

THE CONSEQUENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY LEAVING EXAMINATIONS (PLE) IN THE LANGO SUB-REGION OF UGANDA

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Abstract: This article addresses the consequence of domestic violence on the performance of Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) in the Lango Sub-region of Uganda. At the front lines of this article, is the harsh reality that domestic violence imposes on children at home and in school hence poor PLE performance. Children exposed to physical domestic violence have more disciplinary problems at school as well poor performance in arithmetic and reading compared to other students. Victims of domestic violence have a negative relationship with their peers in school resulting to poor results and increased cases of indiscipline. Exposure to violence is associated with children's cognitive development process since exposure to chronic abuse and violence leads to low scores, poorer language skills, decrement in visual- motor integrations skills and poor attention memory. The cognitive problems associated exposure to domestic violence encompass direct trends to the development task of school adaptation and academic achievements. Also, deficit attention, language skills, and poor memory undermine the child's ability to accomplish the set requirements to academic achievements and school adaptation. Lango is no exception of this.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Lango, children, PLE performance, indiscipline.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to World Health Organisation (2010), violence is "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened, or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community that either results in or has a higher likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation". The World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH) presents a typology of violence that, while not uniformly accepted, can be a useful way to understanding the contexts in which violence occurs and the interaction between different types of violence. This typology distinguishes four modes in which violence may be influenced, viz: physical, sexual, psychological attack and deprivation. It further divides the general definition of violence into three sub types consistent with victim- perpetrator relationship, namely; (a) Self- direct violence which refers to abuse in which the perpetrator and the victim are the same individual; it is sub-divided into self-abuse and suicide. (b) Interpersonal violence involves violence between individuals, and is sub-divided into family and intimate partner violence as well as community violence. The former category includes child

maltreatment, intimate partner violence and elder violence; while the latter is segmented into acquaintance and stranger violence and includes youth violence, assault by strangers, violence related to property, crimes and violence in work place and other institutions. And (c) Collective violence refers to violence committed by a large group of individuals and can be sub-divided into social, political and economic violence.

1.1 Domestic Violence

The Child Information Gateway (2018) notes that domestic violence varies depending on the context in which it is used. A behavioural definition is that of 'a pattern of assaultive and or cohesive behaviours, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic cohesion. In a number of cases, adults and or adolescents use this form of violence against their intimate partners. Also, the United States Department of Justice describes domestic violence as 'a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner'. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economical or psychological actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviour that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorise, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. In addition, Ganley (1989) notes that domestic violence includes physical, sexual, psychological, abuse and abuse to property and domesticated animals. In this description, exposure to different forms of violence has potential to be perceived as life threatening by the victims and can leave them in a sense of vulnerability, helplessness and extreme fear. Let us describe the different forms of violence;

a) *Physical Violence* - Physical abuse as any behaviour that involves the intentional use of force against the body of another person that risk psychological injury, harm and or pain (Dutton, 1992). Such violence includes pushing, hitting, slapping, use of object to heat, twisting of the body parts among others.

b) *Economic Violence* - This form of domestic violence is very common in a number of sexual relationships (Adams, 2018); economic abuse takes place when one partner denies another partner access to economic resources such as money and property. Some husbands, for example, can force their wives into a state of submission by refusing to allow them to work. Without economic resources, the person who is affected becomes powerless and virtually has no say when it comes to making decisions.

c) *Sexual Violence* - Sexual violence/abuse is defined as any unwanted sexual intimacy forced on an individual by another (Dutton, 1994). It may include oral or vaginal stimulation or penetration, forced nudity, forced exposure to sexual explicit material or activity. Compliance may be obtained through actual or threatened physical force or through some other form of coercion. Sexual violence varies from harassment, rape, abuse, defilement, force prostitution of a sexual nature in men and women, girls, boys force marriage for girls and boys (UDHS 2011, 2016). In Uganda, incidences of sexual violence, irrespective of gender, declined between 2011 and 2016. As regards to women, there was a decline of approximately 5percent for both women in rural and urban areas while there was a 1percent decline for the men in the rural areas. Nonetheless, men in the urban areas had an increase in the number of cases of sexual violence from 7.7 to 8.7 percent between the years 2011 and 2016 respectively.

