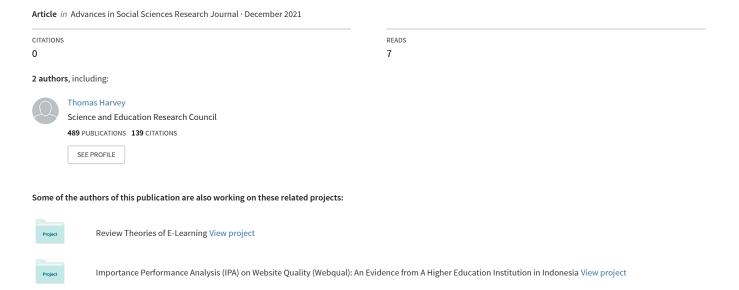
Is There a Solution to Domestic Violence? Digging Deeper Into the Problem of Domestic Violence in Uganda a Case of Ibanda District



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Is There a Solution to Domestic Violence? Digging Deeper Into the Problem of Domestic Violence in Uganda a Case of Ibanda District

Dr. Fredrick Mutabaruka (PhD)

Mountains of the Moon University

Charles Tushabomwe Kazooba

Mbarara University of Science and Technology P.O Box 1410 Mbarara, Uganda

ABSTRACT

This paper is a deeper analysis to whether there is an end to domestic violence. The fact that there are a numbers of increased cases reported especially during corona virus (covid-19) period, it was inevitable to carry out this study to understand more about domestic violence. The study mainly focused on clear features and causes of domestic violence. It also aimed at coming out with practical approaches to curbing the problem. A mixed design approach was used in both collection and analysis of data. The study used judgmental sampling strategy in selecting the participants because the data that was required more tailored to knowledge based participants. A total of 57 participants were involved from whom interviews and questionnaires were administered. Results reveal a high increase in domestic violence evidenced mainly by assaults of physical, mental emotional and verbal. Other cases are through harassment behavioors, disrespect and confrontation. The leading caused to domestic violence are attributed to poverty, attitude of male dominance and alcoholism as well as having outside relationships. Creation of extensive public awareness through training and public campaign is recommended as the practical intervention to curb domestic violence.

INTRODUCTION

During the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic, a lot of social medial platforms revealed very many incidences pertaining to domestic violence. Depending on each media platform, domestic abuse reflected its self many forms. It appeared affecting both men and women in either a married or unmarried relationship. Looking at the way the problem has been publicized during this corona virus pandemic, the assumption is that the problem of domestic violence is a new and emerging problem or as if it has come with corona virus. This therefore interested the researcher to dig deep into the understanding of domestic violence to ascertain its meaning, causes and suggest mitigations measures to the problem.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Domestic violence or violence expressed through intimate acts is as old as history. Rape and other forms of sexual assaults and exploitation have been historically used to demoralize groups of people. For example in Germany, contraction camps, North America bound slave ships, World war 11 Japanese brothels filled with "comfort women" and many others. Society also sanctioned forms of violence against women that include infibulations (fastening or

buckling together, female genitalia in an effort to render less able to work or unable to have sexual intercourse respectively) and female genital cutting or excision (female circumcision).

The world societies have viewed women as less valuable than men. The assaults of women from attending schools, killings women being victims or rape or other sexual violence or being premarital sex in some countries, women being omitted from serving on juries in the United states until 1701, preventing them from voting until 1920, all this viewed women as second class citizens which encouraged their mistreatment (Edwards 1996).

Domestic violence (also called intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, dating violence, spouse abuse or intimate partner abuse) is any form of mistreatment that takes place in a hetero sexual or homosexual romantic relationship between adults or adolescents (Medicine net 1996). It is any physical, sexual or psychological violence inflicted on a victim by a current or former spouse or intimate partner or other members of the family (Spanish President 2002). Domestic valance also refers to valance, abuse and intimidation between people who are currently or have previously been in an intimate relationship. The perpetrator uses violence to control and dominate the other person. This causes fear, physical harm and or physiological herm. It is also termed as family violence meaning it is violence between family members (children and parents) as well as intimate partner. Family valance reflects better on their understanding and experience. Domestic violence is therefore a major health problem to the public in that it affects millions of people and often results into physical and emotional injuries and sometimes death (Phillips J 2014). This study aimed at understanding more on domestic violence through explicitly identifying clear features and causes of domestic violence and looked at the feasible measures that would led to overcoming the problem.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Different scholars have come out with different meanings of domestic violence. There are also other underlying factors pointed out in different studies each with several determinants and effects of domestic valance. Most studies however all have in common issues like household wealth, education levels of partners, economic status levels and control of resources, consumption of alcohol, drugs, HIV status and witnessing family violence during child growth, all have more likely prone behaviors to family violence. Studies have further put across measures to curb domestic violence. The understanding of all these determinants as well as underlying interventions to domestic violence in developing countries Uganda inclusive remains limited. Although there is some evidence on the causes and interventions to domestic valance, the current demographic data reveals that domestic violence is on the highest increase in developing countries. One therefore wonders whether the issue of domestic violence not well understood or whether there is no solution to domestic valance. This study therefore focused on understanding more on domestic violence, its causes and coming out with possible mitigation measures to the problem.

