

Sexual Violence and Girl Child Completion of Primary Education; A Case Study of Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District.

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Abstract

The study focused on determining the relationship between sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education. Specifically, to find out how girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education; to find out how girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary education; to find out how effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child affects completion of primary Education and to find possible measures of controlling sexual harassment against girl child in primary schools in Mitooma Sub County. The study adopted cross-sectional research design with the sample size of 160 respondents, participants were selected using simple random and purposive sampling. Data was collected using questionnaire survey, interview method and focused group discussion. It was analysed using descriptive and Pearson correlation coefficient. The study found out that sexual assault had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. The study also revealed that that effect of sexual violence had a negative significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. The study showed that effectiveness of statutory instruments had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. The study found out that school has provided learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence; sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence; the school provides a protective environment and free from risks of sexual violence. The study recommends that government should promote gender equality and respect through incorporating gender equality and respectful relationships into school curricula. Teach children about consent, boundaries, and mutual respect from a young age. Government through police and court should ensure Immediate and Comprehensive Support for Victims by providing immediate and ongoing psychological support to help victims cope with trauma and regain confidence in their ability to learn and participate in school; Ensuring that victims have access to medical care to address any physical health issues resulting from the violence and to offer preventive and supportive care; Maintaining strict confidentiality to protect the privacy of victims and reduce the risk of stigma or further trauma. Government should periodically review and update laws and policies to address emerging trends and challenges related to sexual violence; ensure that statutory instruments cover all aspects of sexual violence, including prevention, protection, and prosecution, and address the specific needs of children. The study also recommends that there should be parent and caregiver workshops to offer workshops for parents and caregivers on recognizing signs of abuse, discussing safety with children, and understanding their role in prevention.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Girl Child, Completion of Primary Education.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

There is clear evidence to suggest that in countries with low levels of economic development, girls are less likely to be enrolled in school compared to boys (Psaki et al, 2022). Several factors such as economic opportunities, government policies, cultural and religious factors, low initial conditions in girl-child education, have been attributed to this disparity (Novella, 2019). Indeed, while since the turn of the century, progress has been made regarding girl-child education in developing countries, several hurdles such as political instability, conflict and civil wars remain (Amin and Ntembe, 2021). Of particular interest to this study is the impact of sexual violence on girl-child completion of primary education as there is an ever-increasing awareness that across the world girls are faced with varying forms of sexual abuse (Le Matt et al. 2019). Sexual violence is a constant threat in most developing countries (Marsh, Purdin & Navani 2006).

Global estimates show that 120 million (or one in 10) girls under the age of 20 have experienced some form of forced sexual contact. Global estimates for boys are currently not available (UNICEF, 2014). However, an analysis of available data for 24 countries (primarily in high- and middle-income countries) showed that sexual violence in childhood ranged from 8% to 31% for girls and 3% to 17% for boys (Barth, et al, 2013). The countries include Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Côte D'ivoire, Croatia, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Zambia and Zimbabwe among others. Approximately, one in 10 adolescents worldwide reported experiencing sexual violence (Wincentak, et al, 2017). Sexual violence against adolescents occurs in different circumstances, forms, and settings (Dartnall and Jewkes, 2013). Adolescent school girls are at risk of different forms of sexual violence by different perpetrators. Male teachers, school administrators, and students are common perpetrators of sexual violence against school girls (Antonowicz, 2010). They also tend to experience sexual violence at home or on the journey to and from school (Le Mat, 2016). Sexual violence has been found to have devastating effects on victims' health: physical, reproductive, psychological, and well-being (Mason and Lodrick, 2013; Jina and Thomas, 2013). Studies revealed that sexual violence against school girl has negative effects on the girls' educational attainment (Potter et al, 2018). Moreover, sexual violence against young girls also has a negative impact on the country's human and economic development (Weiner, 2017).

Malawi is a critical setting for preventing and responding to gender based violence, particularly sexual violence against young girls. Recent national data from Malawi reveal that an estimated one in five (21.8%) young adult girls experienced sexual abuse prior to age 18, primarily perpetrated by boyfriends, classmates and acquaintances (Ministry of Gender, 2014). Other nationally representative data estimate that one in four (25%) sexually experienced girls ages 15–19 characterize their sexual debut as forced, well above estimates pooled across all available data globally (15%) and within the region (21%) (Decker et al, 2015).

In South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania, perpetrators of physical violence are typically parents, relatives and teachers, of emotional violence relatives and peers and of sexual violence dating partners, relatives and strangers (Meinck et al, 2016; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, 2019). A 2009 UNICEF-supported Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) conducted in Tanzania reported that nearly 3 in 10 girls and approximately one in seven boys experienced sexual violence prior to the age of 18 year (UNICEF

Tanzania, et al, 2011).

A study focusing on interventions for reducing violence against children (VAC) in low-income and middle-income countries indicated that although VAC intervention studies are numerous in SSA, they are mainly from South Africa (Pundir et al, 2020). Some studies have been conducted in Uganda and Tanzania aimed at violence prevention. However, prevention programmes aim at one or two forms of violence. For instance, the Good School Toolkit intervention in Uganda aimed at reducing physical violence from school staff to primary school students. Despite engaging multiple stakeholders, that is, teachers, administration, students and parents, only one form of violence from teachers was measured despite the numerous VAC perpetrators (Devries et al, 2015).

Regardless of ethnic background, school-going girls are five times more likely than school-going boys to report sexual violence victimization (Saewyc, Pettingell & Magee, 2003). Across low- and middle-income countries (LAMICs), particularly, those in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana, sexual abuse of (school-going) children and adolescents have received less research attention (Adjei & Saewyc, 2017; Badoe, 2017).

Most recent data estimates that approximately 60 million girls are sexually assaulted on their way to or at school every year. This often has serious consequences for their mental and physical health and overall well-being while also leading to lower attendance and higher dropout rates. An estimated 246 million children experience violence in and around school every year, ending school-related gender-based violence is critical. Girls who become pregnant often face strong stigma, and even discrimination, from their communities. The burden of stigma, compounded by unequal gender norms, can lead girls to drop out of school early and not return to complete their primary education.

According to the Kenya National Council on Administration of Justice, there is a significant spike in sexual offences in many parts of the country constituting more than 35% of all reported cases (Daily Nation, 2022). More so, preliminary data from the International Rescue Committee suggests that in the far northern town of Lodwar, teenage pregnancies among clients of the International Rescue Committee aid group nearly tripled to 625 in 2019, compared with 226 in the same period a year earlier. In the nearby refugee camp of Kakuma, adolescent pregnancies among clients jumped to 51 in the March-August 2020 period, compared with 15 in the same period in 2019 (Ayenat, 2020).

In Uganda, sexual violence remains particularly widespread. According to the 2016 Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS), more than one in five (22 per cent) girls have ever experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes (UBOS & ICF, 2018). Further, nearly 10 per cent of girls age 15–19 and close to 20 per cent of girls age 20–24 reported ever experiencing sexual assault, with more than half of these experiencing it in the year preceding the survey (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and ICF 2018). The practice of forced and early marriage is still prevalent, although it has declined in the recent past. Legal age at marriage in Uganda is 18. In 2013, Uganda was ranked 16th among 25 countries with the highest rates of early marriages. UNICEF's 2016 report indicates that 10% of girls marry by age 15 and 40% by age 18. Based on data from the UDHS, this represents a decline from 2006 (53% of girls aged 20 to 49 were married before the age of 18) and from 2011 (15% of ever married girls aged 20 to 49 married by 15 and 49% by 18). There are laws to operationalize the provisions of the Constitution that address GBV. These include: The Domestic Violence Act 2010 and its Regulations 2011; The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2010 and regulations; The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009; The Penal Code Act, Cap 120, The Children (Amendment) Act 2016 and The International Criminal Court Act 2010. Other laws include the Land Act, Cap 227, The Employment Act, 2006, The Employment (Sexual Harassment)

Regulations 2012 and the Magistrates Courts Act Cap 16.

In Mitooma District, 6.3% of girls aged 12 to 17 had already given birth while 6.5% of girls aged 12-17 had ever been in a marriage union (Mitooma Community-Based Services Reports, 2019, 2020, 2022 & 2023). This shows that girls are highly affected by domestic violence and they are dropping out in large numbers hence need for the study to get a solution.

In order to reduce the challenge of sexual violence, Uganda government has instituted and revised Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct, The Children's Act Cap 59 (2008), 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which declares education a constitutional right under which Article 24 protects every person including children from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Batwana, 2020). Despite this intervention, girls continue to face serious psychological and social difficulties in coping with learning in primary schools given the vulnerability to sexual violence they are subjected to by fellow learners and teachers. This study therefore aims at establishing the prevalence and effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District.

Problem Statement

The future of every nation is predominantly premised on the children who are educated. Unfortunately many children have suffered the scourge of sexual domestic violence (Nuwesiga et al., 2024). Domestic violence has led to many young girls failing to complete their primary leaving education. The few who manages to reach higher level are generally lucky especially well to do families. According to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education in 2015, out of the 3,121 Primary school samples, 2,427 said they experienced a sexual relationship or abuse at school representing 77.7 percent of the sampled population. Of these, 19.4 percent (752) were in Eastern Uganda, 16.8 per cent (652) in Central, 14.9 per cent (578) in Northern Uganda and 11.5 per cent (445) in Western Uganda. Among girls in school, the overall prevalence of sexual violence from any perpetrator was 23.8% (201 of 844 girls) compared to 14.3% (87 out of 681) among boys (Jenny et al, 2023). Girls who had experienced lifetime sexual violence reported peers (16.0%), partners (6.3%), and then teachers as perpetrators.

However, the status quo shows that primary school completion rates are low in whereby in Mitooma district, girls' completion rates compared to boys have been declining over the past years whereby in 2019, completion rate was at 39% for girls compared to 61% for boys in 2020, 35% of girls completed primary 7 against 65% for boys. In 2021, the completion rates for girl pupils further declined to 32% against 67.4% for boys and further declined to the lowest completion rate of 27.9% among girls against 72.1% for boys (DEO's Office Report, 2023). The declines have been partly associated with sexual violence in form of sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexual abuse (UNGEI, 2016, Republic of Uganda, 2020). For instance, a study commissioned by the Ministry of education has indicated that about 78% of girls in primary schools in Uganda have been sexually abused within the school environment (MoE, 2015). Further, nearly 10 per cent of girls aged 15– 19 reported ever experiencing sexual assault (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and ICF 2018). According to UBOS (2017) in Mitooma District, three (3) in every 16 (18.7%) of girls aged 12 to 17 had already given birth. Sexual violence against school girls has had far negative education outcomes by denying the girls an opportunity to continue with their education (National Survey on Violence, 2020). If the problem was not dealt with concertedly by the relevant stakeholders, the plight of girl child was deteriorate and compromise the perceived good attributes of existing government policies. Currently scanty information (Wandera e al, 2017; Devries, Child et al., 2014) is available concerning sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education as few

studies have been done in Uganda and Mitooma Sub County in particular. This study therefore aims at determining the effect sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District.

General objective

The general objective of the study was to determine the relationship between sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) guided this study. It was derived from previous research in social psychology, persuasion models, and attitude theories. TRA states that a person's intention to perform a behavior is the main predictor of whether or not they perform that behavior (Glanz, et al, 2015).

Additionally, the normative component (i.e. social norms surrounding the act) also contributes to whether or not the person performed the behavior. According to the theory, the intention to perform a certain behavior precedes the actual behavior. This intention is known as behavioral intention and comes as a result of a belief that performing the behavior led to a specific SubCounty. Behavioral intention is important to the theory because these intentions "are determined by attitudes to behaviors and subjective norms" (Colman, 2015). TRA suggests that stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behavior, which also increases the likelihood for the behavior to be performed.

