

**Investigating The Effects That Gold Mining Activities Have Brought On Child Education In Uganda
Case Study Tiira Mawero Gold Mines In Busia District.**

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Abstract

In this study, we explored the historical implications of gold mining activities on child education in Uganda, specifically focusing on Tiira Mawero gold mines in Busia District. Utilizing a quantitative research design, we employed simple random and snowball sampling techniques, collecting data through questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions from 140 respondents. The study aimed to identify reasons behind children's involvement in gold mining, analyze the effects of illegal gold mining on children's education, and propose practical ways to reduce children's participation in gold mines. Results indicated that poverty (53.6%) was the primary driver, emphasizing the economic necessity for children to contribute to family income. Lack of education (32.1%), family influence (14.3%), and limited job opportunities (7.1%) were also significant factors influencing children's engagement in gold mining. The correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship between illegal gold mining and education (-0.358**), emphasizing the adverse impact on children's educational attainment. The model estimation suggested that 25.7% of variations in children's education could be explained by their participation in illegal gold mining activities. Practical ways to reduce children in gold mines included strengthening law enforcement (57.1%), providing scholarships and education opportunities (46.4%), creating alternative livelihoods (28.6%), and community awareness programs (17.9%). These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions addressing the root causes of child labor in gold mines, particularly the socio-economic challenges faced by families. The negative correlation between illegal gold mining and education raises significant concerns about the potential long-term consequences on the development and well-being of these children, highlighting the profound linkages between poverty, limited educational opportunities, and children's engagement in hazardous labor. To effectively combat child labor in gold mines, integrated socio-economic interventions addressing poverty and limited educational opportunities are crucial. Government agencies, NGOs, and community stakeholders should collaborate to design and implement programs focused on poverty alleviation and economic empowerment. Public awareness campaigns are essential to educate communities about the legal implications of involving children in mining and to encourage reporting of violations.

Key words, gold mining, academic performance, poverty, school dropouts and early marriages.

Background of the study

Briefly Gold mining referred to the process of extracting gold deposits from and on the Earth's surface. People together with school going children had engaged themselves in mining gold and this brought in both positive and negative effects on child education in Uganda especially in Tiira Mawero gold mines where the activity of gold mining was rampant (Victoria et al., 2023). The international interest on artisanal gold mining (AGM) evolved over time looking mainly at; the definitional issues, technical, legal, Gender, Environmental and Social

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Economic issues and some important linkages that exist. Artisanal gold mining (AGM) was one of the emerging economic activities providing alternative livelihoods globally with more than 13million artisanal miners and about 150 million people indirectly reliant on (Vincent & Peter, 2023). A large proportion of artisan miners mainly in Africa were women and children who were also important in supporting sustainable livelihood security. However, their extensive involvement in the informal mining operations sharply affects other livelihood interventions for which they hold key roles (Hentschel, 2003). In Uganda, Artisanal Gold Mining is on the increase and is largely a poverty-driven activity used as a coping mechanism with thousands of local communities currently engaged in the mining practice (MEMD, 2011). The communities in the mining sites live in deplorable sanitary conditions, use toxic chemicals such as mercury in the gold extraction and had severely degraded fragile ecosystems that support their livelihoods. The government of Uganda still regards AGM as an illegal practice providing no regulatory and policy framework to guide the mining operations. The absence of evidence-based strategies for sustainable mineral exploitation exacerbates the situation (MEMD 2009). Despite the growing trend of community engagement in artisanal gold mining practice, the implications of the mining on the livelihood security are largely unknown. This research therefore sought to explore artisanal mining implications on livelihood security with the aim of developing best practice strategies and inform other necessary interventions. In Uganda, mining started in ancient times by artisans. Formal mining started with arrival of the British Explorers during the colonial times. Copper, phosphates, limestone and several small-medium mines for tungsten, tin, beryl, niobium, tantalum, gold were operated (1930s-60s). During 1950s-60s, mining contributed about 30% of foreign exchange earnings. In 1970s, due to political crisis, exodus of skilled man power, economic sanctions and the collapse of the economy, the mining industry collapsed.

Statement of the problem.

It's widely accepted that education leads to sustainable development (Allan et al., 2023). This is evidenced in developed countries like Japan, America, Ghana, England, and France. Where the literacy rate is high. These countries are highly developed because of their high literacy rate. Education brings skills to discover and create things that are needed. The situation of children doing menial jobs (gold mining) had been worsened by the perception of our societies. Children at Tiira Mawero and other places like Aniamoah community in Ghana have after all seen that wealthiest persons in the area had very little education (Brighton et al., 2023). Therefore, basing on the topic of my study, gold mining activities have brought some of the positive and negative effects on the child education i.e., income in support of school fees and increased school dropouts rates raised respectfully as a result of these gold mining activities in Tiira Mawero community in busia district and other sited areas like Ghana, England, France, America, Japan to be discussed.

Objectives of the study.

1. To find out some of the reasons as to why these children engage themselves in gold mining activities instead of going to school.
2. To identify the effects that illegal gold mining activities have brought on children's education based on the case study.

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3. To suggest some of the possible ways to reduce the number of these children in the gold mines.

Research Questions

1. Why do children go for gold mining?
2. What are the effects that illegal gold mining activities have brought on children's education?
3. Mention some of the practical ways that should be put in place to reduce on the number of these children in these gold mining sites?

Methodology.

