

Domestic Violence and Academic Achievements of Girls in Public Primary Schools in West Pokot County, Kenya

Christine Nabwire, Patrick Kibet

Kibabii University, Bungoma, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to assess the influence of domestic violence practices on academic performance of girls in West Pokot County. The study was guided by social cultural theory and Bourdieu theory of practice. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data collection instruments included; Focus group discussion which was administered on girls in regular schools and girls in rescue centre schools. The questionnaires were given to senior teachers and teacher counsellors. Document analysis focused on the termly results for the girls in regular schools and those in rescue centre schools. The study targeted all girls in upper primary (1201), senior teachers (101), girls in rescue centres (212) and teacher counsellors (101) in the West Pokot County, making a total of 1615. According to Krejcie and Morgan Table for determining sample sizes, a target population of 1615 results into a sample size of 310 persons. Thus, proportion to size sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of each of the sampled groups, hence 92 girls in regular schools, 16 girls in rescue centres, 101 senior teachers and 101 teacher counselors. The data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and Chi-square and presented in tables. The study established that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and pupils academic performance. It is hoped that the findings will help in improving the management of girls' education in the region.

KEYWORDS: Academic, Achievements, Domestic Violence, Girls

INTRODUCTION

Confirmed report that was compiled in National Coalition against Domestic Violence (2011) about domestic violence cited the USA where an estimated number of 20 people were physical abused in 1 minute. Averagely this accounted for 10 million people affected yearly. In their Data the NCAD Indicated that women were the most vulnerable with 1 out of every 3 being hurt by partners where only 1 out of the 25 involving men with Injuries from their partners. Out of all these approximately 19% were very close partners. This follows the WHO (2013) which reported of violence against women and which can be describe in many form – sexual assault, rape, violence by very intimate partners, sexual violence others not partners, women trafficking and female genital mutilation among others.

Riechers (2010), report of study carried out shows how rampant reports of domestic violence is but unfortunately, the authorities choose to neglect frequent reports and so many fail to report the

incidence. Riecher (2010) reported that domestic violence causes many negative outcomes and risk against women and children. The central victim here is the girl child as the risk factors include early marriage for the girl child, lower educations, violence, alcohol and drug abuse. There is however no overall consistency in this, Domestic violence is still a global social vice quite wide spread especially in Brazil and Tanzania where it is tied on taboos and uncertainty.

The victims of which many are women, children and a negligible number of men undergo the violence within their intimate relationship and to some extend the immediate social environment. They undergo physical violence, emotional and psychological violence that poses great risk to their health, one cannot give an accurate extent of the violence due to the inability of the affected victims to narrate their ordeals or request for help. The underlying reason is shame, perception hinged on traditional issues of

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marriage, family, and feelings of fear. The number of unknown cases is high due to rare notification to the law authorities. Those in position never keep epidemiological data.

Horrifying and terrible experiences whereby wives are badly beaten by their husbands were reported by WHO (2010) research in ten different countries with different customs, traditions, values and family structures in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Peru, Namibia, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand and Tanzania. This affects the lives and upbringing of children. Further the report highlights the need of public health response against the violence unleashed on women. The impact is not only immediate harm on women but also affect many in their future life. The medical personnel hardly recognize the problem nor give reports of evidence of violence on women suffering. The victims rarely get adequate help and support.

There is relationship between being violent physically and emotionally mistreating someone.

In addition to these WHO (2010) data collected from more than 24000 women in 10 counties confirms propagation of this culture has widespread domestic violence against women. A further study done by Hindin & Kishor (2010) gave the demographic and health survey of the countries mentioned as follows, Canada 18 %, Zambia 48%, Dominican Republic 17%, south Africa 42% and Ethiopia 16% of girls and women aged (13-23) reported domestic violence cases.

A report by David, et al (2012) indicates that about 60% of all the criminal cases recorded in Zimbabwe courts emanated from domestic violence and this form of violence mainly involves assault such as hitting, slapping, intimidation and abuse. The same report indicates that in Gulu hospital in Northern Uganda a total number of trauma cases was 1880 and 24% of which was due to domestic violence. A report given by the cabinet secretary for public service youth and gender affairs in Kenya Sicily Kariuki published on 12th June 2018 by the Daily Nation newspaper confirmed that cases of gender-based violence have been witnessed in different counties in Kenya totaling to 357 cases in Kenya. These figures are very alarming as increase in gender-based violence has affected the country negatively as it has led to killings and torture to the victims' involved especially women and the girls who are at higher risks than men. The Kenya government has put a lot of efforts to counter the vice by enacting laws and policies such as the protection against domestic violence act, the sexual offence act, the marriage act and the matrimonial

property act but the vice is still in the increase despite this effort.