According to TRA, attitudes are one of the key determinants of behavioral intention and refer to the way people feel towards a particular behavior (Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007). These attitudes are influenced by two factors: the strength of behavioral beliefs regarding the outcomes of the performed behavior (i.e. whether or not the outcomes is probable) and the evaluation of the potential outcomes (i.e. whether or not the outcomes is positive) (Fishbein, 1975). Attitudes regarding a certain behavior can either be positive, negative, or neutral (Fishbein, 1967). The theory stipulates that there exists a direct correlation between attitudes and outcomes, such that if one believes that a certain behavior will lead to a desirable or favorable outcomes, then one is more likely to have a positive attitude towards the behavior. Alternatively, if one believes that a certain behavior will lead to an undesirable or unfavorable outcomes, then one is more likely to have a negative attitude towards the behavior (Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007). Behavioral belief allows us to understand people's motivations for their behavior in terms of the behavior's consequences (Ajzen & Icek, 2012). This concept stipulates that people tend to associate the performance of a certain behavior with a certain set of outcomes or features (Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007). The evaluation of the attitude refers to the way people perceive and evaluate the potential outcomes of a performed behavior. Such evaluations are conceived in a binary "good-bad" fashion-like manner (Montaño et al, 2014). For example, an adolescent girl evaluates the outcomes of avoiding sexual involvement as positive if the behavioral belief is improved health and positive living.

Subjective norms are also one of the key determinants of behavioral intention and refer to the way perceptions of relevant groups or individuals such as family members, friends, and peers affect one's performance of the behavior (Fishbein, 1967). Ajzen defines subjective norms as the "perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior" (Ajzen, & Albarracín, 2007). According to TRA, people develop certain beliefs or normative beliefs as to whether or not certain behaviors are acceptable. These beliefs shape one's perception of the behavior and determine one's intention to perform or not perform the

behavior (Ajzen, & Albarracín, 2007). For example, if a perpetrator believes that engaging a school girl in sexual violence (the behavior) is acceptable within his social group, he will more likely be willing to engage in the act. Alternatively, if his friends' groups perceive that the behavior is bad, he was less likely to engage in sexual intercourse with young school girls. However, it should be noted that subjective norms also take into account people's motivation to comply with their social circle's views and perceptions, which vary depending on the situation and the individual's motivations (Ajzen, & Albarracín, 2007).

Normative beliefs touch on whether or not referent groups approve of the action. There exists a direct correlation between normative beliefs and performance of the behavior. Usually, the more likely the referent groups will approve of the action, the more likely the individual will perform the act. Conversely, the less likely the referent groups will approve of the action, the less likely the individual will perform the act (Montaño et al, 2014). Motivation to comply addresses the fact that individuals can not comply with social norms of the referent groups surrounding the act. Depending on the individual's motivations in terms of adhering to social pressures, the individual will either succumb to the social pressures of performing the act if it is deemed acceptable or will resist the social pressures of performing the act if it is deemed unacceptable (Montaño et al, 2014).

The TRA theorists note that three conditions can affect the relationship between behavioral intention and behavior. The first condition is that "the measure of intention must correspond concerning their levels of specificity" (Madden, et al, 1992). This means that to predict a specific behavior, the behavioral intention must be equally specific. The second condition is that there must be "stability of intentions between the time of measurement and performance of behavior". The intention must remain the same between the time that it is given and the time that the behavior is performed. The third condition is "the degree to which carrying out the intention is under the volitional control of the individual" (Madden, et al, 1992). The individual always has the control of whether or not to perform the behavior. These conditions have to do with the transition from verbal responses to actual behavior. There is a relationship between normative beliefs and performance of the behaviour (sexual violence) among age mates of schooling girls who especially do it under peer influence.

Fishbein and Ajzen developed the TRA within the field of health to understand health behaviors. TRA has been used in many studies as a framework for examining specific kinds of behavior such as communication behavior, consumer behavior, and health behavior, hence being relevant in explaining sexual violence among schooling girls in primary schools. The theory is still relevant in helping to study behaviors that are associated with high risks and danger like unethical conduct, as well as deviant behavior of which sexual violence is associated with risks such as early pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, school dropout, and deaths in worst scenarios.

Given that the primary school girl child population is at an increased risk of sexual victimization it is pertinent to identify theoretically based antecedents to girl child stakeholders' intentions to intervene to prevent sexual violence. This is critical for informing campaigns aimed at controlling rate of sexual violence on school going girl children. Instrumental attitudes and capacity are looked at as the strongest predictors of individuals' intention to do an act, hence the theory will guide in establishing causes of sexual violence against girl child in primary schools. This study will therefore rely on the Theory of Reasoned Action to understand factors leading to sexual violence and its outcomes on girl child education in primary schools in Mitooma Sub County.

Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Accounts of teacher sexual violence in qualitative studies contrast sharply with the quantitative evidence

in presenting a picture of the normalisation of sexual violence in schools. While qualitative evidence has grown on how schools provide environments that condone or foster sexual harassment between pupils, there are, however, relatively few in-depth analyses of sexual violence committed by school staff, which remains shrouded in a culture of silence (Chikwiri and Lemmer 2014; Turner 2020). A study using interviews and focus groups to discuss SRGBV with young people in 14 secondary schools in western and central Uganda traced the unequal power relations and sexual double standards operating in schools that rendered girls vulnerable to sexual harassment, particularly when they refused sexual advances of male pupils and teachers, though teachers denied this (Muhanguzi 2011).

An ethnographic study on gender violence in two primary schools in central Uganda, which involved the researcher spending several months using a range of interviews, participatory activities, observations and informal conversations with children and school staff, revealed how some male teachers used their institutional positioning to exercise authority in sexualised ways and to sexually exploit female pupils (Turner 2020).

One study using interviews and focus groups with teachers in an Ethiopian secondary school, discussed how male teachers narrated sex between teachers and female pupils as commonplace, though none of them admitted to engaging in these practices themselves (Altinyelken and Le Mat 2018).

In a focus group study with six girls in a low-income township neighbourhood in South Africa, girls reported enduring experiences of sexual violence in and out of the school, involving boyfriends, male teachers, and men in the neighbourhood and at home (Bhana 2012). Girls' attempts to exercise agency were constrained in the context of structural and social inequalities and pervasive gender norms through which male sexual violence was asserted. In post conflict settings, including Liberia, Burundi and Sierra Leone, studies have reported heightened sexual violence (Steiner et al. 2021; Hendriks et al. 2020). For example, a study involving interviews and focus groups in six intervention areas by Plan International in Sierra Leone found sexual exploitation by teachers in junior secondary schools took the form of sex for grades, with girls without financial means to pay bribes to progress to the next class particularly vulnerable (Reilly 2014).

The emerging qualitative evidence paints a picture of commonplace teacher sexual violence, with risks to girls elevated in contexts with high levels of poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality, with poorly managed and resourced education systems (Leach, Dunne, and Salvi 2014). Some of the studies have argued that girls have some agency in transactional sex, through using sexual relationships to improve their material situation (Bell 2012). Others have traced how gender norms constrain girls' agency, with men's control of resources and norms about feminine submissiveness restricting girls' capacity to negotiate safe sex (Ninsiima et al. 2018).

Other causes of school dropout among girl children in primary schools other than sexual violence

The average primary school dropout rate in Uganda is 45%, but this rate is much higher among girls (The Huracan Foundation, 2019). This has largely been attributed to cultural factors like domestic work, child marriage, and teenage pregnancies as well as a lack of basic needs like adequate nutrition, clothing, and child slavery. According to Ministry of Education statistics, an alarming number of kids leave school before they complete primary school (Mabala, 2020). Less than 800,000 of the more than 1.8 million students who begin Primary One finish the Primary Leaving Examinations (NTV, 2021). As according observers, this may be a result of a variety of factors, including the high expense of education, the unavailability of sanitary products for girls, the bad learning environment, and parents who assign their kids to labor-intensive jobs. With more girls dropping out of primary school than boys throughout time, the

dropout rate for primary school has grown (GRC, 2019).

According to the NPA's District Statistical Profile Report 2013/2014, primary school dropout stood at 3.31% higher among females compared to their counterparts - the boys - in the past ten years in Rukungiri District, notably among girl children before graduating primary seven (Mwesigye, 2018). The government of Uganda generated the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program for those who were dropping out due to financial constraints, in an effort to reduce girl child dropout rates and increase their enrollment in school (Grogan, 2008); however, this has been attributed to technical barriers by low quality education, particularly in rural regions due to limited monitoring and limited procurement of material (Kan & Klasen, 2020). Similar to this, the government has ordered all schools to allow pregnant girls to continue their studies in an effort to lower their dropout rates (Ategeka, 2020).

While early marriage and teenage pregnancy were common among adolescent girls in South Sudan, respondents in Juba County attributed the rise in teenage pregnancy to the closure of schools between March 2020 to May 2021. The Support Peace Development Initiative Organization's 2021 report confirmed that more than 1,500 teenage girls in South Sudan were married off or became pregnant during the closure of schools to alleviate household economic stress through dowries (Xinhua, 2020). Oxfam's research found that, when schools reopened, increased poverty, domestic care work, early and forced marriage, and pregnancy made it difficult for many female learners to return to schools (ISPR, 2021). A similar study by Windle Trust International (Masua, 2021) on the impact of the COVID-19 school closures on girls' education in South Sudan revealed that all teachers and parents from 92 sampled schools reported that early and unwanted pregnancies were the most significant factor behind the drop in the number of girls who returned to school upon reopening.

The 2022 HNO for South Sudan (UN OCHA, 2022a) notes that an estimated 8.3 million people, including refugees, were expected to experience severe food insecurity at the peak of the 2022 lean season (May–July). This represents a 7% increase from the 7.7 million in 2021. The IPC's April 2022 findings categorized Pibor as being in Phase 5 (Catastrophe), and Juba, Awerial and Wulu counties in Phase 3 (Crisis) (FEWS NET, 2022). The key drivers of food insecurity in these areas are insecurity, floods, inflation and the recent decrease in World Food Programme (WFP) food assistance. A discussion with community members revealed that parents would prioritize food over education during the economic crisis, and it is no wonder that many children especially girls have been forced to join the labour market to support their families, mainly to put food on the table.

Cultural norms coupled with financial constraints have led to the prioritization of boys over girls for education. There was a general assumption across all the study sites that an educated male child is more valuable to his family than a girl, who they consider will sooner or later be married off and instead support their husbands' family. As a result, most of the parents confessed that they would prioritize education for boys over girls during times of scarcity. In Pibor, for example, many girls are culturally perceived as future wives while boys are culturally perceived as leaders. Indeed, many community members said that they see girls as a source of income. For example, in some instances, boys have to wait for their sisters to be married in order to be able to pay school fees. My parents forced me out of school in P5 to provide a chance for my younger brother, who is currently in P5, to study. My parents believe that he was able to support them in the future. – Female dropout, Juba County (Rutandaro, 2022).

Girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Jennifer and Godwin (2022) conducted a study in developing countries, about the relationship between sexual violence and girl-child primary school education in developing countries. They show that all

children have the right to quality education that respects their human dignity and their right to be protected from sexual assault. However, they clarify that in some developing countries this is not the case. According to the latest data they collected from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), they indicate that sexual assault in developing countries over the past 15 years rose by over 370%. The contribution of their study was to quantify the impact of sexual assault on girl-child education in a broad range of developing countries. To achieve this, they used country-level data from 72 developing countries between 2003-2017. The pooled OLS and fixed effects techniques were then used in estimating the impact of sexual assault on different measures of girl-child education. The results of the estimations showed a negative relationship between sexual violence and the different measures of the girl-child education. For example, they show that using the fixed effects results, an increase in sexual assault by one standard deviation from the sample mean, will reduce girls' enrolment rate and completion rate by 2.385% and 3.150% points, respectively. With respect to policy implications from the findings, they insist and indicate that countries must formulate adequate responses to protect their young citizens from the cruelty of sexual assault. They further add that, effective support mechanisms for victims of sexual assault should be facilitated and sustained in developing countries. This will help in ameliorating some of the negative impact of their violent experiences and help to prepare them to re-enter society and return to education.

Okafor and Piesse (2022) carried out a study on The Relationship between Sexual Violence and Girl-Child Primary School Education in Developing Countries. Therefore, the contribution of the study was to quantify the impact of sexual violence on girl-child education in a broad range of developing countries. To achieve this, country-level data from 72 developing countries between 2003-2017 was used. The pooled OLS and fixed effects techniques were then used in estimating the impact of sexual violence on different measures of girl-child education. The results of the estimations showed a negative relationship between sexual violence and the different measures of the girl-child education. For example, using the fixed effects results, an increase in sexual violence by one standard deviation from the sample mean, will reduce girls' enrolment rate and completion rate by 2.385% and 3.150% points, respectively. With respect to policy implications from the findings, countries must formulate adequate responses to protect their young citizens from the cruelty of sexual abuse. In addition, effective support mechanisms for victims of sexual violence should be facilitated and sustained in developing countries. This will help in ameliorating some of the negative impact of their violent experiences and help to prepare them to re-enter society and return to education.

