District.

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Abstract

The study sought to find out the influence of cattle rustling on pupils' access to primary education. A case study of selected primary schools in Apac district. With such magnitude of violence in place Schools have closed to prevent attacks and the government may be reluctant to reopen schools because threats of attack may still be present. The instruments used in collection of data included questionnaires and interview guides. They were designed for the different groups of sample representatives. The study established that cattle rustling had various causes such as need to expand boundaries, incitements by politicians, competition for grazing fields and it was a lucrative business to some people. The study also established out that cattle rustling had effects on pupils' access to primary education. Some pupils dropped out of school as a result of cattle rustling others became orphans, others feared attacks while at school therefore they stopped going to school and teachers stopped going to school for fear of being the targets. All this crippled accessibility of education by pupils in Apac district. The study recommended that in order to improve the situation on the area the government in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations should set up more boarding schools to shorten the distance and improve on security by building police camps near the boarding schools. In order to stop the practice of cattle rustling the government to eradicate black markets for cattle. Also, all security agencies and relevant line ministries should collaborate with each other and with key education stake holders to ensure that the cattle rustling is promptly and effectively resolved so that pupils can continue with their education without fear.

Keywords: Cattle, Rustling, Pupils, Primary and Education

Background to the Study

Cattle rustling is the theft or planning, organizing, attempting, aiding or abetting the theft of livestock by any person from any community where the theft is accompanied by dangerous weapons and/or violence. Thanks to this, it becomes one of the forms of insecurity especially in the communities where it is practiced. Insecurity in society is one of the main challenges facing education in today's world. (Harbon and Wallenstein 2009), notes that although the incidence of civil wars has decreased in recent years, the legacy of violence still persists in many countries around the world, particularly in Africa, the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East. Cattle rustling is a persistent security challenge that has affected regions of northern Uganda for decades. As a cross-border crime, cattle rustling involves the violent theft of livestock from communities by armed raiders. The Apac area in Lango sub-region is one of the areas where there are frequent cattle raids which adversely affect the local population. A large part of the rural economy and livelihood of the Apac depends on cattle breeding. However, the threat of rustling consistently disrupted this system. According to the Apac Resident District Commissioner's office, there were more than 50 major rustlings across the district from 2017-2020, with hundreds of cattle looted each time (RDC Office in Apac, 2022). These raids often involve violence, injury and death on both sides of the clashes. Insecurity caused by cattle rustling poses a critical challenge to children's access to education in Apac. During attacks, school children are directly at risk of being

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caught in the act of violence. This has caused many parents in the constantly attacked areas to withdraw their students from schools for safety reasons (Victoria et al., 2023). In some sub-districts, such as Akokoro, the number of students enrolled decreased by more than 30% between 2016-2019 due to frequent raids around schools (MŠMT, 2020).

The loss of family livestock also limits the funds available for school expenses such as school fees, uniforms and school supplies. When herds are raided, children may be forced to leave school to help rebuild family assets or find alternative income (Anena, 2020). Children from families in Apac with rustling are more than 3 times more likely to drop out of school or never register than in secure areas (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Long absences caused by bullying and their impact on livelihoods pose additional threats to children's learning. Frequent missed days disrupt students' mastery of concepts and put them at risk of falling behind, which can reduce motivation (Barnes et al., 2021). Teachers also report problems with senior classroom management when teaching disruptive students (UNICEF, 2021). To limit the ill effects, the government of Uganda has deployed sizeable security contingents to disarm and contain the rustlers operating in the northern regions including Apac. Although these operations increase security, they have had limited success in completely eliminating the threat (Carment et al., 2006). The local administration of Apac District has introduced scholarships and feeding programs to encourage the enrollment of children affected by tinnitus, but coverage remains narrow (Apac District, 2020). It is therefore up to the administrative authorities in the affected areas to take meaningful and significant steps by bringing the warring parties together to promote peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

Statement of the problem

The provision and access to education is an important priority for every country and remains a very basic right that every child must acquire. The Ugandan government's policy to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) needs to be seen as a development in a wider international context (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024).

Despite this, however, serious problems affected the implementation of the UPE policy

The Ugandan Government's Efforts to Realize Education for All (EFA), (UNICEF and World Bank, 2009). Recurring incidents of cattle rustling not only threaten the safety and well-being of the local community, but also disrupt regular attendance and academic progress of primary school students (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). The ongoing threat of cattle rustling creates an atmosphere of insecurity that leads to increased fear and anxiety among students and their families, hindering their willingness and ability to consistently participate in educational activities (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). This study therefore aims to investigate the impact of cattle rustling on pupils' access to primary education in Apac district with the aim of identifying effective strategies and interventions to mitigate these problems and create an environment conducive to lifelong learning.