OBJECTIVES TO THE STUDY

- 1. To explicitly come out with clear features of domestic violence
- 2. To identify key causes of domestic violence
- 3. To suggest possible remedies to cub domestic violence

LITERATURE REVIEW

Domestic violence (DV) also called dating violence, intimate partner abuse, and domestic abuse takes many forms. Maltreatment that takes place in the context of any romantic relationship is an abuse as described by the above specific terms. It therefore affects men, women, or teen girls and boys, whether in a married or unmarried heterosexual or homosexual relationship. Intimate partner violence may consist of one or more forms, including emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or economic abuse. It is defined as one person in an intimate relationship using any means to put down or otherwise control the other (AARDVARC2007). Examples of domestic abuse include physical, verbal (also called emotional, mental, or psychological abuse), and sexual, economic/financial, and spiritual abuse.

Physically abusive behaviors include assault of any kind, ranging from pinching, pushing, hitting, or slapping to choking, shooting, stabbing, and murder. Verbal, emotional, mental, or psychological violence is described as using words to criticize, demean, or otherwise decrease the confidence of the wife, husband, or other intimate partner victim. Sexual abuse refers to any behavior that uses sex to control or demean the victim, like intimidating the victim into engaging in unsafe sex or sexual practices in which he or she does not want to participate. Economic or financial abuse is described as threatening or otherwise limiting the victim's financial freedom or security. Spiritual abusers either force the victim to participate in the batterer's religious practices instead of their own or to raise mutual children in a religion that the victim is not in favor of. Stalking refers to repeatedly harassing and threatening behavior, including showing up at the victim's home or workplace, placing harassing phone calls, voicemail, email or postal mail messages, leaving unwanted items, or vandalizing the victim's property. It is usually committed by perpetrators of other forms of domestic violence (Coker, et al, 2000)

Domestic violence is a major public health problem in that it affects millions of people and often results in physical and emotional injuries and even deaths (Fernandez, 1999). Media reporting of celebrities' domestic abuse victimization demonstrates that even the most accomplished individuals can be involved in this problem. The statistics about those who are affected by intimate partner violence are staggering; domestic abuse affects 3%-5% of current adult relationships in the United States, including more than 2 million women (AARDVARC2007). Despite this issue disproportionately affecting women, the myth that violence against men does not occur is incorrect; 800,000 men are victims of intimate partner abuse. Nearly one-third of women can expect to be the victim of intimate partner violence sometime in their lifetime (Mayell 2002). About 25% of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals are victims of intimate partner abuse, just as often as are heterosexual women. About 1,300 deaths were attributed to domestic abuse as of 2003. Research into deaths that result from intimate partner abuse in the United States and Austria indicate that more than 50% of women murdered are the result of domestic violence, most often using a gun. About 4%-9% of men are killed as victims of domestic violence. Approximately 65% of the approximate 1,300 murdersuicides that occur in the United States every year involve intimate partners (AARDVARC2007) Teen intimate partner abuse takes place at an alarming rate. Facts about domestic violence in this group include that as many as 12% of adolescents in grades 7 through 12 have been victims of physical dating violence, and 20% of youth have suffered from psychological dating violence (Lehmann 2002). This abuse puts victims in danger of practicing risky sexual behavior, unhealthy eating, drug use, and suicidal behaviors. Other complications can include physical

injury and death. These victims are also more likely to become sufferers of intimate partner violence as adults.

There tends to be a cycle of behavior, known as the cycle of violence, in abusive relationships. That cycle includes the tension-building, explosive, and tranquility/honeymoon stages. The tension-building stage is described as the phase of the abusive relationship in which the abuser tends to engage in lower-level abuse, like pushing, insulting, coercive behaviors, and escalating demands for control. Simultaneously, the victim of abuse tends to try to appease the abuser in an effort to avoid worsening of the abuse. Acts of abuse escalate to a severe level during the explosive stage of intimate partner violence, manifesting as the most overt and serious acts of abuse and control, like slapping, punching, inhibiting the movements of the victim, rape, or other sexual violence. The tranquility or honeymoon stage of the cycle of domestic violence tends to immediately follow the overt acts of aggression of the explosive stage and is usually characterized by the abuser seeming to be quite remorseful and apologetic for the abuse, making promises that it will never happen again and showering the victim with affection.