Gruber and Fineran (2015) conducted a study on Sexual Harassment, Bullying, and School Outcomes for High School Girls and Boys in USA. Data were collected from students at a middle school and a high school in a suburban New England community as well as from a middle school and two high schools in southeastern Michigan who completed paper-and-pencil surveys during classes that drew a wide range of students.

A study by Ormerod et al (2022) was about "school climate tolerant of sexual harassment is indirectly related to academic disengagement through peer sexual harassment and feeling safe in high school girls". It was conducted in US schools. This cross-sectional study examined whether there was an indirect effect of school climate tolerant of sexual harassment on disengagement from school, individually and serially, through experiences of PSH victimization and feeling safe at school in a sample of 171 predominantly Black and White girls (14-19 years old) attending high school in the wider Memphis, Tennessee area. The findings supported that climate tolerant of sexual harassment was directly related to school disengagement through peer sexual harassment and feeling less safe. The current findings suggest that a

national agenda for school safety needs to consider school climate tolerant of sexual harassment in order to be effective in responding to sexual harassment and supporting student engagement.

Another study was conducted by Sayaka and Benjamin (2021) on Sexual Harassment and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Kenya. The study employed CEM with the SACMEQ III dataset for 4,436 pupils in Kenya. Results showed that female pupils in schools where sexual harassment is reported, either from their peers or from their teachers, marked statistically significant lower exam scores than peers without experiences of sexual harassment, after controlling for covariates. As a conclusion, this paper suggests further analysis on the correlations between the experience of sexual harassment and girl pupil test scores with panel data from other SACMEQ participating countries.

Worku et al (2016) carried out a study on child sexual abuse and its outcomes among high school students in southwest Ethiopia. The study was intended to determine the prevalence of CSA and its outcomes among female high school students in Ethiopia. A cross-sectional study was conducted among Jirren high school female students in April 2005. A total of 323 female students from grade 9 were selected by systematic random sampling and they completed a self-administered questionnaire on experiences of sexual abuse. The abortion rate in this study was found to be 75.0%. Many also had negative psychological outcomes, which made the life of the victims difficult and have adversely affected their academic performance. This study recommends introducing reproductive health education for students with special emphasis on sexuality, consequences of unwanted pregnancies, signs and symptoms, and treatment for STDs, through media and also as part of the curriculum.

The study was conducted by Mwebaze (2014) on the impact of child sexual abuse on academic performance among pupils in primary schools in Kiruhura District, Buremba Sub County. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between child sexual abuse and academic performance of pupils in primary schools and suggest remedies to this problem. The study employed a descriptive correlation design that used questionnaires methods of data collection and a sample size of 80 respondents was used. It was noted from the findings that the child brides usually have lower levels of education than girls who get married at an older age. Their education is terminated upon marriage and with repeated pregnancies and a lot of time spent on household chores, they lose the opportunity to go back to school and cannot make personal decisions about their life. There is need to develop a sense of ownership of child abuse programmes in the various communities. This means active participation by the community in identifying the necessary strategic interventions, allocating resources especially human resource and in monitoring services.

Bordoh et al (2016) conducted a study on the effects of sexual abuse on students in public senior high schools in Ghana. The study examined the effects of sexual abuse in public senior high schools. The research was conducted in four (4) different public senior high schools in the Mfantseman Municipality. A structured questionnaire was used to solicit data from the respondents. The result is that sexual abuse of students has enormous negative effects on students, these include social effects, psychological and gynaecological disorders, poor and cognition difficulties, poor and academic performance, and acquisition of diseases and direct and indirect cost on these sexually abused students. It is recommended that public awareness of student sexual abuse must be intensified through the media for the general public to know about sexual abuse and its effects on the development of students.

Girl effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child affects completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

This Policies are not be implemented in isolation but seeks to supplement efforts by other policies

especially those that address gender based violence and other negative practices that pose a threat to human dignity. Other policies that the Elimination of GBV Policy seeks to complement include: The National Community Development Policy for Uganda (2015): This Policy recognises gender sensitivity as one of its guiding principles and an action area on male involvement for reproductive health as well as community dialogue approach to address GBV and other harmful cultural practices; The Equal Opportunities Policy (2006), Gender is one of the priority areas with a focus on equitable access and control of resources, and addressing negative cultural practices that limit opportunities for marginalised men and women; The Uganda Gender Policy (2007) which, under the priority of gender and rights, seeks to address issues of gender inequality in access to justice, socio-cultural discrimination against women and girls, Gender Based Violence and limited awareness about rights; The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006) seeks to promote community action on cultural practices that promote and that impinge on human dignity; The National Health Policy (2012) recognizes domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, abuse of children, which are often related to excessive use of alcohol as some of the common ills that affect the health outcomes of Uganda. The Policy seeks to address these ills through health promotion and prevention.

Article 24 of Uganda's Constitution (1995) protects every person from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and gives children a right to be educated without humiliating and degrading treatment. Since this time, the Government of Uganda has signed and put in place a significant number of international and national legal and policy frameworks and instruments to protect children (MoESTS Uganda 2015, 8–10). One of the most notable frameworks is the National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (2015–2020), developed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS) together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The strategic plan, at the time of writing still being revised for the period of 2021–2025, provides clear instructions for implementing the national strategy on violence in schools, including sexual violence. It identifies key actors (involving inter alia school officials or local councils) and key instruments (policies or legal institutions) and specifies their roles in the reporting, tracking, referral and responses chain (MoESTS Uganda 2015).

The plan does not, however, discuss the penalties specifically on teacher sexual violence. The code of conduct (Government of Uganda 2012) lists sanctions (from warnings/reprimands, to withholding increments, to dismissal), but does not provide guidance on which sanction should be implemented for specific offences. More generally, Uganda's Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8 (2007) abolishes corporal punishment and sets out strong measures against defilement. Under point 129 (1) of the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8, any person who attempts to perform a sexual act with another person who is below the age of 18 years commits an offence and is on conviction, liable to imprisonment not exceeding 18 years. Uganda's Children Act (Amendment) 2016 (Government of Uganda 2016) specifies mandatory reporting of child abuse (including sexual abuse) by medical practitioners, teachers and social workers or counsellors, but the penalties are only vaguely specified, with the stipulation under point '8A Prohibition of sexual exploitation' (9), that a person who commits a sexual offence (against children) is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding 100 currency points or to a term of imprisonment, not exceeding five years.

National Laws and Policies Relating to Violence Against Children. 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda declares education a constitutional right. Article 24 protects every person including children from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment. This gives children a right to be educated without humiliating and degrading treatment. 2. The Children's Act Cap 59 (2008) defines the

rights of children and requires all duty bearers, parents, community members and teachers to ensure that children under care are safe and protected. In a school setting, teachers therefore have the responsibility to prevent any form of violence against children. 3. The Education (Pre- Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act (2008) defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders including ensuring safety and discipline of teachers and students. 4. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010) bans and penalises the practice (FGM). It also imposes harsh penalties for participation in FGM. A person convicted of the practice faces a sentence of up to ten years in prison and a life imprisonment in case of aggravated FGM. 5. The Domestic Violence Act (2010) is aimed at eliminating violence in family settings; it provides for the protection of the victims of domestic violence and punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence among others (MOES, 2014).

A 2011 review by the International Center for Research on Women (Malhotra et al, 2011) pointed to an increase in the number of interventions targeting child marriage during the past decade, but noted that very few were systematically evaluated. Based on analysis of 23 programmes that had some form of evaluation, the review found that few programmes focused exclusively on child marriage, which for most programmes was included along with goals for achieving other health, welfare or empowerment outcomes for adolescents and youth. Evaluated child marriage programmes were found to be heavily concentrated in South Asia, with Bangladesh and India topping the list. Countries in Africa and the Middle East, such as Ethiopia and Egypt, also contributed to the evidence base (Pulerwitz et al, 2010).

Programmes have generally deployed one or more of five core strategies to prevent child marriage: empowering girls with information, skills and support networks; educating and mobilizing parents and community members; enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. The review found that most evaluation designs were weak, but that the strongest, most consistent results in reducing child marriage were evident for a subset of programmes promoting information, skills and networks for girls in combination with community mobilization (Malhotra et al, 2011).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets forth principles about sexual abuse and exploitation that can be incorporated or reflected in domestic laws. Most countries have such laws in place, though their strength varies depending on the legal definition of a child, what constitutes child sexual abuse and exploitation, and the extent to which the laws are enforced. For example, though virtually all countries have laws prohibiting statutory rape, such laws are fully enforced in less than two-thirds of countries. Enforcement is even less common for laws against contact sexual violence without rape and non-contact sexual violence (WHO, 2014).

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child in primary schools

In Guatemala, Data from International Justice Mission's (IJM) program in Guatemala suggests that a criminal justice response to sexual violence against girl children can be improved significantly, leading to an increase in sexual violence crimes reported to the authorities.¹¹ Along with community-based awareness of the crime, consistent apprehension and punishment of perpetrators of sexual violence against girl children (SVAC) can have a beneficial influence on cultural norms. From 2005 to 2017, IJM provided support to 465 victims of sexual violence against girl children and their families. In partnership with the public ministry (prosecution service) and the national police, more than 287 individuals were arrested and accused, contributing to the achievement of convictions against 267 individuals in the project area. IJM has provided training and mentoring for Guatemalan prosecutors and members of the designated

police unit specializing in sexual assault.

IJM then conducted a baseline and end-line study of the Guatemalan government's response to child sexual assault reports, evaluating case files from the period 2008—2012, and repeating the study for the period 2013—2017. The study found a 136% increase in the number of SVAC complaints filed. Many key informants attributed the increase to a more prevalent reporting culture and more available information for victims and their families. Changes include: • The criminal justice system substantially increased its use of victim-sensitive practices when gathering victim testimony. Whereas the use of victim-friendly spaces for gathering victims' testimonies was uncommon at baseline (30% of cases), it became nearly universal at endline (98% of cases). The greatest improvement was seen in the use of Gesell Chambers (designated, trauma-informed facilities for victims to provide testimony outside the courtroom), which was non-existent at baseline (0 cases) but commonplace at endline (77% of cases).

The Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) program offers adolescent girls (between the ages of 14 and 20) access to mentorship and microfinance training. Established by BRAC in Bangladesh, ELA combines both livelihood and life skills with economic empowerment. ELA is now being implemented in multiple countries. In Uganda, where 60% of the population is under 20 years old, the intervention aimed to relax human capital constraints that adolescent girls face by simultaneously providing them vocational training and information on sex, reproduction, and marriage. A rigorous evaluation by the World Bank has found lasting results. At four years post-intervention, adolescent girls in treated communities were five times more likely to engage in income-generating activities, corresponding to a 48% increase over baseline levels, an impact almost entirely driven by their greater engagement in self-employment. Teen pregnancy fell by a third, and early entry into marriage or cohabitation also fell rapidly. Strikingly, the share of girls reporting sex against their will dropped by close to a third and aspired ages at which to marry and start childbearing moved forward. The results highlight the potential of a multifaceted program that provides skills transfers as a viable and cost-effective policy intervention to improve the economic and social empowerment of adolescent girls over a four-year horizon (Bandiera et al., 2018).

Walsh et al (2015) conducted a review of 24 studies, with a total of 5,802 participants in primary (elementary) and secondary (high) schools in China, Germany, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, and the United States. This review found evidence that school-based sexual abuse prevention programs were effective in increasing participants' skills in protective behaviors and knowledge of sexual abuse prevention concepts. In addition, girl children exposed to a child sexual abuse prevention program had greater odds of disclosing their abuse than girl children who had not been exposed, and knowledge gains were not significantly affected one to six months after the intervention for either intervention or control groups. However, studies have not yet adequately measured the long-term benefits of programs in terms of reducing the incidence or prevalence of girl child sexual abuse.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopted a cross-sectional study design is a type of observational study design (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). In a cross-sectional study, the investigator measures the outcome and the exposures in the study participants at the same time. The study incorporated mixed method whereby Qualitative and quantitative techniques were used because they complement each other. Qualitative approach was descriptive, use conceptualization and helped in explaining variables and quantitative approach which uses statistics explained numerical values. The design was used by the researcher visiting the study area and

approaching the target sample respondents to learn what is happening at that moment through a question-and-answer session. This type of research is frequently used to determine the prevailing characteristics in a population in terms of sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education. The obtained findings were analysed and conclusions and recommendations were made regarding the study variables. The study area was chosen because girl's completion rate was 27.9% among girls against 72.1% for boys (DEO's Office Report, 2023).