1.2 Status of domestic violence in Uganda

According to Uganda Bureau of statistics (2016), 26 percent of partnered men reported experiencing some form of emotional violence by their spouses. The percentage of men experiencing sexual and emotional violence was only 5 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Gilles (19190) reveals that domestic violence is widespread and occurs among all social economic groups. In a national survey of over 6000 conducted among families in America, it was found that between 53percent and 70percent of the male batterers likewise abuse their children. As a consequence, domestic violence is one of the most under reported crimes in the United States of America, and the department of Justice estimates that there are between 960,000 to 4million domestic incidences each year. Based on Uganda Demographic Household Survey (UDHS), Uganda has a high rate of reported gender-based violence (GBV). For example, the 2011 UDHS report indicated that overall, prevalence rate by type of violence were 56percent for physical violence, 27.7percent of sexual violence and 42.9percent for spousal emotional violence. Also, sexual violence reportedly decreased from 39percent in 2006 to 28percent in 2011. 60 percent of women report having experienced some form of violence. A study by the Uganda Law Reform Commission (2009) found that half of women surveyed reported experiencing violence on a daily or weekly basis, and 35percent of working women reported marital violence. While women aged 15 to 49 years report a decrease in physical violence (27percent in 2011, down from 34percent in 2006).

Violence affects women and children disproportionately, however, men and boys also experience physical violence (27percent in 2011, down from 34percent in 2006), the rate reported among pregnant women (16percent) has remained the same. Only 2percent of survivors reported the violence. Violence affects women and children disproportionately; however, men and boys also experience violence. The UDHS reveals that the percentage of men aged 15 to 49 reporting experiencing violence overall increased from 20 percent in 2006 to 22 percent in 2011, although the percentage experiencing sexual assault decreased during the same period from 11percent to 9percent. Data from the UDHS (2016) shows that women are more than twice likely to have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives than men (one in five or 22percent for women; one in 10 or 8percent for men). The pattern holds for reports of recent sexual violence: 13percent of women and 4percent of men reported experiencing sexual violence in the 12months preceding the survey. Older women are more likely to report having experienced recent sexual violence than younger women aged 15 to 19. 13percent to 16percent of older women and 5percent of younger women reported recent sexual violence. Experience of sexual violence ever and in the past 12 months is lowest among women with more than secondary education. A 2007 report by the Ministry of

1.3. Status of domestic violence in Lango Sub-Region

The Ministry of Health (MOH) identifies the most prevalent types of violence in of Lango Sub-region, after the long Lord's Resistant Army (LRA) war and found domestic violence cases on the increase. According to the annual crime report of the Uganda Police Force (2017), gender-based violence cases that were reported and investigated increased by 4percent (from 38,651 to 40,258 cases) between 2015 and 2016. Equally, the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2016) reveals that up to 22percent of women aged 15 to 49 in the country had experienced some form of sexual violence. The report also revealed that annually, 13percent of women aged 15 to 49 reports experiencing sexual violence. This translates to more than 1 million women exposed to sexual violence every year in Uganda. According to Okech (2017), cases of domestic violence in Lango Sub-region increase during and after crop harvest as couples fight over money generated from the sales of crops. For example, in Kole district the rate of domestic violence is very high when individuals start selling soya beans and on average 5 cases of domestic violence are reported to the department of community liaisons at the district police. Physical assault is reportedly ranked highest in the form of domestic violence in Lira and Lango sub-region. This is mainly caused by economic imbalance, sexual abuse and force marriage for children. In Lira district, the three sub counties of Agali, Ojwina and Agweng register the highest number of cases of domestic violence as the district registered 453 cases of domestic violence between January and June in the year ending December 2019. And of these, 216 cases involved physical assault on both men and women.

1.4 Victims of domestic violent

According to African Renewal, between December 2019 and March 2020, violence against women has taken new, more sophisticated forms in Uganda. An increasing number of women are reporting cyber-bullying and abuse through social media and smartphones. Cases of jilted lovers exposing nude pictures of their ex-girlfriends on social media platforms in what is locally called "revenge porn are equally on the rise. For in 2014 one of the Ugandan musicians, made a public apology after her ex- boyfriend leaked her nude pictures on social media. Since that incident, over 10 women have had their nude pictures leaked on social media by jilted lovers, resulting in public shame and ridicule. However, in all the revenge porn cases, women have been singled out for criticism while the offending men are never followed up. According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017), experiences of violence by the current or most recent partner, 25 percent of partnered women reported experiencing some form of physical violence by their spouse. The percentage of women experiencing sexual and emotional violence was 21 percent and 33 percent respectively. Also, the UDHS findings showed that women experienced less violence in 2011 than in 2006, and Northern Uganda that covers Lango sub-region was worst hit. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development on Violence Against Children in Uganda (2018) defines violence against children in reference to the Children's Act (as Amended) as any form of physical, emotional, or mental injuries or abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child which may result in or has a higher likelihood of resulting into injury, death, psychological harm, mal- development or deprivation. Violence against children is costly to society and destructive to individuals and families. Worldwide, an estimated one million children experience physical abuse each year (Hill, 2017). Survivors of violence suffer a wide range of negative physical, mental, social and cognitive outcomes and preventing violence against children and providing services for victims can make gains in the health, education and wellbeing of the affected children and, in so doing, provide the foundation for improving growth of communities in which they live and grow.