General objective

The main objective of the study is to determine the influence of cattle rustling on pupils' access to free primary education in primary schools in Apac district.

Objective of the study

1. To examine the causes of cattle rustling in primary schools in Apac district.
2. To investigate the effects of cattle rustling on pupils' access to free primary education in Apac district.
3. To identify the strategies that can be put in place by the government to eliminate cattle rustling in Apac district.

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Methodology

According to Orodho (2004), descriptive survey design is a technique in which detailed information concerning a social phenomenon is gathered by posing questions to respondents. The study used descriptive survey design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches because it intends to avail useful detailed information on the factors influencing pupils' access to primary education in cattle rustling prone areas of Apac district (Olanrewaju et al., 2021a). Qualitative approach deals with synthesizing the collected information while quantitative approach deals with analyzing numerical values, charts and tables. This choice of design was based on the fact that it seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals their perception, attitude, behaviour or values. It was used to explore and/ or explain existing status of two or more variables (Jallow et al., 2021). The study was carried out from selected primary schools in Apac District which is situated in the Northern region of Uganda and Lango Sub-region in Uganda. The largest town in the district is Apac which is located approximately 62 kilometers (39 miles), by road, south-west of Lira, the largest city in the Lango sub-region. The researcher selected four primary schools in the district that is Olili Primary School, Angayiki Primary School, Apac Model Primary School, Awiri Primary School. The researcher chose Apac district because it experiences a higher incidence of cattle rustling (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b).

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), assert that target population is the population to which the researcher wants to generalize to the absolute population of a study. The target population was 260 respondents including 10 educational officials, 4 head teachers, 40 teachers, 150 pupils and 20 village elders and area chiefs and 36 community members (District Education Office Apac 2013). A sample is a smaller group obtained from the accessible population. Each member in a sample is referred to as a subject. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) affirmed that sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals for study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected. The study selected sample size of 150 respondents that is all the head teachers of the sampled school was involved in the study (Lu et al., 2013). The study sample therefore comprised of the following: seven 7 educational officials, 4 head teachers, 20 teachers and 98 pupils, 6 area chiefs and community elders and 15 community members as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Population size and Sample Size

Group/Respondents	Population size	Sample Size	Sampling techniques
Educational officials	10	7	Purposive sampling
Head teachers	4	4	Purposive sampling
Pupils	150	98	Simple random sampling

Teachers	40	20	Simple random sampling
Elders	20	6	Purposive sampling
Community members	36	15	Simple random sampling
Total	1494	150	

Source: Researcher 2023

The study adopted two sampling techniques that is simple random sampling and purposive sampling as expressed herein. The researcher selected Educational officials, Head teachers and Elders using purposive sampling while teachers, community members and students was selected using simple random sampling. Simple random sampling technique is where every item in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample and selection depends on chances or probability. In this study, teachers, community members and students were selected to participate in this study using simple random sampling (Jallow et al., 2021). This sampling technique was adopted because it gives all the participants in the target group equal chances of participation in the study. Purposive sampling technique is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and objectives of the study. It was adopted in selecting participants like Educational officials, Head teachers and Elders (Nafiu, 2012). These was selected because they are believed to have in-depth information on the phenomenon under investigation. The research instruments employed in collection of data in this study was the structured questionnaires and interview schedules. (Nafiu et al., 2012), states that questionnaires are commonly used to obtain important information about the population. The researcher constructed questionnaires; for one teachers and pupils. The questionnaires contained background information of the respondents and question items that related to the objectives. The questionnaire carried both open ended and close ended items. The interview on the other hand gives an opportunity to capture some key issues that are not provided for in the questionnaire by having leading or guiding questions (Anwar et al., 2022). The interview was scheduled prior to commencement of study and administered to chiefs and village elders, head teachers and educational officials of the sample. The interviews were meant to gather information on the influence of cattle rustling in the area under study. They specifically give an insight on the objectives of the study. Generally, interviews were used in this study because they also give the researcher a chance to make first hand face-to-face interaction with the respondents who may not have been literate enough or busy to fill questionnaires (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b). According to research scholars, there are two forms of validity, namely, content and face validity. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), content validity is a measure of the degree to which data collected using a particular tool represents a specific domain of indicators or content of a particular concept. They also define face validity as the degree to which an instrument is judged to be relevant in obtaining accurate and meaningful data on the variables of interest. Further, (Nafiu et al., 2013) explain that content validity is the degree to which the sample test or instrument items represent the content that the instrument is designed for while face validity is the degree to which an instrument appears to measure what it is supposed to measure. To ensure that the research instruments

collected the expected data, different measures was taken to ensure both content and face validity. The instruments were given to the supervisors, colleagues, and other experts in research who checked and further interrogate them on content and face validity. Their feedback helped in making necessary adjustments that was identified.