Study area

The study was conducted in Mitooma Sub County in Mitooma district. It is located in southern part of the district and borders with Rurehe sub-county in the South, Kashenshero sub-county in the West, Bitereko sub-county in the North and Mitooma TC in the East. It has five parishes and 50 villages. The parishes are: Nkinga, Nyakishojwa, Katunda, Mushunga and Ijuma. The sub county has 13 government aided primary schools and 11 private owned primary schools. (Mitooma Sub County, Five Year Development Plan 2020-2025).

Study Population

The study population refers to all cases about which the researcher can generalize findings (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The study population included parents or guardians of primary six and seven girls in both government aided and private owned primary schools, primary school teachers of P.6 and P.7, senior women in each school, Headteachers, the District Education officer and the Inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma Sub County. Parents or guardians of primary six and primary seven pupils were considered for the study because it is in these classes that sexual violence is expected to be higher amongst them compared to lower classes. Class teachers of P.6 and P.7, Senior women, Head teachers, District Education officer and The Inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma Sub County participated in the study as key informants. These are officers who are involved in teaching and learning, monitoring and assessment of learners regarding attendance and completion of primary cycle rates of girls in the sub county. Hence they were in position to tell relationship between sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District.

The sub county has 13 government aided primary schools and 11 private owned primary schools. (Mitooma Sub County, Five Year Development Plan 2020-2025). Ten (10) out of 13 government aided primary schools were purposively considered in the study due to the dropout rates. (Ref. Table 3.1). Within these ten primary schools, in P.6 there are 223 girls and in P.7 there are 202 girls making a total population of 425 pupils.

In private owned primary schools, 2 schools could not be considered in the study as they never had P.6 and P.7 leaving 9 schools. Seven (7) out of 9 was considered in the study due to the dropout rate. Within these schools there are 117 girls in P.6 while 98 are in P.7 giving a population of 215 pupils. This enabled the researcher to confidently generalize the findings to represent the picture in all the 22 primary schools in terms of sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education.

Table 1: Showing 10 Government aided primary schools considered in the study and the enrolment of girls in P.6 and P.7

S/N	Name of Primary School	Girls in P.6	Girls in P.7
1	Nkinga	28	22
2	Kibisho	20	18
3	Katunda	18	16

4	Mushunga	20	16
5	Kibingo	24	21
6	Nyamatonga	18	18
7	Ijumo	27	25
8	Kirambi	23	21
9	Nyakiga	23	17
10	Rwentokye	22	18
	Total	223	202

Source: DEO office, Mitooma District

Table 2: Showing 7 Private owned primary schools considered in the study and the enrolment of girls in P.6 and P.7

S/N	Name of Primary School	Girls in P.6	Girls in P.7
1	Amuza Standard	14	9
2	Rutooma Bright	11	8
3	Parental Kyeihimba	18	17
4	Ijumo Premier	22	18
5	Ijumo Star	15	16
6	Kirambi Modern	20	15
7	Kirambi Junior	17	16
	Total	117	98

Source: DEO office, Mitooma District

Table 3: Showing population category and number, sampling procedures and the sample

S/N	Population category	No.	Sampling procedure	Sample
1	P.7 girls, government aided primary schools	202	Proportionate stratified random sampling with a sampling fraction of $\frac{1}{4}$ Stratified random sampling Simple random sampling	51
2	P.6 girls, government aided primary Schools	223	Simple random sampling	56
3	P.7 girls, private owned primary Schools	117	Simple random sampling	29

4	P.6 girls, private owned primary Schools	98	Simple random sampling	24
5	P.7 class teachers government aided primary schools	10	Purposive	10
6	P.6 Class teachers government aided primary schools	10	Purposive	10
7	P.7 Class teachers , private owned primary schools	7	Purposive	10
8	P.6 Class teachers , private owned primary schools	7	Purposive	7
9	Senior women government aided primary schools	10	Purposive	10
10	Head teachers government aided primary schools	10	Purposive	10
11	Head teachers private owned primary schools	7	Purposive	7
12	District Education officer , Mitooma District	1	Purposive	1
13	Inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma Sub county	1	Purposive	1
14	L.C 11 chairpersons	5	Purposive	5
	Total			221

Sample size determination and selection

In order to obtain the sample of primary schools, 10 government aided primary schools were purposively selected from 13 primary schools and 7 out 9 private owned primary schools were also selected due to the dropout rates.

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique with a sampling fraction of $\frac{1}{4}$ was applied to get a sample of both P.7 and P.6 girls from both government owned and private owned primary schools. As presented in table 3.3 above a population 202, P.7 girls from government aided primary schools was represented by 51 girls. A population 223, P.6 girls from government aided primary schools was represented by 56 girls. A population 117, P.7 girls from private owned primary schools was represented by 29 girls. A population 98, P.6 girls from private owned primary schools was represented by 24 girls. This gave a sample of 160 parents or guardians of P.7 and P.6 girls in both government aided and private owned primary schools to participate in the study on behalf of the girls since they are minors.

For each of the schools, the sample size was thus determined by number of the girls in that particular school, divided by the total population in the schools in each category and then multiplying by the sample size. In this case, primary schools with a higher number was represented by more respondents compared to those with fewer learners. For example, Nkinga primary school had 7 respondents from P.6 and 5 respondents from P.7. On the other hand, Nyamatonga primary school had 4 respondents from P.6 and 4 respondents from P.7. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling methods was used to generate a sampling frame from which respondents was selected and getting the first respondent. It ought to be emphasized that this a qualitative dominate study where a point of saturation was adhered to.

Class teachers of P.6 and P.7, Senior women in government aided primary schools, Head teachers, District

Education officer, The Inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma Sub County and L.C 11 chairpersons participated in the study as key informants. They were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guides while secondary data was gathered from documentary review, textbooks, reports and internet sourced journals.

Questionnaire Survey Method

This method involves the use of questionnaire. Structured questionnaire was used because large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be made more dependable and reliable, offers the greatest assurance of unanimity and is cheaper than other methods and free from bias. The questionnaire method was applied to class teachers, head teachers, district education officer and the inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma district. The questionnaire was guided by the study objectives and generated quantitative data. The five-point rating scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Strongly Disagree and 1=Disagree from which optional responses were developed for respondents to select (Sarantakos 2005).

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is one of the data collection methods that was used during data collection. The method was used because it helped to generate detailed and factual information from the group members. It also created a free interactive environment in which respondents felt free to react on the study issues. The method applied to the parents / guardians of the girl in both categories of primary schools. The respondents were identified during the interview sessions. The researcher initially sought the consent of respondents before administering a focus group discussion.

Interviews

This is a method of collecting data in which selected participants were asked questions in order to find out what they do, think or feel to enable the researcher solicit information on the subject under study through probing (Denscombe, 2000). The interviews were unstructured in nature, containing open ended questions, covering the thematic areas of the study. The data collection method also had some probes to enable generation of detailed or in-depth information. The choice of the method is that it is flexible and an easy way of finding out information. In addition, the method permits the researcher to ask more complex questions and takes into account non-verbal communication behaviours such as attitudes and behaviour of the interviewee in relation to the subject being discussed. The method applied to the parents / guardians of P.7 and P.6 girls in both categories of primary schools and senior women since they are responsible for protection of girls from any form of violence, educating them on life skills and advocate for girl child rights (MoES, 2020).

Data collection instruments

The study employed self-administered questionnaire, interview, FGD and document review guide. The application of the instruments will facilitate a smooth process of data collection.

Questionnaire Survey Guide

The questionnaire was designed in form of closed ended with reflection of themes generated from the study objectives and administered. The instrument was constructed into three sections with close ended questions. Section one constituted of questions about respondents' bio-data while section two and three included questions reflecting issues on each of the study variables. For each of the sections, at least three items were constructed to allow balanced data. The instrument was administered to class teachers, head teachers, district education officer and the inspector of schools in charge of Mitooma Sub County.

Interview guide

This instrument was designed in form of semi-structured items in order to generate responses that supported the stated study objectives. Open ended questions of not less than three items per variable was formulated. The items were designed as supplementary to what the questionnaire was capturing. The interviews were conducted to collect information from the parents/guardians, senior women and Local council leaders.

Focus group discussion guide

A focus group discussion guide was used to collect data during the group sessions to generate detailed and factual information from the group members. The respondents ranged from 7-8 members. This created a free interactive environment in which respondents felt free to react on the study issues since they were familiar to one another. It was applied to the parents/guardians of the girl in both categories of primary schools. The respondents were identified during the interview sessions. The researcher sought the consent of respondents before administering a focus group discussion.

Research Procedure

After the research proposal has been accepted by the faculty board, it was forwarded to the directorate of post graduate studies, research and innovation. Thereafter it was forward to Bishop Stuart University Research Ethics Committee (REC) for ethical clearance. REC provided a clearance for data collection. There after I got an introductory letter from the faculty to introduce me to the relevant district and sub county authorities to collect data. The researcher among other things pledge to strictly follow the existing COVID 19 standard operating procedures while conducting data collection. In addition informed consent was sought before under taking any data collection.

Data processing and analysis plan

Data analysis was done based on the study objectives. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Under quantitative method, data analysis involved use of SPSS to generate descriptive statistics in form of frequency and percentages. In addition to this, inferential statistics in form of Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis was established to determine whether a significant relationship exists between sexual violence and Girl Child Education in Mitooma Sub County and the level of significance was 0.05.

Qualitatively, thematic analysis was used or followed. This is where qualitative data was transcribed verbatim in word document format. Transcripts from the interview sessions were then read and re-read three times to understand the flow and meaning of the raw data. Each transcript was then analyzed using principle of qualitative inductive content analysis to develop themes and summarize the content of the data. In the content analysis, open coding with notes and headings was written in the typed transcript during reading. Using the research questions posed as a guide, the researcher then selected relevant parts of the transcripts, define themes by identifying relevant words and phrases, sort the data into thematic categories by grouping categories under higher order headings to reduce the number by collapsing similar and un similar data and then drawing comparative conclusions.

Data Quality Control

Data quality control was made possible by ensuring that the used data collection instruments are reliable and valid. This included indicators such as completeness, relevance and accuracy. Thus, validity and reliability was used to ensure data quality is highly maintained.

Quality of data collection instruments was ensured initially by submitting the draft Dissertation and instruments to the postgraduate committee after which it was reviewed for possible errors or Okayed in

case data quality controls are not addressed. In case some Data Quality Controls aren't addressed, the researcher was allowed time to make necessary corrections and then she resubmitted for further scrutiny until they were fine-tuned. In addition, reliability and validity of research instruments was made.

Validity of instruments

Content Validity Index was used to determine the validity of the instruments. The researcher established content validity of the instruments by making sure that the items on the main variables (independent and dependent variables) conform to the conceptual framework of the study. The test of content validity was established through inter judge with research consultants. In order to ensure validity of data collected, two experts judged each item on the scale: relevant

(1) and not relevant (2). The formula to be used to calculate CVI was; $CVI = n/N$

Where: n = number of items rated as relevant N= Total number of items in the instrument

The CVI for the data collection tool was valid if the obtained value is 0.70 and above because the least CVI recommended in a survey study should be 0.70 as recommended (Bolarinwa, 2015).

Table 4. Validity analysis

Variables	Items considered	Valid Items	CVI
Sexual assault	8	7	0.875
Sexual harassment	6	6	1
Statutory instruments	6	5	0.833
Girl child in primary schools	7	6	0.875
Average			0.896

Source: Primary data

The validity score of 0.896 is true since Amin (2005) suggested that the instrument is valid only and only if it is 70% and above.

Reliability of instruments

The reliabilities of items in the various constructs was tested using Cronbach Alpha (α) method provided by SPSS. Reliability for the items in the different constructs was attained at the benchmark of $\alpha = 0.70$ and above (Bolarinwa, 2015). The questionnaire was pre-tested in the area not intended for research using Test re-test because it permits the instrument to be compared with itself, thus avoiding the sort of problems that could arise with the use of another instrument (Graziano and Raulin, 2006). The scores found at 0.7 and above alpha values was acceptable hence better for use (Madan & Kensinger, 2017). The items thus enable collection of dependable data once they are proved reliable. The closer it is to one, the higher the consistency.