Uganda has a population of about 25 million and an annual economic growth rate of 4-4 percent (UBOS 2014). Despite a positive economic outlook, development challenges remain for Ugandan children since 55percent of the population is under age 18. This suggests that the population of Uganda is among the youngest in the world (CIA World Facebook). HIV continues to be the leading cause of death and has left 8percent of children orphans (CDC, 2010; UBOS, 2014). In addition, a high percentage of children work in agriculture and as domestic workers and many are out of school (UDHS, 2011; UBOS, 2014). These issues, coupled with widespread poverty, food insecurity, and orphanage put children in Uganda at higher risk of violence especially domestic violence. The Uganda Bureau of statistics (2017) reveals that 84percent of boys and 80percent children in rural areas are engaged in child labour; 20percent of girls and 16percent boys are engaged in child labour in urban areas. Since more than 95percent of Lango sub-region is rural, physical violence is on the lead as a result of alcoholism, bad cultural practises, poverty, and power imbalance at household level. According to UDHS (2016), physical violence, on average, is more common in the rural areas irrespective of gender. For example, in 2016, there were no significant differences in the proportion of men and women who reported physical violence in rural areas (about 52percent). However, more men reported physical violence than women in urban areas in 2016, there was 50percent and 47percent ratio men to women. Some of the cases of physical violence in rural areas are associated to limited economic opportunities which have led to idleness and drunkenness. Nonetheless, a number of men reportedly fear reporting cases of domestic violence against them due to the cultural belief that men are always superior.

2. PLE PERFORMANCE IN LANGO SUB-REGION

According to Richard (2010), Uganda education system has different stages starting from nursery that takes three years, followed by primary education that takes seven years, secondary education that takes six years and university and or other tertiary institutions. As stated, primary education takes seven primary school years, from primary one to primary seven. With normal annual progression this means primary school can last seven years, but many pupils drop out part way through and return late, so it is not usual to find teenagers sitting primary examinations. At the end of primary seven, pupils sit their first major national examination (the PLE). This examination has four subjects, namely English language, Mathematics, science and Social studies. The best possible mark pupils can get is 4 while the worst is 36. Pupils with grades ranging between 4 and 12 points are graded in division one; those with scores between 13 and 23 are graded as division two, 24 to 29 graded as division three while 30 to 34 are graded as division four. While the general performance in PLE is not the best, rural schools that includes majority of schools in Lango sub-region perform poorly as compared with urban schools (Uganda Bureau of Statistics report, 2018). This is exemplified by the number of pupils in division one for the five years, viz.; 57percent in 2013, 57percent in 2014, 54percent in 2015, 55percent in 2016 and 58percent in 2017 respectively. According to The New Vision of (Jan 18, 2020), the PLE Performance of 2019 by District, indicated that Districts in Lango Sub-region performed poorly; Lira municipality ranked 12th in the country with 27percent pupils in division one, Lira District ranked 93rd with 5percent, Kole district ranked 95th with 5percent, Apac Municipality ranked 97th with 5percent, Dokolo district ranked 106th with 4percent, Kwania district ranked 136th with 3percent, Amolatar district ranked 132nd with 3percent, Otuke district ranked 136th with 2percent, Apac main ranked 143rd with 2percent and Oyam district ranked 147th with 2percent out of 169 Districts in the country. With the aforementioned records of increased domestic violence and poor PLE performance in Lango Districts, one can draw an assumption that domestic violence is responsible for the poor LPE performance in Lango sub-region.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite a number of the interventions put in place by the government of Uganda and other agencies like Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs) to improve performance of pupils at primary schools like Universal Primary Education, availability of teacher training schools for teachers to upgrade and refresh, early learning programs by NGOs, putting up learning structures and materials among others, PLE performance remains poor (Vermeulen, 2013). In Lango Sub-region, it is important to stress that recent history of conflict in this area has had several consequences for education. The conflict and the activities of the LRA in the region devastated the education system. Furthermore, poverty forces families to choose who goes to school, cultural attitudes leads many to express a preference of boy's education (UNESCO 2010). According to the Global Monitoring Report (2010) indicated that Northern Uganda is considered the most deprived region in Uganda when it comes to education poverty. It shows that 29percent of the population of the Northern Uganda had fewer than four years of education; compared to 16.7percent national average education poverty. Furthermore, this report shows that girls are worst off boys on all the indicators presented (UNESCO 2010). The above