The Researcher adapted to a quantitative research design. Quantitative research design was used because the researcher carried out research in Busia district which had a big population. The Study was conducted in Tiira Mawero gold mines in Busia district. The choice of the study area was because the researcher used all the languages used in the study area and more so the researcher understood all the study area properly which made data collection easy and concrete. The researcher adopted both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources of information included using questionnaires to collect data and secondary source of information included use of articles related to the study, publications and books. The study put much emphasis on children who were supposed to go to school but they are mining gold which was illegal by law. Therefore, the study population for this case was be about 2000children whereby the 1200 boys and 800 girls around the mining centers of Tiira Town council, Mawero and other neighboring centers like Sikuda, Buteba, Amonikakinei, Busitema in Busia District. The researcher developed both primarily and secondary sources of information and data. In collecting Primary Data, the researcher used questionnaires as tools for collecting data. For Secondary Data, publications by re known authors in this field for example magazines, articles, books and News Papers will be used by the researcher to gather information that is required. Data analysis was conducted in SPSS and all results were presented in a tabular (Nelson et al., 2022). Frequencies and percentages were reported at univariate level, correlation and regression analysis were considered for further analysis.

Results.**Table 1: Reasons for Children Engaging in Gold Mining**

Gold mining	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	75	53.6
Lack of education	45	32.1
Family influence	20	14.3
Limited Job opportunities	10	7.1

The table above summarizes the reasons why children engage in gold mining activities in Tiira Mawero gold mines. The majority of respondents (53.6%) cited poverty as the primary reason, emphasizing the economic necessity for children to contribute to family income. Lack of education was identified by 32.1% of respondents, indicating that the absence of educational opportunities drives children toward mining. Family influence and limited job opportunities were mentioned by 14.3% and 7.1% of respondents, respectively, shedding light on the social and economic factors influencing children's involvement in gold mining.

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Effects of Illegal Gold Mining on Children's Education.**Table 2: Shows the association between illegal gold mining and children's education.**

		Illegal gold mining	Education
Illegal gold mining	Pearson Correlation	1	-.358**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036
	N	150	150
Education	Pearson Correlation	-.358**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	
	N	150	150

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis showed strong negative significant relationship between illegal gold mining and education ($r = -0.358^{**}$, $p=0.036$). The significance value ($p = 0.036$) was less than the critical p value of 0.05 hence the null hypothesis wasn't rejected hence the research results showed a significant negative relationship between illegal gold mining and education.

Table 3: Model estimation for the effect of illegal gold mining and children's education.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.158 ^a	.257	.255	0.15921

Findings from the table above indicated that 25.7% of the variations in children's education were explained by the illegal gold mining activities that they participate into. The regression coefficient (Coeff = - 0.158) indicated that as the rate at which children involve in the illegal gold mining activities increases by one unit, the children's education reduces by 0.158 units. This indicated that illegal gold mining activities negatively affects children's education (Nelson et al., 2023).

Table 3: Practical Ways to Reduce Children in Gold Mines

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Strengthening Law Enforcement	80	57.1
Providing Scholarships and Education	65	46.4
Creating Alternative Livelihoods	40	28.6
Community Awareness Programs	25	17.9

The table above presents practical ways to reduce the number of children engaged in gold mining. The majority of respondents (57.1%) emphasized the importance of strengthening law enforcement to curb illegal mining activities involving children. Providing scholarships and education opportunities was suggested by 46.4% of respondents as a means to address the root cause of child labor. Creating alternative livelihoods and community

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awareness programs were mentioned by 28.6% and 17.9% of respondents, respectively, highlighting the need for holistic interventions to combat the issue.

Discussion of findings.

The results of the study provided valuable insights into the multifaceted issue of children's engagement in gold mining activities in Tiira Mawero gold mines. The predominant identification of poverty as the primary reason for children participating in mining underscored the harsh economic realities faced by families in the region. The observed negative correlation between illegal gold mining and education signified a concerning trend where the more children were involved in such activities, the lower their educational attainment. This finding raised alarm about the potential long-term consequences on the development and well-being of these children, as limited access to education often perpetuated a cycle of poverty and restricted future opportunities. The acknowledgment of family influence and limited job opportunities as contributing factors further emphasized the interconnectedness of socio-economic challenges influencing children's choices in engaging in gold mining. The implications of these results were far-reaching and called for urgent interventions. Firstly, addressing the root cause of poverty through targeted socio-economic initiatives was crucial to break the cycle of child labor in gold mines. Strengthening law enforcement, as suggested by a majority of respondents, was essential to curb illegal mining activities involving children and safeguard their rights. The emphasis on providing scholarships and education opportunities indicated a collective recognition of the pivotal role education played in breaking the cycle of poverty and child labor. Creating alternative livelihoods and community awareness programs were also crucial components of a holistic approach to mitigate the factors driving children into gold mining.

Conclusion.

The investigation into the effects of gold mining activities on child education in Tiira Mawero gold mines, Busia District, Uganda, revealed a complex interplay of socio-economic factors influencing the involvement of children in mining. The study exposed poverty as the predominant driver, with a majority of respondents citing economic necessity as the compelling force leading children into gold mining. The negative correlation between illegal gold mining and education raised significant concerns about the adverse impact on the educational attainment of children engaged in such activities. The findings highlighted the urgent need for targeted interventions addressing the root causes of child labor in gold mines, particularly the socio-economic challenges faced by families. The implications of these results underscored the profound linkages between poverty, limited educational opportunities, and children's engagement in hazardous labor.

Recommendations.

To effectively combat the issue of child labor in gold mines, there is a critical need for integrated socio-economic interventions that target the root causes of poverty and limited educational opportunities. Government agencies, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community stakeholders, should design and implement programs that focus on poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.

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Government authorities should enact and enforce stringent laws specifically targeting child labor in mining operations. This includes imposing severe penalties for those found exploiting children and conducting regular inspections of mining sites to identify and address child labor issues promptly.

Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate communities about the legal implications of involving children in mining and to encourage reporting of violations.

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