Most of the cases reported happen in domestic environment of the social settings therefore cultivating the practice with increased cases that many women have undergone the ordeal of violence she indicates that in every 5 out of 10 women in Kenya have at least experience one form of violence ranging from beatings, battery and sexual assault which is estimated at 50%. Kenya has experienced high cases of domestic violence that are very horrifying, the one that broke the hearts of many Kenyans and indeed the whole world is the scariest case of domestic violence as reported by local newspaper the Daily Nation in Kenya which published cases by GBV in 2018. A case in point is the assault on Ms Winfred Mwende from Kyaaka village battered by a husband in the county of Makueni in 2018. The law enforcers negligence on the all matter necessitated the outrage of the public who demanded the arrest and prosecution of the propagator of the violence. Daudi Nzomo was consequently arrested and jailed for 12 years.

A report by Church World Wide Service (2018) on gender-based violence in West Pokot among the pastoralists still a nightmare in this communities with patriarchal social structures deeply rooted this gender-based violence include spouse beating, forced marriages, emotional abuse among others. The 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey issued a report stating about 44% of women had faced physical abuse since when they were young. Domestic violence contributes to negative mental and physical effects, hypertension, and pregnancy loss among others. The police and Kenyan in general have out of negligence failed to strengthen their response to gender based violence and this therefore leave the perpetrators of gender-based violence scot free and continue practiced this vice the girl child therefore remain traumatized and cannot concentrate in matters pertaining school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence domestic violence on academic achievement of girls

The third objective of the study was to investigate the influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of girls in public primary schools in West Pokot County. The respondents targeted were senior teachers, girls in public schools, girls in rescue centres and teacher counsellors. The instruments used for this objective were questionnaires and focused group discussions. The responses given are indicated for each item in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of domestic violence on academic achievement of girls

Statements	Senior Teachers		Teacher Counsellors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Most of the girls who were rescued from early marriages experienced domestic violence in their marriage	82 (81.18%)	19 (18.81%)	69 (68.32%)	32 (31.68%)
Girls who were rescued from their marriages due to domestic violence have an above average academic performance	14 (14.00%)	87 (86.00%)	26 (25.74%)	75 (74.26%)
Girls who experience domestic violence are the most truant pupils	68 (67.33%)	33 (32.67%)	69 (68.32%)	32 (31.68%)
Girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school	77 (76.24%)	24 (23.76%)	67 (66.34%)	34 (33.66%)
Girls who experience domestic violence at home are the most withdrawn in school.	72 (71.29%)	29 (28.71%)	82 (81.19%)	19 (18.81%)
Girls who experience domestic violence at home are unable to submit assignment on time	67 (66.34%)	34 (33.66%)	20 (19.80%)	81 (80.20%)
Girls who experience domestic violence at home have less concentration in class	69 (68.32%)	32 (31.68%)	69 (68.32%)	32 (31.68%)

Source: Field data (2021)

The findings in Table 2 revealed that most of the girls who were rescued from early marriages experienced domestic violence in their marriage. From the data obtained, 81.18% senior teachers and 68.32% teacher counsellors agreed that most girls who were rescued from early marriages experienced domestic violence in their marriage. Only a few of them, 18.81% Senior teachers and 31.68% teacher counsellors disagreed that girls who were rescued from early marriages experienced domestic violence in their marriage. This finding corroborated with what one of the rescued girls in the focused group said, that is:

“I was married off to an elderly man at 15 years. For the first three months things were going on well but once he realised, I was pregnant he started coming home late and many a times picking up fights on unnecessary issues. This went on for another four months until when the institution came to my rescue after being beaten into a miscarriage.” (Focussed group discussion 20-25 group)

This implies that domestic violence against women is widespread and a staid problem among the Pokots. These findings concur with findings of The National Dimensions of Domestic Violence studies by Oketch, et al.(2010), Abuya and Onsomu, (2012), Narai (2013) and Gichuba (2017) on its forms, incidences, impacts and prevalence are alarming. Children being the most affected individuals; their learning is a consequence of domestic violence (Gichuba, 2017)

The findings in Table 2 also revealed that most of the girls who were rescued from their marriages due to domestic violence had a below average academic performance. From the data obtained, 86.00% senior teachers and 74.26% teacher counsellors disagreed that most girls who were rescued from their marriages

due to domestic violence have an above average academic performance. Only a few of them, 14.00% Senior teachers and 25.74% teacher counsellors agreed that most of the girls who were rescued from their marriages due to domestic violence have an above average academic performance. These findings corroborated with what one of the rescued girls in the focused group said after an inquiry on their performance at school, that is:

“.....we experienced domestic violence before our rescue and this has left some of us so traumatised that we cannot concentrate on our studies well..... It has to some extent affected our grades in class though we are trying our best.....” (Focussed group discussant 5-10 group)

This implies that most girls who were rescued and had experienced violence in their marriage are still traumatized by the events. According to Okisai (2018) exposure to domestic violence indirectly affects child adjustment by distracting the pattern of regular school attendance. Margolin and Gordis (2014) observe that negative outcomes from domestic violence are what leads to the children behavioral and emotional difficulties and poor academic performance in school.