are manifested by absenteeism from school by pupils, termly drop out, late coming to school, sleeping in class during learning, fear to contact both teachers and fellow pupils in case of a problem, non-payment of school fees and or late payment, lack of food at school and illness from beating by parents and or guardians.

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to assess the consequence of domestic violence to the performance in PLE in Lango Sub-region. Consequently, three questions were answered, namely: (a) what is the consequence of physical violent affect performance on the performance PLE in Lango sub-region? (b) What is the consequence of economic violence on the performance in PLE in Lango sub-region? And (c) what is the consequence of sexual violence on the performance in PLE in Lango sub-region?

5. METHODOLOGY

The research based on review of relevant literature available. The research relied on the reports from schools and the District Education offices. Results are analysed thematically to draw conclusions on the consequence of domestic violence PLE. The key focus will be on the three forms of domestic violence, namely, physical violence, economic violence and sexual/psychological violence.

6. OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Physical Violence and Performance in PLE

According to Telera Centre (1988), the consequences of witnessing physical violence at home vary from one child to another. The attribute that gives a child the greatest chance of surfing unscathed are average or above average intellectual development with good attention and interpersonal skills. This suggests that children who are exposed to physical domestic violence not only have more disciplinary problems at schools but they perform considerably worst in essential subjects than other students. A study conducted by economic Scott carrel of University of California and mark Hoekstra of the University of Pittsburgh (1998) established that physical violence has negative consequences on children's classroom peers, resulting to low test scores and increased disciplinary problems. Exposure to physical violence is associated with a number of problems in the children's cognitive process as well as poor academic functioning. Studies have linked exposure to chronic physical abuse with low scores, poorer language skills, decrement in visual- motor integrations skills and problem with attention memory, cognitive problem associated exposure to violence and abuse comprise one of the most direct trends to the development task of school adaptation and academic achievements. Deficit attention regulation, language skills, and memory undermine the child's ability to accomplish the centre requirement to academic achievements and school adaptation, namely to encode, organise, recall and expresses understanding of new information. According to community overcoming relationship abuse (CORA, 2014), children and teen are often hidden victims of domestic physical violence. When exposed to a parent who is abusive, children always witness domestic violence, get hurt or become direct victims of abuse. The consequences of exposure to domestic physical violence is as damaging to children as the damage that an abusive person inflict on their partner. The good news is that children are resilient because they are strong and able to heal if they are listened to, nurtured and allowed to feel safe.

Three to ten million children witness physical domestic violence. The extent of witnessing depends on the age of the child and the severity length and frequency of the abuse. Children as young as 1 to 2 years exposed to an abusive parent often feel afraid, helpless, guilty, anger, frustrated, isolated and confused. As the incidents of interpersonal violence grow in our society, so does the need to for intervention of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural consequences produced from exposure to domestic violence especially in children and teens. Traumatic stress is produced by exposure to events that are extreme or severe and threatening that they demand extraordinary coping effort. Such events are unpredictable and uncontrollable. They overwhelm a person's sense of safety and security. A traumatic event can seriously interrupt school routine and the process of teaching and learning. There are usually high levels of emotional upset, potential for disruptive behaviour or loss of student attention unless efforts are made to reach out to the pupils and teachers with additional information and services. Students traumatised by exposure to violence have been shown to have lower grade point averages, more negative remarks in their cumulative records and more reported abuses from school than others pupils. They may have increased difficulties concentrating and learning at school and may engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behaviour. All the facts above are common features to the majority school going children in Lango Sub-region and as a result, poor performance in PLE.

6.2 Economic Violence and PLE Performance

According to Michel et al (2013), despite the fact government aided primary and secondary education in Uganda are supposed to be free, there are still associated costs that household must cover, including uniform, examination fees, building funds (that go to the construction of housing for teachers), food that each child is requested to donate to the school and school lunches. In school where teachers are not yet confirmed on the government payroll, parents also have to contribute to the teacher's pay. Primary school cost can anywhere 15,000= 100,000 Uganda shillings (\$ 4- \$27) per term, per child. Due to high cost of paying school fees for several children at ones, households prioritise which of their children should attend school? In most cases, boys' education is priority. In some cases, parents withdraw their children from school during part of the year until they secure enough money to enable them attend school or help them in garden. The above incidences is as a result of poor prioritising the family expenditures like buying alcohol and ending up in child abuse and poor performance in PLE in Lango sub-region.