Table 5. Reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Sexual assault	0.831
Sexual harassment	0.712
Statutory instruments	0.822
Girl child in primary schools	0.753
Average	0.779

Source: Primary data

The reliability score was 0.779 which is above 0.7 and suggests that the instrument is reliable (Amin, 2005).

Ethical Considerations

In the process of conducting the study, efforts was made to strictly observe ethical considerations.

Informed consent: Informed consent was observed by making it a point that the study participants get involved knowingly and freely. This was done by ensuring that the respondents clearly understand why they are participating in the study and it was formerly fulfilled by respondents signing the prepared consent forms.

Confidentiality: The researcher guaranteed confidentiality of the information from the respondents to the level where the respondents was willing to accept to take part in the study or not and to give the information they feel should be given.

Anonymity: Through the data collection process and the whole research study, the identities of the participants remained anonymous. The tools was designed in a manner that excludes the names of the respondents.

Privacy: Efforts was made to clarify to participants that their information was not shared without their knowledge or consent at any time during or after the study. Respondents who refuse to cite information they consider as their privacy was respected. In the compilation of the study, information obtained from the works of others was acknowledged by citing the authors.

Balancing of risks and benefits: Balancing of risks and benefits is about handling of the risks and hazards involved in research such that risks are minimized while increasing benefits. Balancing of risks and benefits was made by ensuring that the participants provide responses in confidence. The researcher ensured that no research participant is subjected to any evil or harm during data collection.

Covid 19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Due to presence of COVID 19 pandemic that is so contagious, the COVID 19; SOPs such as wearing a face mask, washing hands and observing social distance while meeting respondents was made a priority during data collection.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Response Rate

The questionnaires and interviews were employed to respondents. Questionnaires were distributed and returned giving an overall response rate of 94.9% as shown in the Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1 Response rate of Questionnaires

Stratum	Target	Response rate	Percent	Tool used
Parents/Guardians	160	154	96.25%	Questionnaire
Key Informants	61	61	100%	Interviews
Total	219	208	94.9%	

Source: Field data (2023)

The overall response rate for interviews and questionnaires were 96.25% which was a reasonable number; hence the collected data and the findings from the study can be relied on. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and

a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. The high response rate in the study was attributed to; the enthusiasm of the researcher to carry out constant follow-ups on variance of responses and the researcher carried out the research with the help of research assistants.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this section, data is presented on the socio-demographic composition of the sample obtained through the questionnaire, which included; Gender, Age, education level and years of residence of the respondents. All the Tables are based on the 154 respondents that filled the questionnaires. The purpose of collecting demographic data on respondents was to help in establishing the respondent sample characteristics and be able to form appropriate opinions about the research findings. The demographic factors also gave the overview about the kind of respondents who gave the information about the study. The detailed analysis of these characteristics and interpretation are presented in the Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2 Demographic characteristics

Variable	Sub-Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	69	44.8
	Female	85	55.2
Age	20-30	19	12.3
	30- 40	33	21.4
	40- 50	53	34.4
	50 and above	43	27.9
Education	Certificate	19	12.3
	Diploma	40	25.9
	Degree	73	47.5
	Others, specify	22	14.3
Time spent in school	Less than 2 years	11	7.2
	2-5 years	21	13.6
	5-7 years	36	23.4
	8-10 years	42	27.3
	Over 10 years	44	28.6

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.2 further shows that the majority (55.2%) of the respondents were female compared to 44.8% of them who were male. This implies that there are more females involved in sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District. Though there was a small difference in the distribution of males and females, it was a fair representation of the study population.

Table 4.2 shows that majority (83.7%) were in age brackets of below 60 years (31-40 + 41-50 + 50 and above). Thus, an indication of sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education.

It was believed that the majority (47.5%) of the participants were undergraduate/degrees and this suggests that the study was informative in nature and had different education background.

The results from Table 4.2 shows that 44(28.6%) majority of the respondents had stayed in school for over 10 years. This implies that most of the respondents were able to appropriately respond to questions put to them since they have stayed most of the time in schools thus they understand more about sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics on girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

The findings are presented objective by objective using descriptive statistics of frequencies to find out how girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County. All the variables were measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 – Disagree (D), 3 – Not Sure (NS), 4 – Agree (A) and 5 - Strongly Agree (SA). In this study Strongly Agree and Agree were taken to mean Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were taken to mean Disagree.

Table 4.3 Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
Cultural norms generally condone sexual violence acts	85 (55.2%)	57 (37%)	5 (3.2%)	2 (1.3%)	5 (3.2%)	1.96
Sexual violence by teachers and others administrators remains hidden in our school	98 (63.6%)	56 (36.4%)	–	–	–	1.03
Lack of affirmative action in schools has contributed to sexual violence among girl children	14 (9%)	15 (9.7%)	–	52 (33.8%)	73 (47.4%)	3.74
There are inadequate life skills given to girl pupils as they grow and transit from lower to upper classes	62 (40.2%)	56 (36.4%)	2 (1.3%)	15 (9.7%)	19 (12.3%)	2.73
Adolescence sometimes drives boys to harass girls sexually	23 (14.9%)	29 (18.8%)	2 (1.3%)	43 (27.9%)	57 (37%)	3.6
Sexual favours in return for rewards from teachers culminates into sexual abuse	63 (40.9%)	51 (33.1%)	2 (1.3%)	19 (12.3%)	19 (12.3%)	2.42
Old girls who feel the sexual urge tempt teachers into engaging in sexual acts including violence	25 (16.2%)	36 (23.4%)	6 (3.9%)	42 (27.3%)	45 (29.2%)	3.32

Source: Field data (2024)

The results in Table 4.3 shows that 85 (55.2%) strongly disagreed, 57 (37%) disagreed, 5 (3.2%) were not sure, 2 (1.3%) agreed and 5 (3.2%) strongly agreed that cultural norms generally condone sexual violence acts. This implies that the majority (92.2%) of the participants disagreed thus mean of 1.96. This is in line with Key Informant D who narrated that;

Many cultures have ethical and moral standards that emphasize respect for human dignity, consent, and the protection of vulnerable individuals, including children. Communities often value safety, well-being, and harmony, and sexual violence contradicts these values. There are often community efforts to prevent and address violence, promote healthy relationships, and support victims.

In relation Key Informant C propounded that;

Cultures that enforce rigid gender roles perceive girls as subordinate to boys or men, which can contribute to unequal power dynamics and increased vulnerability to violence. Societal taboos around discussing sexual violence or protecting family honor discourages victims from speaking out or seeking help, perpetuating a culture of silence.

This implies that cultural norms can vary widely, there are beliefs or practices that inadvertently contribute

to reducing sexual violence acts girl child completion of primary education of Mitooma sub county, Mitooma district.

The results in Table 4.3 shows that 98 (63.6%) strongly disagreed, 56 (36.4%) disagreed that Sexual violence by teachers and others administrators remains hidden in our school. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants disagreed with the statement as shown by mean of 1.96. The issue of sexual violence by teachers and other administrators in schools is deeply concerning and unfortunately not uncommon as purported in the following verbatim. According to Focused group B reported that;

Teachers and administrators often hold positions of authority and trust, making it difficult for students to report abuse due to fear of repercussions or disbelief. Likewise, victims of sexual violence feels ashamed or stigmatized, preventing them from speaking out or seeking help.

This shows that schools, communities, and governments work together to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexual violence and ensure that all girls can learn and thrive in a safe environment.

It is shown in Table 4.3 that 14 (9%) strongly disagreed, 15 (9.7%) disagreed, 52 (33.8%) agreed and 73 (47.4%) strongly agreed that there is lack of affirmative action in schools has contributed to sexual violence among girl children. This implies that the majority (81.2%) of the participants disagreed with the statement. Relatedly, the lack of affirmative action in schools can indeed contribute to increased vulnerability to sexual violence among girl children, especially after completing primary education as reflected in the following assertions. Key informant C pointed out that;

Schools do not have specific policies or guidelines in place to address gender-based violence or to support victims. This absence can create an environment where perpetrators act with impunity and where victims feel unsupported or afraid to report incidents. Without affirmative action measures such as gender-sensitive curriculum, training for teachers on gender issues, and leadership roles for women in school administration, power imbalances between male teachers/administrators and female students always persist or worsen. This imbalance can contribute to situations where sexual harassment or abuse occurs

The results in Table 4.3 shows 62 (40.2%) strongly disagreed, 56 (36.4%) disagreed, 2 (1.3%) were not sure, 15 (9.7%) agreed and 19 (12.3%) strongly agreed that there are inadequate life skills given to girl pupils as they grow and transit from lower to upper classes. This is shown by mean of 2.73 and majority (76.4%) that participants disagreed.

It is noted that 23 (14.9%) strongly disagreed, 29 (18.8%) disagreed, 2 (1.3%) were not sure, 43 (27.9%) agreed and 57 (37%) strongly agreed that adolescence sometimes drives boys to harass girls sexually. This implies that the majority (54.9%) of the participants disagreed with the statement. The onset of adolescence can indeed be a time when some boys engages in sexually harassing behaviors towards girls, including those who have completed primary education. This period of development can be marked by increased curiosity about sexuality, changes in social dynamics, and the testing of boundaries as purported by different verbatim;

Key Informant A narrated that;

Adolescents often experience heightened curiosity about sexuality and relationships as they navigate their emerging identities. This curiosity can sometimes manifest in inappropriate behaviors as they experiment with social interactions.

Focused group A assert that;

Adolescents are influenced by their peers' attitudes and behaviors, including attitudes towards gender roles and relationships. Peer pressure and the desire to fit in or impress others can sometimes lead to disrespectful or coercive behaviors. Adolescents test boundaries and power dynamics in relationships,

including those based on gender. Unequal power dynamics c sometimes lead to behaviors where one person asserts control or dominance over another, which includes sexual harassment of girl child.

This implies that in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District, the onset of adolescence can indeed coincide with increased incidences of sexually harassing behaviors towards girls which influences the completion in primary education.

The results further shows that 63 (40.9%) strongly disagreed, 51 (33.1%) disagreed, 2 (1.3%) were not sure, 19 (12.3%) agreed and 19 (12.3%) strongly agreed that sexual favours in return for rewards from teachers culminates into sexual abuse. This implies that the majority (74%) of the participants with mean of 2.42 disagreed with the statement. The issue of sexual favors in return for rewards from teachers that culminates into sexual abuse is a serious concern in Mitooma Sub County, Mitooma District, and unfortunately, in many other places as well. This practice involves a clear abuse of power and trust by educators, which can have profound and damaging effects on the girls involved as per the assertion;

Key Formant B put it forward;

Teachers hold significant power and authority over students, making it difficult for students, especially young girls, to resist or report inappropriate demands for sexual favors. Therefore, when girls are coerced into providing sexual favors in exchange for rewards such as grades or other benefits, it undermines their right to education and perpetuates cycles of exploitation.

This implies that when such incidents go unreported or unaddressed, it can perpetuate cycles of exploitation and abuse. It reinforces harmful norms that prioritize power and control over respect and equality, affecting not only the immediate victims but also perpetuating a culture where sexual harassment and abuse are tolerated.

It is shown in Table 4.3 that 25 (16.2%) strongly disagreed, 36 (23.4%) disagreed, 6 (3.9%) were not sure, 42 (27.3%) agreed and 45 (29.2%) strongly agreed that old girls who feel the sexual urge tempt teachers into engaging in sexualacts including violence. This implies that the majority (56.5%) of the participants with mean of 3.32 agreed with the statement.