METHODOLOGY

This borrowed a mixed method design research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methods and tools were used to in both data collection and analysis. The study used judgmental sampling technique to select the participants because data required was more of participants who have key information and experience about the problem. Data was collected from District community development Officer(DCDO), 15 Community development officers(CDOs) in all sub counties of the district, District Police Officer in-charge family protection, District probation and welfare Officer,30 Local Council One Chairpersons selected and 10 family members that have fallen victim of domestic violence. The total sample of participants was 57.

Both questionnaire and interviews were used. Questionnaires were used on CDOs and Police Officer in charge of family protection. This assisted in generating quantitative data especially numerical data that was related to number of domestic violence cases recorded. Interviews were used on DCO, Local Council one chairpersons and the family members who were victims to domestic valance. This assisted in digging out more information resulting from experience and getting grass root information of domestic violence. Data was then tabulated, interpreted and analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 while qualitative data was analyzed using narrative guided by thematic approach. The results and concisions for the study are all based on the study objectives which as well served as the themes for the study.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

During the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic, a lot of social medial platforms revealed very many incidences pertaining to domestic violence. The researcher interests himself into the understanding of the prevailing problem. Data was collected from relevant offices responsible in regard to domestic violence to justify the speculation in the social media. Table one below presents the cases of domestic violence reported in the Child and Protection Unit in Ibanda district which is the study area, the District Community Development Office and Senior Probation Office all responsible for the wellbeing of people especially families.

Table 1: Domestic Violence Cases Reported in Three Consecutive Years					
Reported Cases Offices Handling Domestic Violence	201	%'se	201	%'se	2019
•	7		8		
Child Family Protection Unit	97	68.3	306	41	519
District Community Development Office	-	-	128	36.3	201
Senior Family Probation Office	82	34.9	126	53.2	269

Following table was above, there is substantial evidence that domestic violence is on increase. This is justified by the fact that cases reported in the office of Child and Protection Unit at police head officer in the study district indicated 86.3% increase between the year 2017 and 2018 as well as 41% increase between 2018 and 2019 respectively. Again using the same table1, the office of Senior Family Probation Office presents a sharp increase in cases reported for domestic violence. The cases increased from 34.9% in 2017 to 53.2% in 2018. This therefore justifies the view of the media reports that domestic violence has actually increased not only during Covid-19 as reported by various media groups but rather a continuous problem in as far as family and wellbeing of interment partners is concerned.

This is in agreement with MedicineNet (2018) in their argument that Domestic violence or violence that is expressed using intimate acts is unfortunately as timeless as history. Rape and other forms of sexual assault and sexual exploitation have historically been used to demoralize groups of people as in German concentration camps, on North America-bound slave ships, and in World War II Japanese brothels filled with "comfort women."

In the same vein, domestic violence seems to manifest itself in different perspectives. In this study, it was imperative to conceptualize what exactly participants perceive in what is called domestic violence. Table 2 below presents the response to what participant understand by domestic violence.

Table2: The Meaning of Domestic Violence

Variable(s)	Frequency (N=83)	Percentage (%)
Physical Assault	14	16.9
Verbal, Mental and Emotional Assault	14	16.9
Sexual Abuse	12	14.5
Limiting Fincial Freedom	10	12
Spiritual Abuse	08	9.6
Harassing Behaviors	12	14.5
Disrespect and Confrontation	13	15.6
Total	83	100

Following table 2 above, assault is the most leading and manifestation of domestic violence. This assault manifests itself in different forms where in some case it appears physical, verbal, mental, and emotional assaults. This is justified by 16.9% respectively from participants' responses. The other issues that are a manifestation of domestic violence is disrespect and confrontation with 15.6%, sexual abuse and harassing behaviors each appearing at 14.5%. MeddicineNet (2018) further describes Intimate partner violence as consisting of one or more forms. This includes emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or economic abuse. It is defined as one person in an intimate relationship using any means to put down or otherwise control the other. They spell out the common types of domestic abuse to include physical, verbal (also

called emotional, mental, or psychological abuse), and sexual, economic/financial, and spiritual abuse. Stalking and cyber-stalking are also forms of intimate partner abuse.