The data gathered by use of questionnaires was examined to ascertain its accuracy, competence and to identify those items wrongly responded to. The data was validated, edited and then coded. The validation process was to enable researchers to determine the return date of questionnaire. Data from interviews and open-ended items in the questionnaire constituting qualitative data in form of words and phrases was transcribed and then arranged as per emerging themes (Nafiu et al., 2017). Some data however was quantified where possible and with quantitative data from the structured questionnaire items. All quantitative data was coded, classified, recorded and prepared on a sheet as per the objectives of the study.

They were subjected to descriptive statistics by use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022). Frequencies and percentages were used as tools of analysis in order to answer research questions. Frequency tables was used to present the information from which interpretation was done by comparing the frequencies and percentages. The study was analyzed by making inferences and conclusions from the data gathered. SPSS version 20 was used to generate frequencies and percentages that was presented using tables (Nelson et al., 2023).

RESULTS

Causes of cattle rustling

Table 2 below shows the responses ranked in descending order of those who said to a very large extent.

Table 2: Causes of cattle rustling

Respondents Opinion	Frequency Responses (F) and their percentages (%)										
	Very small extent		Small extent		Moderate extent		Large extent		To a very large extent		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Proliferation of small arms among pastoralists	4	11.4	1	2.9	7	20	6	17.1	17	48.6	100.0
Competition for grazing grounds	7	20	3	8.6	1	2.9	7	20	17	48	100.0
Cultural practices	3	8.6	2	5.7	5	14.3	9	25.7	17	45.7	100.0
Incitements from politicians	6	17.1	3	8.6	7	20	5	14.3	14	40	100.0
Poverty	11	31.4	3	8.6	5	14.3	5	14.3	11	31.4	100.0

Competition for supremacy	9	25.7	3	8.6	3	8.6	11	31.4	9	25.7	100.0
Revenge among pastoralist	6	17.1	7	20	6	17.1	7	20	9	25.7	100.0
Financing by businessmen	15	42.9	8	22.9	5	14.3	2	5.7	5	14.3	100.0

Source: Primary data

From table 2 above, a major cause of cattle rustling is the availability of the illicit small arms and light weapons which has for many years been found to trigger cattle rustling majority of the respondent, 48.6 percent respondents indicated that possession of small arms have contributed greatly to cattle rustling escalation in Apac district, the findings collaborate the JETEMS report that alluded to the arming of communities in preparation to war, they further said that illicit arms and light weapons can easily be concealed and transported from one place to another as it has been witnessed in Apac district. 48 percent, said to a very large extent cattle rustling was caused by competition for grazing grounds. These findings are in line with JETEMS report which found out that physical boundaries cutting across traditional migratory routes and cattle rustling among the Kalenjin, Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and other neighboring districts continually bring increased problems in accessing traditional resources such as water and pasture.

In this study, 45.7 percent said to a very large extent it is caused cultural practices, 42.9 percent said to a very small extent it is caused by financing by businessmen, 40 percent said to a very large extent it is caused by incitements from politicians, 31.4 percent said to a very large extent it was caused by poverty however 31.4 percent said to a very small extent it was caused by poverty 31.4 percent further said cattle rustling to a large extent is caused by competition for supremacy, 25.7 percent said to a very large extent it is caused by revenge among pastoralist. From table 5 above, it is clear that in the top three of the causes were, proliferation of small arms among pastoralists, competition for grazing grounds and cultural practices.