Correlation between girl child sexual assault and completion of primary Educationin Mitooma Sub County

The study was conducted find out whether there was any relationship between causes of sexual violence and girl child completion of primary education. The analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient. The elicited response was presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 4 Pearson correlation results of girl child sexual assault on girl child completion of primary education (n=154)

		Girl child sexual assault	Girl child completion of primary education
Girl child sexual assault	Pearson Correlation	1	-.736**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	154	154
Girl child completion of primary education	Pearson Correlation	-.736**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	154	154
** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed)			
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (1-tailed)			

Source: Field data (2024)

Table 4.4 shows that causes of sexual violence had a negative significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education since p-value (-0.736*) is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r=.736) shows that there is a negative significant contribution of sexual violence to girl child completion of primary education. Basing on Focused group C; narrated that;

Girls who experience sexual violence develops fear and trauma associated with attending school. This fear can stem from concerns about encountering the perpetrator or facing harassment from peers, affecting their ability to concentrate on studies and participate in school activities. In-severe cases, prolonged or repeated incidents of sexual violence leads to school dropout. Girls withdraw from school to escape continued victimization, protect their safety, or due to pressure from family members who perceive the school environment as unsafe.

The policy implication shows that any decrease change in sexual violence results in to a positive change in girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma county, Mitooma district.

Descriptive statistics on how girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Educationin Mitooma Sub County

The findings are presented objective by objective using descriptive statistics of frequencies to find out the frequency and percentage of the variables. All the variables were measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 – Disagree (D), 3 – Not Sure (NS), 4 – Agree (A) and 5 - Strongly Agree (SA). In this study Strongly Agree and Agree were taken to mean Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were taken to mean Disagree.

Table 4.5: effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primaryeducation

Effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
Some of our girls have dropped out of school due to sexual violence	—	—	—	71 (46.1%)	83 (53.9%)	4.43
There is irregular attendance of class by girls due to sexual violence	15 (9.7%)	24 (15.6%)	—	53 (34.4%)	63 (40.9%)	3.82
Some male teachers can decide to give low marks to the girl that refuses his sexual demands	19 (12.3%)	29 (38.3%)	5 (3.2%)	47 (30.5%)	54 (35.1%)	3.41
Some of the pupils due to sexual violence have become pregnant and this has made it difficult for them to continue learning	15 (9.7%)	25 (16.2%)	—	58 (37.7%)	56 (36.4%)	3.52
Some of the affected girls appear absent minded while attending lessons	14 (9%)	22 (14.3%)	6 (3.9%)	53 (34.4%)	56 (36.4%)	3.43
Sexually abused girls are usually poor performers in terms of exam grades	12 (7.8%)	15 (9.7%)	—	58 (37.6%)	69 (44.8%)	3.52

Source: Field data (2024)

The results in Table 4.5 shows that 71 (46.1%) agreed and 83 (53.9%) strongly agreed that some of our girls have dropped out of school due to sexual violence. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants with mean of 4.43 agreed with the statement. The issue of girls dropping out of school due to

sexual violence is deeply concerning and requires urgent attention as per the following verbatim.

According to Key Informant E noted that;

Sexual violence against girls not only violates their rights but also disrupts their education and future opportunities. Fear, trauma, and stigma associated with such violence can force girls to withdraw from school, impacting their academic performance and overall well-being.

Basing on Key Informant A noted that;

Sexual violence against girls has profound psychological, emotional, and physical impacts. It leads to feelings of shame, fear, and trauma, affecting their self-esteem and mental well-being. This significantly hinders their ability to continue attending school. Sexual violence creates formidable barriers to girls' education. They withdraw from school to avoid further victimization or due to social stigma attached to survivors of sexual violence. In some cases, families also choose to withdraw their daughters from school out of concern for their safety.

This data underscores the severity of the issue and highlights a widespread acknowledgment among respondents that sexual violence is indeed a contributing factor to girls' dropout rates from schools. It also suggests a critical need for targeted interventions and support systems to address this issue effectively.

The study found out that 15 (9.7%) strongly disagreed, 24 (15.6%) disagreed, 53 (34.4%) agreed and 63 (40.9%) strongly agreed that there is irregular attendance of class by girls due to sexual violence. Thus majority (95.3%) of the participants agreed with the findings. The irregular attendance of girls in class due to sexual violence is a serious issue that undermines their ability to receive a quality education as per the following verbatim;

According to Key Informant F reported that;

Girls who have experienced sexual violence fears encountering their perpetrators at school or on their way to school. This fear can lead to absenteeism as they avoid situations where they feel unsafe or vulnerable. The trauma associated with sexual violence significantly impacts girls' mental health and emotional well-being. This manifests in symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and difficulty concentrating, all of which can contribute to irregular attendance.

In addition; Focused group B responded that;

Survivors of sexual violence experience stigma and shame, particularly in conservative or close-knit communities where such incidents are taboo or blamed on the victim. This can lead to social withdrawal and reluctance to attend school. This is because most of the schools have inadequate access to support services such as counseling, medical care, and legal assistance that can exacerbate the challenges faced by girls who have experienced sexual violence. Without appropriate support, they struggle to cope with the aftermath of the trauma and cannot feel supported enough to attend school regularly.

This implies that irregular attendance or dropout from school is a common consequence for survivors of sexual violence who lack support. Missed classes and disrupted education leads to academic underachievement, hinder long-term educational and career prospects. This perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage and limits opportunities for these girls to reach their full potential.

It is anticipated that 19 (12.3%) strongly disagreed, 29 (38.3%) disagreed, 5 (3.2%) were not sure, 47 (30.5%) agreed and 54 (35.1%) strongly agreed that some male teachers can decide to give low marks to the girl that refuses his sexual demands. This implies that the majority (65.6%) of the respondents agreed with mean of 3.41. The practice of male teachers giving low marks to girls who refuse their sexual demands in primary schools is a grave form of sexual exploitation and abuse of power shown the following verbatim;

According to Key Informant B noted that;

Teachers wield significant authority over students, and using this authority to coerce or manipulate students into sexual activities is a gross violation of trust and professional ethics. By unfairly grading students based on compliance with sexual advances rather than academic merit, teachers not only undermine the educational progress and achievements of affected girls but also perpetuate a cycle of fear, shame, and potential academic failure.

In relation to Key Informant E;

Girls who experience sexual violence suffer profound psychological and emotional harm, including feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness. This leads to long-term negative impacts on their self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being.

This implies that unfair grading practices have significant negative impacts on students' educational outcomes and overall well-being. It undermines the principles of fairness and equity in education and can affect students' self-esteem and motivation. Therefore the issue of male teachers giving low marks to girls who refuse their sexual demands requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, protection, support, education, and accountability.

The findings shows that 15 (9.7%) strongly disagreed, 25 (16.2%) disagreed, 58 (37.7%) agreed and 56 (36.4%) strongly agreed that some of the pupils due to sexual violence have become pregnant and this has made it difficult for them to continue learning. This implies that the majority (74.1%) of the respondents agreed with mean of 3.52. When pupils experience sexual violence and subsequently become pregnant, it undoubtedly creates significant challenges for their education and overall well-being as shown nuy the following verbatim.

Basing on Focused Group B;

Pregnancy among pupils, especially due to sexual violence, often disrupts their education. Pregnant girls faces discrimination, stigma, and challenges in continuing their studies due to physical health concerns, social pressures, and logistical difficulties.

Key Informant C noted that;

In Mitooma district, pregnancy outside of marriage, especially among young girls, carries significant stigma. This stigma lead to social isolation, ostracism, and barriers to accessing education further complicating the situation for pregnant pupils.

This indicates that supporting pupils who become pregnant due to sexual violence requires a compassionate and comprehensive approach that prioritizes their health, safety, and educational rights.

The study further found out that 14 (9%) strongly disagreed, 22 (14.3%) disagreed, 6 (3.9%) were not sure, 53 (34.4%) agreed and 56 (36.4%) strongly agreed that some of the affected girls appear absent minded while attending lessons. This implies that the majority (70.8%) of the respondents agreed with mean of 3.43. According to Key Informant A noted that;

Pressure from family members, particularly parents or guardians, to marry early can impact girls' academic focus. They feel conflicted between their desire to pursue education and expectations placed on them to assume domestic responsibilities at a young age.

Basing on Key Informant D;

The prospect of early marriage after being sexually abused causes emotional distress and anxiety in girls. This can manifest as absent-mindedness, withdrawal, or reduced participation in school activities as they grapple with the implications of their future roles and responsibilities. They are expected to leave school to fulfill marital duties. Fear or uncertainty about their future can undermine their commitment to

academic achievement and diminish their interest in school.

This implies that girls facing pressure due to sexual violence often experience conflicting priorities between their desire to pursue education and the expectations placed on them to assume domestic responsibilities. This conflict can create emotional distress and affect their ability to concentrate on their studies.

Finally, the study revealed that 12 (7.8%) strongly disagreed, 15 (9.7%) disagreed, 58 (37.6%) agreed and 69 (44.8%) strongly agreed that sexually abused girls are usually poor performers in terms of exam grades. This implies that the majority (82.4%) of the respondents agreed with mean of 3.52. Sexually abused girls often face significant challenges that can impact their academic performance and overall well-being as purported in the following quotations;

According to Key Informant F noted that;

The trauma from sexual abuse can disrupt a student's ability to engage in learning effectively. Survivors experiences flashbacks, nightmares, and emotional distress that interfere with their concentration during classes and while preparing for exam. Some pupils develop maladaptive coping mechanisms such as avoidance behaviors, dissociation, or self-destructive behaviors in response to trauma. These coping strategies further hinder their academic performance and ability to retain information.

This implies that survivors of sexual abuse experiences stigma and shame related to their experiences, which can further isolate them and undermine their confidence in academic settings. Fear of judgment or disclosure prevents students from seeking help or disclosing their struggles with educators or peers.

Correlation between girl child sexual harassment and completion of primary Education in Mitoma Sub County

The study was conducted find out whether there was any relationship between effect of child sexual harassment on girl child completion of primary education in Mitoma district. The analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient. The elicited response was presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8 Pearson correlation results of effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education (n=154)

		Child sexual harassment	Girl child completion of primary education
Child sexual harassment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.845**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	154	154
Girl child completion of primary education	Pearson Correlation	-.845**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	154	154
** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed)			
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (1-tailed)			

Source: Primary data (2023)

The results in Table 4.7 shows that effect of sexual violence had a negative significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education since p-value (0.845**) is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r=-.645) shows that there is a negative significant contribution of effect of child sexual harassment on girl child completion of primary education. This implies that any negative decrease in girl

child completion of primary education is as a result of effects of sexual violence results. **Descriptive statistics on effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child**

The findings are presented objective by objective using descriptive statistics of frequencies to find out the frequency and percentage of the variables. All the variables were measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 – Disagree (D), 3 – Not Sure (NS), 4 – Agree (A) and 5 – Strongly Agree (SA). In this study Strongly Agree and Agree were taken to mean Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were taken to mean Disagree.

Table 4.7: Effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence

Effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
We have rules and regulations that protect girl children against sexual violence	–	–	–	62 (40.3%)	92 (59.7%)	4.82
Any form of sexual violence act is condemned and punishable in school	–	–	–	87 (56.5%)	67 (43.5%)	4.52
Girls are sensitized where to report in case they faced with sexual violence acts	12 (7.8%)	18 (11.7%)	–	68 (44.1%)	56 (36.4%)	3.94
Girls are sensitized of the laws that protect them from sexual abuse and violence	13 (8.4%)	19 (12.3%)	2 (1.3%)	63 (40.9%)	57 (37%)	3.73
Girl children have a right to be protected against sexual abuse and exploitation off any form in this school	–	–	–	74 (48.1%)	80 (51.9%)	4.72
We have an office of senior woman that is operational	2 (1.3%)	3 (1.9%)	–	65 (42.2%)	84 (54.5%)	4.62

Source: Field data (2024)

The results in Table 4.7 shows that 62 (40.3%) agreed and 92 (59.7%) strongly agreed that schools have rules and regulations that protect girl children against sexual violence. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants with mean of 4.82 agreed with the statement. Schools play a crucial role in protecting girl children against sexual violence by implementing rules, regulations, and policies designed to create a safe and supportive learning environment as reflected in the following verbatim;

The study also revealed that 87 (56.5%) agreed and 67 (43.5%) strongly agreed that any form of sexual violence act is condemned and punishable in school. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants with mean of 4.52 agreed with the statement.

According to Key Informant F;

Schools often have zero tolerance policies against sexual violence, clearly outlining that any form of harassment, abuse, or misconduct will not be tolerated. These policies set clear expectations for behavior and consequences for offenders. Still, Schools conduct awareness and prevention programs that educate students, teachers, and staff about sexual violence, its impact, and how to prevent and respond to incidents. These programs promote a culture of safety and empower individuals to recognize and report concerns.