Belatedly, assessing whether a man or woman is being abused in a relationship is manageable. There is always a tendency for the victims not willing to disclose their victimization. Despite those difficulties, the effects of domestic violence have often come up hence realization of the problem. In this paper, the researcher interests himself in understanding exactly what causes domestic violence in homes. Table 3 below presents responses fro the participants on what could be the caucuses.

Table 3: Causes of Domestic Violence

Variable(s)	Frequency (N=91)	Percentage (%)
Limited Higher Education	02	2.2
Poverty	12	13.2
Attitude of Male Dominance over Women	11	12
Witnessing Family Violence While Young	10	11
Having a Low Sense of Self Worth	06	6.7
Drug Abuse	10	11
Alcohol Abuse	11	12
Unemployment	07	7.7
Outside Relationship	12	13.2
Failure to have Children in a Relationship	10	11
Total	91	100

Domestic violence seem not to be having a clear cause, however, table 3 above presents responses from participants on they the visible causes to domestic violence. It is evident from table 3 above that poverty and having an outside relationship in a marriage are the outspoken issues that lead to domestic violence in families represented by 13.2% respectively. The other issues raised are attitude of male dominance over women, alcoholism all presented at 12% while drug abuse and failure to have children in a relationship are also raised with 11% respectively. Participants however disregarded limited higher education to be part of causes of domestic violence with 2.2% responding to the issue.

World Health Organization (2003) supports this view when they argue that "Our understanding of the underlying determinants of domestic violence in developing countries remains limited. A number of studies have found strong associations between socioeconomic status and domestic violence, with indicators of household wealth or education of the male partner significantly inversely associated with the risk of violence" Other studies have found that women with greater autonomy and control over resources are more protected from violence. However, some evidence shows that this association may be context-specific and that, in more conservative settings, women with high autonomy may actually be at increased risk of violence. Several studies in developing countries have also found a strong association between consumption of alcohol or drugs and the risk of violence. This therefore confirms the results for this study.

Table 3 below addresses the practical measures this study would recommend in curbing domestic violence.

Table 3: Practical Measures to Curb Domestic	c Violence
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Variable(s)	Frequency (N=87)	Percentage (%)
Regular Training on Domestic Violence	14	16.1
Support Services to Domestic Violence	13	14.9
Awareness Raising	13	14.9
Challenging Bad Cultural Practices	09	10.4
Putting Policies into Place	12	13.8
Recognition of Diversity	11	12.6
Reaching Illiterate Victims	08	9.2
Having a Political Will	07	8.1
Total	87	100

The most outstanding and possibly practicable measures brought out by this study are regular training, support services and awareness creation in regard to domestic violence. This is reflected in the 16.1 and 14.9 percentage response rate. It is believed that most communities where domestic violence is high have limited knowledge on the problem and its effects. The more the trainings and creating awareness about the problem, the less the cases of domestic violence! This is in agreement with the House of Ruth, a domestic violence center, arguing that everyone can help find ways to stop domestic violence, either by donating money or time to a domestic-violence organization. learning more about the problem, teaching children about healthy versus abusive relationships, listening in a nonjudgmental way to a domestic violence victim when he or she shares what they are going through, and giving victims information about where to get help.

Other issues that come out are putting policies in place, recognition of cultural diversity, challenging bad cultural practices and reaching out to illiterate communities. Since having a strong support system has been found to be a protective factor against domestic violence (Medicine Net, 2018), encouraging such support has been found to decrease the likelihood that a person will become the perpetrator or victim of domestic violence. Effective solutions for preventing domestic violence include providing economic opportunity, mentors, and safety advocates, role models who are survivors of domestic violence, organized community programs for youth and families and a school environment that promotes prevention of abusiveness in any relationship. Adult family members can also help prevent domestic violence by nurturing and by providing consistent, structured supervision. Raising the awareness about domestic violence in society at large, can occur during Domestic Violence Awareness weeks or months each year, and can be invaluable to educating people about this issue. Another Advocacy can further involve encouraging one's own health care providers to post and share information about the issue. In the workplace, those who want to help stop domestic abuse can organize a drive or fundraiser for goods or money to give to a domestic-violence organization.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence has largely become one of the problems facing countries in Africa Uganda inclusive. The more understanding of the problem will help equip the communities with interventions and skills to better prepare themselves to face the challenges of reality in the world. It is quite evident that domestic violence is faced by many families and people in Uganda and beyond which is believed as one of the stumbling block to development. Based on this, it

recommended by this study that officials responsible for peoples welfare need to intensify trainings at the village level in all communities to create awareness of domestic violence hence minimize the rate at which the cases are increasing. Secondly, as a measure to educate the public, a policy needs to enacted and gazette specific period as a domestic awareness week or month each year for domestic violence campaign.

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