The findings in Table 2 further revealed that girls who experience domestic violence at are the most truant pupils. This finding was supported by 67.33% senior teachers and 68.32% teacher counsellors who agreed that most girls who experience domestic violence at are the most truant pupils. Only a few of them, 18.81% Senior teachers and 23.76% teacher counsellors disagreed that most girls who experience domestic violence at are the most truant pupils. Pupils exposed to domestic violence may develop difficulty

with school work and may perform substantially poor. This finding is in tandem with what one of the school girls in the focused group:

“I experience domestic violence against my mother on nearly a daily basis. My father fights my mother on account of her being rude to him and not following his instructions. I and my brother have been assisting to protect her from our father and this at times forces us to skip school to be next to her.....” (Focussed group discussant 20-25 group)

This implies that girls who experience domestic violence in their homes most at times skip school to protect their mothers at home, hence affecting their academic performance. Holt (2008) observes that domestic violence interferes with children’s lives as they think it is their fault, thus creating a negative impact on school performance and achievement. Some pupils may opt to stay home because they might be frightened on what might happen when they have gone to school.

The findings in Table 2 established that girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school, hence affecting their academic performance. From the data obtained, 76.24% senior teachers and 66.34% teacher counsellors agreed that most of girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school. Only a few of them, 23.76% Senior teachers and 33.66% teacher counsellors disagreed that most of the girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school. This implies that girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school hence performing dismally in their academics. According to Gichuba (2017), the effect of exposure to domestic violence is prevalent in the classroom setting. The affected children at home are likely to imitate and transfer the acquired behaviors to the classroom setting especially during peer interaction. Thus, it is requisite for teachers to address the practice of healthy imitation in young children who witness domestic violence

The findings in Table 2 established that girls who experience domestic violence at home are the most withdrawn in school. From the data obtained, 71.29% senior teachers and 81.19% teacher counsellors agreed that most of the girls who experience domestic violence at home are the most withdrawn in school. Only a few of them, 28.71% Senior teachers and 18.81% teacher counsellors disagreed that most of the girls who experience domestic violence at home are the most withdrawn in school. This implies that domestic violence makes some of the pupils be withdrawn in school and hence make it hard for

teachers to assist them academically. This might lead them into performing poorly in school.

The findings in Table 2 further revealed that girls who experience domestic violence at home are unable to submit assignment on time. This finding was supported by 66.34% senior teachers and 80.20% teacher counsellors who agreed that most girls who experience domestic violence at home are unable to submit assignment on time. Only a few of them, 33.66% Senior teachers and 19.80% teacher counsellors disagreed that most girls who experience domestic violence at home are unable to submit assignment on time. This finding is in tandem with what one of the school girls in the focused group:

“.....my father and mother fight in the evenings, mostly when my father comes home drunk. This makes us not concentrate on our studies and most of the time unable to do take home assignments.....” (Focussed group discussant 20-25 group)

This implies those girls who experience domestic violence at home have very limited or no time to undertake their studies and also work on their take home assignments. This makes them unable to submit their assignment on time and hence affecting their academic performance at school. Children, who grow up with domestic violence according to Gichuba (2017), may have difficulty in completing school work, impaired ability to concentrate and poorer scores on measures of motor, social and verbal skills.

The findings in Table 2 further revealed that girls who experience domestic violence at home have less concentration in class. This finding was supported by 68.32% senior teachers and 68.32% teacher counselors who experience domestic violence at home have less concentration in class. Only a few of them, 31.68% Senior teachers and 31.68% teacher counselors disagreed that most girls who experience domestic violence at home have less concentration in class. This implies that pupils exposed to domestic violence may keep thinking about the act at school hence lose concentration in class which leads to poor academic performance. According to Narae (2013) and Gichuba (2017), domestic violence influences, will affect the pupils’ concentration in learning.

Conclusion

The study also established that majority of the girls who were rescued from early marriages experienced domestic violence in their marriage. The findings also revealed that most of the girls who were rescued from their marriages due to domestic violence had a below average academic performance. The findings further reveal that girls who experience domestic violence at are the most truant pupils. The findings established

that girls who experience domestic violence at home have the most indiscipline record in school, hence affecting their academic performance. The findings established that girls who experience domestic violence at home are the most withdrawn in school. The findings further revealed that girls who experience domestic violence at home are unable to submit assignment on time. The findings further reveal that girls who experience domestic violence at home have less concentration in class.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the study recommends that the county governments should embark on a series of barazas with the community and sensitize them on issues concerning domestic violence; and in so doing also empower the village elders, sub-chiefs and Chiefs on how to handle domestic violence cases.

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