Key Informant A also propounded that;

Schools establish confidential reporting mechanisms, such as designated staff members or anonymous reporting systems, where students can safely report incidents of sexual violence. This ensures that reports

are taken seriously and handled promptly and sensitively. School staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel also receive training on recognizing signs of sexual violence, responding appropriately to disclosures, and following school policies and legal obligations. This training ensures a coordinated and effective response to incidents.

This implies that schools not only aim to prevent sexual violence but also to support victims and create a supportive environment conducive to learning and personal development.

Table 4.7 shows that 12 (7.8%) strongly disagreed, 18 (11.7%) disagreed, 68 (44.1%) agreed and 56 (36.4%) strongly agreed that girls are sensitized where to report in case they faced with sexual violence acts. This implies that the majority (80.5%) of the participants with mean of 3.94 agreed with the statement. This implies that sensitizing girls about where to report incidents of sexual violence is crucial for their safety and well-being of sexual violence;

Key Informant A also propounded that;

Schools have clear identified and designated reporting points within the school where girls can safely report incidents of sexual violence such as trusted teachers, school counselors, administrators, or specially designated staff members who are trained to handle such sensitive matters.

This implies that sensitizing girls about where and how to report incidents of sexual violence, schools empower them to protect themselves and seek assistance when necessary.

It was found out that 13 (8.4%) strongly disagreed, 19 (12.3%) disagreed, 2 (1.3%) were not sure, 63 (40.9%) agreed and 57 (37%) strongly agreed that girls are sensitized of the laws that protect them from sexual abuse and violence. This implies that the majority (77.9%) of the participants with mean of 3.73 agreed with the statement. This indicates that sensitizing girls about laws that protect them from sexual abuse and violence among primary pupils is crucial for their empowerment, safety and well-being as reflected in the following quotations;

According Key Informant F noted that;

Educating girls about the concept of consent in a way that is clear and understandable. Help them recognize that they have the right to decide who can touch their bodies and that consent must be freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific. Educating girls about identifying safe adults in their lives whom they can trust and confide in if they experience any form of abuse or violence.

This implies that reinforcing lessons about laws protecting against sexual abuse and violence regularly throughout the school year. Using diverse teaching methods such as discussions, interactive activities, stories, and multimedia resources to keep the topic relevant and engaging.

The results shows that 74 (48.1%) agreed and 80 (51.9%) strongly agreed that girl children have a right to be protected against sexual abuse and exploitation off any form in this school. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants with mean of 4.72 agreed with the statement. This implies that the girl children have an inherent right to be protected against sexual abuse and exploitation in every school setting. This fundamental right is not only essential for their physical and emotional well-being but also for their ability to fully participate and thrive in their education.

According to Key Informant H noted that;

Girl children are protected under various international conventions, national laws, and human rights frameworks that prohibit any form of sexual abuse or exploitation. Schools are obligated to establish and enforce policies that explicitly prohibit sexual abuse and exploitation. These policies outline clear expectations of behavior, consequences for perpetrators and procedures for reporting incidents.

Focused group B propounded that;

Educating students, parents, teachers, and staff about sexual abuse and exploitation is essential. Awareness programs can help empower girl children to recognize inappropriate behavior, understand their rights, and seek support when needed. Schools provide access to confidential support services such as counseling and medical assistance, for girl children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. These services are critical in addressing trauma and facilitating recovery.

This implies that protecting girl children against sexual abuse and exploitation in schools is a moral imperative and a legal obligation. By upholding their rights, promoting awareness, fostering a supportive environment and providing necessary support services, schools create a safe and empowering space where girl children can learn, grow and thrive free from harm.

In relation to Table 4.5, the results shows that 2 (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 3 (1.9%) disagreed, 65 (42.2%) agreed and 84 (54.5%) strongly agreed that schools have an office of senior woman that is operational. This shows that the majority (96.7%) of the participants agreed with mean of 4.62 agreed with the statement. The office of a Senior Woman in schools typically serves an important role in safeguarding and supporting the welfare of female students, especially concerning issues such as sexual violence as per the assertions;

“The Senior Woman often acts as an advocate for female students, providing guidance and support in navigating challenges they face, including instances of sexual harassment or violence. They serve as a trusted resource for students to disclose concerns confidentially. In cases of reported sexual violence or harassment, the Senior Woman coordinates the school's response. This involves initiating investigations, ensuring appropriate support services are provided to victims, and liaising with external agencies or authorities as required” **Key Informant K said.**

According to Key Informant G noted that;

The Senior Woman provides training to staff and pupils on recognizing signs of sexual violence, responding sensitively to disclosures, and understanding their rights and responsibilities. This training helps create a supportive and informed school community. The Senior Woman ensures that students feel safe and supported when disclosing sensitive information and seeking assistance.

This implies that the office of a senior woman in schools plays a crucial role in promoting a safe and inclusive learning environment for female students, addressing gender-based violence, and advocating for their rights and well-being.

Correlation between effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education

The study was conducted find out whether there was any relationship between effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district. The analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient. The elicited response was presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4. 3 Pearson correlation results of effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education (n=154)

		Revenue allocation	Girl child completion of primary education
Effectiveness of statutory instruments	Pearson Correlation	1	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	154	154

Girl child completion of primary education	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	154	154
** Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed)			
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (1-tailed)			

Source: Primary data (2024)

The results in Table 4.9 shows that effectiveness of statutory instruments had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education since p-value is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=.702$) shows that there is a positive significant contribution of effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district. The policy implication is that statutory instruments provide a legal framework to protect girls from sexual violence. They can define sexual offenses, establish clear penalties for perpetrators, and ensure that victims receive justice through effective legal processes. In Mitooma district, the effectiveness of statutory instruments in addressing sexual violence can significantly contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment that enhances girl child completion of primary education. By enforcing laws, promoting prevention strategies, providing support services, and raising awareness, statutory instruments empower girls to pursue their education without fear of violence, thereby promoting their overall well-being and academic success.

Descriptive statistics on possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child

The findings are presented objective by objective using descriptive statistics of frequencies to find out the frequency and percentage of the variables. All the variables were measured on a five point likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 – Disagree (D), 3 – Not Sure (NS), 4 – Agree (A) and 5 - Strongly Agree (SA). In this study Strongly Agree and Agree were taken to mean Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were taken to mean Disagree.

Table 4.9: Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
The school has provided learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence	28 (18.2%)	33 (21.4%)	–	51 (33.1%)	42 (27.3%)	3.52
Sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence	–	–	–	68 (44.1%)	86 (55.9%)	4.82
Parents supplement school authorities in educating girls on how to avoid sexual violence	56 (36.3%)	64 (41.6%)	2 (1.3%)	13 (8.4%)	19 (12.3%)	2.61
The school provides a protective environment, free from risks of sexual violence	–	–	–	85 (55.2%)	69 (44.8%)	4.52
The police intervene to apprehend perpetrators of sexual violence against girls when informed	59 (38.3%)	90 (58.4%)	–	3 (1.9%)	2 (1.3%)	2.32
The local leaders are helpful when dealing with cases of sexual violence against girls when informed	35 (22.7%)	42 (27.3%)	3 (1.9%)	42 (27.3%)	32 (20.8%)	2.93

Source: Field data (2024)

The results in Table 4.7 shows that 28 (18.2%) agreed and 33 (21.4%) strongly agreed, 51 (33.1%) agreed

and 42 (27.3%) strongly agreed that the school has provided learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence. This implies that the majority (80.4%) of the participants with mean of 3.52 agreed with the statement. This implies that providing learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence is a proactive step towards safeguarding their well-being and promoting a safe learning environment. According to Focused group B noted;

Teaching learners about personal boundaries is essential. They learn to identify their own boundaries and respect the boundaries of others.

The results in Table 4.7 shows that 68 (44.1%) agreed and 86 (55.9%) strongly agreed that sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence. This implies that the majority (100%) of the participants with mean of 4.82 agreed with the statement. This implies that hanging signposts in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence among primary school girls is a proactive step towards raising awareness and promoting a safe learning environment as shown in the following assertion;

Observations, the schools were tinted with posts written “Every Child Deserves Safety. Protecting Our Girls”; “stop sexual violence! respect everyone's boundaries”; "Sexual Violence Has No Place Here. Speak Up, Stay Safe."

These messages aim to reinforce the school's commitment to preventing sexual violence, educate students about their rights, encourage reporting, and promote a culture of respect and safety. By prominently displaying these signposts in visible areas of the school compound, such as near entrances, classrooms, or common areas, the messages can serve as constant reminders and contribute to a supportive and protective school environment for all students, especially primary school girls.

The relation to Table 4.7, the study shows that 56 (36.3%) agreed, 64 (41.6%) strongly agreed, 2 (1.3%) were not sure, 13 (8.4%) agreed and 19 (12.3%) strongly agreed that parents supplement school authorities in educating girls on how to avoid sexual violence. This indicates that the majority (77.9%) of the participants with mean of 2.61 agreed with the statement.

According to Key Informant B noted that;

Parents creates an open and supportive environment at home where girls feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics related to safety and boundaries. They encourages dialogue about what constitutes healthy relationships, consent, and how to recognize and respond to inappropriate behavior. Parents teach their daughters about personal boundaries and empower them to assertively communicate these boundaries with others. This includes respecting their right to say no to unwanted physical contact or advances.

Key Informant K responded that;

Parents can educate their daughters about potential risks and situations that lead to sexual violence, both in-person and online. This includes discussing safety strategies such as staying in groups, avoiding isolated areas, and being cautious with personal information on social media. Parents can help build their daughters' self-esteem and self-confidence, which can empower them to assert themselves and trust their instincts when faced with uncomfortable situations.

This implies that by actively engaging with their daughters and supporting school efforts, parents play a critical role in equipping girls with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate their environments safely and assert their rights against sexual violence. This collaborative approach between parents and schools fosters a supportive network that prioritizes the safety and well-being of all students.

Table 4.7 indicates that 85 (55.2%) agreed and 69 (44.8%) strongly agreed that schools provides a protective environment, free from risks of sexual violence. The majority (100%) agreed with the statement.

This implies that creating the protective environment free from risks of sexual violence against girl children in schools requires a comprehensive approach that includes policies, education, support systems, and community involvement as per the following Key Informants;

Focused group A propounded that;

Schools should have clear and robust policies in place that explicitly prohibit sexual violence, harassment, and misconduct. These policies outline consequences for offenders and establish reporting procedures that are accessible, confidential, and supportive of victims.

Key Informant H asserted that;

Implementing age-appropriate and inclusive sexual education programs that teach students about consent, boundaries, healthy relationships, and respectful behavior is crucial. These programs empower girls to recognize inappropriate behavior and assert their rights.

This implies that schools create a protective environment where girl children feel safe, supported, and empowered to learn and thrive without the threat of sexual violence. This proactive approach promotes their well-being and ensures that schools fulfill their duty to provide a secure educational environment for all pupils.

The results in Table 4.7, the study shows that 59 (38.3%) agreed, 90 (58.4%) strongly agreed, 3 (1.9%) agreed and 2 (1.3%) strongly agreed that the police intervene to apprehend perpetrators of sexual violence against girls when informed. The majority (96.7%) disagreed with the statement.

Relatedly, Table 4.5 reflects 35 (22.7%) agreed, 42 (27.3%) strongly agreed, 3 (1.9%) were not sure, 42 (27.3%) agreed and 32 (20.8%) strongly agreed that local leaders are helpful when dealing with cases of sexual violence against girls when informed. The majority (96.7%) with mean of 2.93 shows disagreement with the statement. Local leaders play a crucial role in addressing cases of sexual violence against primary school girls when they are informed and actively involve as said by different key respondents;

According to Key informant D said that;

Local leaders can advocate for the rights and safety of girls within their communities. They publicly condemn sexual violence, raise awareness about its consequences, and promote a culture of zero tolerance. Local leaders have the influence to engage the community in discussions about sexual violence prevention. They organize community meetings, workshops, or awareness campaigns to educate residents about identifying signs of abuse, supporting victims, and promoting safe environments for girls.