6.3 Sexual Violence and PLE Performance

According to UNICEF (2016), education and social development are key areas where many children are brides lose out when they are married too early. Girls are more likely to drop out of school and end their education at an early age (ICRW) 2014 et al. The children of young, uneducated mothers are also less likely to attain higher level of education, perpetrating cycles of low literacy and limited livelihood opportunities (IPPF). Child marriage limits young girls' skills, resources, knowledge, social support and mobility. The persistence high school dropout rate of girls in Uganda is associated with early marriages and teenage pregnancy which is a result of domestic violence and specifically sexual violence. Denial of education has a regressive impact on girls and boys personal development, their preparation for adulthood and their consequence contribution to the future wellbeing of their families and society (Bantebya et al., 2013; 2014). The destiny of thousands of young girls in Uganda is characterised by involuntary domesticity which is limited to subsistence farming, and performance of unpaid household chores such as cooking, cleaning, child care and other household chores. The above situations are partly a result of domestic violence (sexual) violence. Graham Berman (1994) notes that more than a half of the school going age children in domestic violence homes show clinical levels of anxiety or post-trauma stress disorder without treatment, these children are significance of risk of delinquency, school drop outs and difficulties in their own relationships. Children may become withdrawn, non-verbal and exhibit regression behaviour such as clinging and whining, eating and sleeping difficulties, concentration problem. Unlike young children, the pre-adolescent children typically have greater ability to externalise negative emotions (i.e. To verbalize) in addition to symptoms commonly seen with childhood anxiety, victims within this age group may show a loss of interest in school., low self-esteem/ concept, avoidance of peer relationships and opposition defiant behaviour in school setting. This has contributed heavily in poor performance in PLE in Lango Sub-region.

A study by Calvert (1993) found that, children often imitate behaviours they witness. Generationally transfer of violence behaviour and emotional dependency on another is common, thus children learn that violence is an acceptable behaviour and an integral part of an intimate relationship. Children may become abusive adults or domineering and controlling in the relationships and may perceive violence as normal part of intimate relationship. Children raised in an abusive environment do not understand this is a problem between adults. They learn that family violence is acceptable and it is okay to be loved and hurt at the same time. This kind of adaptation and behaviour does not give conducive environment for a child to perform well in school, hence poor performance in PLE in Lango sub-region.

7. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is a major contributor to poor performance in PLE in Lango sub-region due to its influence on the child's behaviour in school that does not support learning processes. For example, children often imitate behaviours they witness. Generationally transfer of violence behaviour and emotional dependency on another is common, thus children learn that violence is an acceptable behaviour and an integral part of an intimate relationship. The three most commonest forms of domestic violence in Lango sub-region are, physical, sexual and economical which is associated with beating of children, burning of the body parts, pulling/pushing, name callings, not or late paying school fees, absenteeism from school due to domestic work like garden work, defilement, rape, lack of food at school, child force marriage, teenage pregnancy, excessive alcohol consumption among others cannot support improvement in performance in PLE in Lango sub-region. This is worse since there is no supporting program of or alternative support to rehabilitate the victims of domestic violence in the region. In order to improve on the performance of PLE in Lango sub-region, there is need to

improve on household income of the rural population in Lango sub-region, improve on the legal frame work that are comprehensively tackle Domestic violence and the government agencies and partners to adequately implement these laws but also contentious dialogue and sensitisation of the masses on the danger of domestic violence.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for more sensitisation and dialogue with the local leaders (cultural, religions, local leaders), police and parents/care givers on the danger of domestic violence and derive at solution with them and improve on PLE performance in Lango sub-region.
2. Strengthen the reporting and referral systems and structures (pathways) to improve on the response and prevention of domestic violence in Lango sub-region.
3. Establish counselling service centres within the community and at school for the victims of domestic violence especially the school going children to improve on their performance in PLE in Lango sub-region.
4. Initiate income generating activities to improve on the household income to facilitate school fees and food security at home to reduce economic violence at homes and improve PLE performance in Lango sub-region.
5. Improve on the legal framework that emphasise more on the affirmative action in the country.

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