Effects of cattle rustling on pupils’ access to free primary education

Table 3: Effects of cattle rustling

Respondents Opinion	Percentage Response (%)											
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree		Total %	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Leads to pupil drop out	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11.4	31	88.6		100.0
Leads to poverty	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	14.3	30	85.7		100.0

Causes insecurity in learning institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	20	28	80	100.0
Disrupts learning activities in school	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	28.6	25	71.4	100.0
Death of parents	0	0	2	5.7	4	11.4	8	22.9	21	60	100.0
Forces teachers to desert duty hence teacher shortages	3	8.6	1	2.9	0	0	9	25.7	20	57.1	100.0
Leads children to be involved in armed conflicts	2	5.7	9	25.7	2	5.7	7	20	15	42.9	100.0
The morans who practice cattle rustling have no opportunity accessing education	1 3	37.1	5	14.3	7	20	3	8.6	7	20	100.0

Source: Primary data

From table 3 above, 88.6 percent agreed strongly, that cattle rustling leads to pupil drop out. This concurs with Blattman et.al (2010), who mentioned that more than 27 million children are estimated to be out of school every year as a result of emergency situations, of which cattle rustling in Apac district is considered to be an emergency case. This is also cited by Katam, 2012 who said that many of the children in conflict areas such as cattle rustling have been forced to live school. 85.7 percent strongly agreed that leads to poverty, 80 percent strongly agreed it causes insecurity in learning institutions and 71.4 percent strongly agreed that it disrupts learning activities in school (Nelson, 2024). This confirmed by Kikechi et.al, (2012), who said that there is insecurity in learning institutions. Girls are prone to sexual harassment and brutality which eventually may lead to rape. This denies the pupils the opportunity to access basic education. They continue to say that recurring conflict in Kenya such as those caused by cattle rustling often disrupts learning and adversely affect school system and substantially damage. Both boys and girls are endangered. Boys keep moving with bows and arrows in defense of their cattle. 60 percent strongly agreed that causes death of parents, 57.1 percent strongly agreed it forces teachers to desert duty hence teacher shortages, 42.9 percent strongly agreed it leads children to armed conflicts. 37.1 percent strongly disagreed that the 'morans' who practice cattle rustling have no opportunity accessing education.

Challenges of cattle rustling

Table 4: Challenges of cattle rustling

Respondents Opinion	Percentage Response (%)

	Very small extent		Small extent		Moderate extent		Large extent		To a very large extent		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Inability for pupils to travel to schools due to insecurity	0	0	0	0	2	5.7	2	5.7	31	88.6	100.0
Poverty due to stolen cattle	1	2.9	6	0	0	0	6	17.1	28	80	100.0
Fear of attack while at school	0	0	1	2.9	4	11.4	6	17.1	24	68.6	100.0
Lack of enough teachers	1	3	0	0	2	6.1	10	30.3	20	60.6	100.0
Lack of learning facilities due to destruction	1	2.9	1	2.9	5	14.3	8	22.9	20	57.1	100.0
Death of parents to support pupils	2	5.7	0	0	3	8.6	12	34.3	18	51.4	100.0
Forced early marriages due to poverty	4	11.4	3	8.6	9	25.7	6	17.1	13	37.1	100.0
Children involved in cattle rustling	9	25.7	8	22.9	4	11.4	7	20	6	17.1	100.0

Source: Primary data

From table 4 above, majority of the respondents accounted that 88.6 percent to a very large extent leads to inability for pupils to travel to schools due to insecurity. This has also been cited by United Nations Children Fund, 2010, which established that many parents in conflict regions of Kenya refuse to send their children to school for fear of being attacked. This has also been the case in Baringo North where learning came to a standstill due to cattle rustling attack. Further, 80 percent said to a very large extent there is poverty due to stolen cattle, 68.6 percent said to a very large extent there is fear of attack while at school, 57.1 percent said to a very large extent leads to lack of learning facilities due to destruction, 57.1 percent said to a very large extent there is lack of enough teachers, 51.4 percent said to a very large extent it causes death of parents who support pupils and 37.1 percent said to a very large extent there is forced early marriages due to poverty. 25.7 percent said to a very small extent children are involved in cattle rustling.

Pupils’ Analysis

Causes of cattle rustling

The respondents were asked to affirm or negate the statements relating to causes of cattle rustling. Table 5 shows the findings of the study.

Table 5: Causes of cattle rustling

Respondents opinion	Percentage response (%)				
	Yes		No		Total (%)
	F	%	F	%	
Possession of guns by nomadic tribes	99	90	11	10	100.0
Incitement by politicians	92	83.6	18	16.4	100.0
It is a business to some people	88	80.7	21	19.3	100.0
Poverty among nomadic tribes	79	71.8	31	28.2	100.0
Enmity between tribes	67	60.9	43	39.1	100.0
Culture and traditions	64	58.2	46	41.8	100.0

Need for revenge	55	50	55	50	100.0
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Source: Primary data

From table 5 above, 90 percent strongly affirmed that affirmed that possession of guns by nomadic tribes is a major cause of cattle rustling. Further, 71.8 percent affirmed that poverty among nomadic tribes is cause, 60.9 percent affirmed that it is caused by enmity between tribes. The respondents were equally divided in terms of need for revenge and another 59 percent negating, 58.2 percent affirmed that culture and traditions is cause with 50 percent affirming.

Effects of cattle rustling

Table 6: Effects of cattle rustling

Respondents opinion	Percentage response (%)				
	Yes		No		Total (%)
	F	%	F	%	
Learning is disrupted in schools	104	94.5	6	5.5	100.0
Schools become insecure for pupils	103	93.6	7	6.4	100.0
Death of parents	102	92.7	7	7.3	100.0
Leads to shortage of teachers in school	101	91.8	9	8.2	100.0
Teachers abandon schools	99	90	11	10	100.0
Pupils drop out to engage in cattle rustling	76	69.1	34	30.9	100.0
Average					

Source: Primary data

The respondents were asked to affirm or negate the statements relating to the effects of cattle rustling. From table 6 above, a 94.5 percent affirmed that learning is disrupted in schools. This was confirmed by O'Malley (2012), who said that access to good quality education in several conflict affected countries is seriously imperiled not only due to direct effects of fighting, but also because schools, teachers students and staff are often targeted by violent attacks, 93.6 percent affirmed that schools become insecure for pupils, closely 92.7 percent affirmed that it leads to death of parents, and 91.8 percent affirmed that it leads to shortage of teachers in school, 90 percent affirmed that teachers abandon schools. 69.1 percent affirmed that pupils drop out to engage in cattle rustling.

Challenges of cattle rustling to pupils' access to primary education*Table 7: Challenges of cattle rustling*

Respondents opinion	Percentage response (%)				
	Yes		No		Total (%)
	F	%	F	%	
Schools are destroyed and children have no classes	109	99.1	1	0.9	100.0
Parents die and no one support pupils	108	98.2	2	1.8	100.0
Children fear being attacked in school	106	96.4	4	3.6	100.0
Families become poor and withdraw pupils from schools	104	94.5	6	5.5	100.0
Teachers are not found in school to assist pupils	89	82.4	19	17.6	100.0
Girls married off due to poverty when cattle are stolen	84	77.1	25	22.9	100.0
Boys forced to cattle rustling to provide for families	61	55.5	49	44.5	100.0
Average	95	86.2	15	13.8	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 7 above show that, 99.1 percent strongly affirmed. This concurs with Mooney et al (2005) who affirmed that armed groups involved in cattle rustling have always targeted educational facilities with classrooms routinely bombed, burnt or threatened. These combined attacks on children, the fear, insecurity and trauma experienced by people living in cattle rustling zones and damage inflicted on schools is holding back progress on all the education for all goals as many schools are destroyed and children have no classes. On the same note 98.2 percent affirmed that parents die and no one support pupils. 96.4 percent affirmed that children fear being attacked in school, 94.5 percent affirmed that families become poor and withdraw pupils from schools, and 81.8 percent affirmed that teachers are not found in school to assist pupils. 76.4 percent affirmed that girls married off due to poverty when cattle are stolen, 55.5 percent affirmed that boys forced to cattle rustling to provide for families. This figure could not have been a bone of contention because it is their custom for men to go feed for their family.

Conclusion of the study

The study also set to investigate the effects of cattle rustling in Apac district. In view of the above, it is evident that cattle rustling is caused by proliferation of small arms among pastoralists, competition for grazing grounds, cultural practices, incitement by politicians and commercialization of cattle rustling (business to some people) among other causes.

It was also evident that cattle rustling had several effects which included; pupils dropping out of schools, poverty in the affected areas, insecurity in the learning institutions, disruption of learning in schools, teachers abandon schools and death of parents among other effects.

The study also revealed that cattle rustling brings about challenges to access of education by pupils. The major challenges identified were; inability for pupils to travel to schools due to insecurity, poverty due to stolen cattle, fear of attack while at school, disruption of learning and shortage of teachers in schools, among other challenges.

Recommendations from the study

The community should be enlightened on better methods of dowry payment other than cattle as this reduced case of rustling. In addition, the governmental and non-governmental organizations should demarcate the land to avoid conflict due to competition of pasture and water.

The government should eradicate black market for cattle to reduce cases of cattle rustling as this is brought about by the commercialization of animals.

In order to improve the situation on the area the government in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations should set up more boarding schools to shorten the distance and improve on security by building police camps near the boarding schools. The warriors should be enlightened to stop the practice of cattle rustling as it causes teachers' and pupils absenteeism, damage of school facilities, hence disrupting learning.

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