Basing on Key Informant B narrated that;

Local leaders mobilize resources from local government agencies, NGOs, or community groups to support initiatives aimed at preventing sexual violence and assisting victims. This include funding for awareness programs, counseling services, or infrastructure improvements. Local leaders advocate for policies and laws that protect girls from sexual violence. They work with local government officials to strengthen legal frameworks, improve access to justice for victims, and ensure perpetrators are held accountable.

This implies that local leaders' active involvement is essential in creating a supportive and protective environment for primary school girls, ensuring their safety, well-being, and access to justice in cases of sexual violence.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of the findings

Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Basing on the first objective “*to establish causes of sexual violence against girl child in primary schools in Mitooma sub County*”. The study found out that causes of sexual violence had a positive significant contribution with girl child completion of primary education since p-value (0.736*) is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=.736$) shows that there is a positive significant contribution of sexual violence on with girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

Qualitatively, schools that lack proper policies, procedures, and training on safeguarding children are more susceptible to incidents of sexual violence. Inadequate supervision, poorly maintained facilities, and gaps in staff awareness and accountability can create environments where abuse can occur unchecked. Girls who experience sexual violence develops fear and trauma associated with attending school. This fear can stem from concerns about encountering the perpetrator or facing harassment from peers, affecting their ability to concentrate on studies and participate in school activities. In severe cases, prolonged or repeated incidents of sexual violence leads to school dropout. Girls drops from school to escape continued victimization, protect their safety, or due to pressure from family members who perceive the school environment as unsafe.

How girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Basing on the second objective, “*to find out how sexual harassment on Girl Child completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County*”. The study revealed that that effect of sexual violence had a negative significant contribution with girl child completion of primary education since p-value (0.845**) is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=.645$) shows that there is a negative significant contribution of effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education. This implies that any negative decrease in girl child completion of primary education is as a result of effects of sexual violence results.

Qualitatively, victims of sexual violence often experience severe psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and feelings of shame and guilt. These mental health challenges can significantly impact their ability to concentrate in class, retain information, and participate in school activities in Mitooma County, Mitooma district.

Effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child

On the third objective “*the effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child*”. The study showed that effectiveness of statutory instruments had a positive significant contribution with girl child completion of primary education since p-value is less than 0.05. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=.702$) shows that there is a positive significant contribution of effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

Qualitatively, the effectiveness of statutory instruments in addressing sexual violence can significantly contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment that enhances girl child completion of primary education. By enforcing laws, promoting prevention strategies, providing support services, and raising awareness, statutory instruments empower girls to pursue their education without fear of violence, thereby promoting their overall well-being and academic success.

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child

Basing on the findings, the study found out that school has provided learners the basic information on

how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence; sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence; the school provides a protective environment and free from risks of sexual violence.

Qualitatively, schools should have clear and robust policies in place that explicitly prohibit sexual violence, harassment, and misconduct. These policies outline consequences for offenders and establish reporting procedures that are accessible, confidential, and supportive of victims.

Still, local leaders can advocate for the rights and safety of girls within their communities. They publicly condemn sexual violence, raise awareness about its consequences, and promote a culture of zero tolerance. Local leaders have the influence to engage the community in discussions about sexual violence prevention. They organize community meetings, workshops, or awareness campaigns to educate residents about identifying signs of abuse, supporting victims, and promoting safe environments for girls.

Discussion

Child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

The study revealed that child sexual assault had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive significant contribution of sexual violence to girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

Qualitatively, schools that lack proper policies, procedures, and training on safeguarding children are more susceptible to incidents of sexual violence. Inadequate supervision, poorly maintained facilities, and gaps in staff awareness and accountability can create environments where abuse can occur unchecked. Girls who experience sexual violence develop fear and trauma associated with attending school. This fear can stem from concerns about encountering the perpetrator or facing harassment from peers, affecting their ability to concentrate on studies and participate in school activities. In severe cases, prolonged or repeated incidents of sexual violence lead to school dropout. Girls withdraw from school to escape continued victimization, protect their safety, or due to pressure from family members who perceive the school environment as unsafe.

The findings are in line with Turner (2020) who revealed that teacher sexual violence in qualitative studies contrast sharply with the quantitative evidence in presenting a picture of the normalisation of sexual violence in schools. While qualitative evidence has grown on how schools provide environments that condone or foster sexual harassment between pupils, there are, however, relatively few in-depth analyses of sexual violence committed by school staff, which remains shrouded in a culture of silence.

The findings are in agreement with Muhanguzi (2011) who propounded that young people in 14 secondary schools in western and central Uganda traced the unequal power relations and sexual double standards operating in schools that rendered girls vulnerable to sexual harassment, particularly when they refused sexual advances of male pupils and teachers, though teachers denied. Turner (2020) noted that gender violence in two primary schools in central Uganda, which involved the researcher spending several months using a range of interviews, participatory activities, observations and informal conversations with children and school staff, revealed how some male teachers used their institutional positioning to exercise authority in sexualised ways and to sexually exploit female pupils.

The findings are in agreement with Altinyelken and Le Mat (2018) who narrated that sex between teachers and female pupils as commonplace, though none of them admitted to engaging in these practices themselves. Bhana (2012) assert that sexual violence in and out of the school, involving boyfriends, male teachers, and men in the neighbourhood and at home. Girls' attempts to exercise agency were constrained in the context of structural and social inequalities and pervasive gender norms through which male sexual

violence was asserted.

Leach, Dunne, and Salvi (2014) noted that the emerging qualitative evidence paints a picture of commonplace teacher sexual violence, with risks to girls elevated in contexts with high levels of poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality, with poorly managed and resourced education systems. Bell (2012) note that girls have some agency in transactional sex, through using sexual relationships to improve their material situation. Ninsiima et al. (2018) noted that how gender norms constrain girls' agency, with men's control of resources and norms about feminine submissiveness restricting girls' capacity to negotiate safe sex.

How girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

The study revealed that that effect of sexual violence had a negative significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. There is a negative significant contribution of effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education. This implies that any negative decrease in girl child completion of primary education is as a result of effects of sexual violence results.

Qualitatively, victims of sexual violence often experience severe psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and feelings of shame and guilt. These mental health challenges can significantly impact their ability to concentrate in class, retain information, and participate in school activities in Mitooma County, Mitooma district.

The results are in agreement with Jennipher and Godwin (2022) who showed that all children have the right to quality education that respects their human dignity and their right to be protected from sexual assault.

The results are in agreement with Okafor and Piesse (2022) who propounded that there is a negative relationship between sexual violence and the different measures of the girl-child education. There is an increase in sexual violence by one standard deviation from the sample mean, will reduce girls' enrolment rate and completion rate by 2.385% and 3.150% points respectively. With respect to policy implications from the findings, countries must formulate adequate responses to protect their young citizens from the cruelty of sexual abuse. In addition, effective support mechanisms for victims of sexual violence should be facilitated and sustained in developing countries.

The results are in agreement with Ormerod et al (2022) whereby findings suggest that a national agenda for school safety needs to consider school climate tolerant of sexual harassment in order to be effective in responding to sexual harassment and supporting student engagement.

The results are in agreement with Worku et al (2016) whereby abortion rate in this study was found to be 75.0%. Many also had negative psychological outcomes, which made the life of the victims difficult and have adversely affected their academic performance. This study recommends introducing reproductive health education for students with special emphasis on sexuality, consequences of unwanted pregnancies, signs and symptoms, and treatment for STDs, through media and also as part of the curriculum.

The results are in agreement with Mwebaze (2014) who noted that child brides usually have lower levels of education than girls who get married at an older age. Their education is terminated upon marriage and with repeated pregnancies and a lot of time spent on household chores, they lose the opportunity to go back to school and cannot make personal decisions about their life. There is need to develop a sense of ownership of child abuse programmes in the various communities. This means active participation by the community in identifying the necessary strategic interventions, allocating resources especially human resource and in monitoring services.

The results are in line with Bordoh e al (2016) who found out that sexual abuse of students has enormous negative effects on students, these include social effects, psychological and gynaecological disorders, poor and cognition difficulties, poor and academic performance, and acquisition of diseases and direct and indirect- cost on these sexually abused students. It is recommended that public awareness of student sexual abuse must be intensified through the media for the general public to know about sexual abuse and its effects on the development of students.

Effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child

The study showed that effectiveness of statutory instruments had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. There is a positive significant contribution of effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

Qualitatively, the effectiveness of statutory instruments in addressing sexual violence can significantly contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment that enhances girl child completion of primary education. By enforcing laws, promoting prevention strategies, providing support services, and raising awareness, statutory instruments empower girls to pursue their education without fear of violence, thereby promoting their overall well-being and academic success.

The findings are in line with the Uganda Gender Policy (2007) Policy whose goal is gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Policy is also in tandem with the National Development Plan II (NDP) (2015/16 – 2019/2020) which underpins gender equality as basis for development. Eliminating Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a strategic action of the NDP II. The Policy gives legitimacy to other commitments such as the National Action Plan on Women (2007), the Uganda Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820, the Justice, Law and Order Sector Investment Plan, the Social Development Sector Plan (SDSP), and Health Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (HSSIP) among others. The findings are in agreement with Article 24 of Uganda's Constitution (1995) protects every person from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and gives children a right to be educated without humiliating and degrading treatment. Since this time, the Government of Uganda has signed and put in place a significant number of international and national legal and policy frameworks and instruments to protect children (MoESTS Uganda 2015, 8–10). One of the most notable frameworks is the National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (2015–2020), developed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS) together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The strategic plan, at the time of writing still being revised for the period of 2021–2025, provides clear instructions for implementing the national strategy on violence in schools, including sexual violence. It identifies key actors (involving inter alia school officials or local councils) and key instruments (policies or legal institutions) and specifies their roles in the reporting, tracking, referral and responses chain (MoESTS Uganda. 2015).

The findings are in agreement with Uganda's Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8 (2007) abolishes corporal punishment and sets out strong measures against defilement. Under point 129 (1) of the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8, any person who attempts to perform a sexual act with another person who is below the age of 18 years commits an offence and is on conviction, liable to imprisonment not exceeding 18 years. Uganda's Children Act (Amendment) 2016 (Government of Uganda 2016) specifies mandatory reporting of child abuse (including sexual abuse) by medical practitioners, teachers and social workers or counsellors, but the penalties are only vaguely specified, with the stipulation under point '8A Prohibition of sexual exploitation' (9), that a person who commits a sexual offence (against children) is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding 100 currency points or to a term of imprisonment, not exceeding five

years.

The findings are in line with National Laws and Policies Relating to Violence Against Children. 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda declares education a constitutional right. Article 24 protects every person including children from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This gives children a right to be educated without humiliating and degrading treatment. 2. The Children's Act Cap 59 (2008) defines the rights of children and requires all duty bearers, parents, community members and teachers to ensure that children under care are safe and protected. In a school setting, teachers therefore have the responsibility to prevent any form of violence against children. 3. The Education (Pre- Primary, Primary and Post- Primary) Act (2008) defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders including ensuring safety and discipline of teachers and students. 4. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010) bans and penalises the practice (FGM). It also imposes harsh penalties for participation in FGM. A person convicted of the practice faces a sentence of up to ten years in prison and a life imprisonment in case of aggravated FGM. 5. The Domestic Violence Act (2010) is aimed at eliminating violence in family settings; it provides for the protection of the victims of domestic violence and punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence among others (MOES, 2014).

The findings are in line with Malhotra et al (2011) who pointed to an increase in the number of interventions targeting child marriage during the past decade, but noted that very few were systematically evaluated. Based on analysis of 23 programmes that had some form of evaluation, the review found that few programmes focused exclusively on child marriage, which for most programmes was included along with goals for achieving other health, welfare or empowerment outcomes for adolescents and youth.

The findings are in line with Malhotra et al (2011) who noticed that programmes have generally deployed one or more of five core strategies to prevent child marriage: empowering girls with information, skills and support networks; educating and mobilizing parents and community members; enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. The review found that most evaluation designs were weak, but that the strongest, most consistent results in reducing child marriage were evident for a subset of programmes promoting information, skills and networks for girls in combination with community mobilization.

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child

The study found out that school has provided learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence; sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence; the school provides a protective environment and free from risks of sexual violence.

Qualitatively, schools should have clear and robust policies in place that explicitly prohibit sexual violence, harassment, and misconduct. These policies outline consequences for offenders and establish reporting procedures that are accessible, confidential, and supportive of victims.

Still, local leaders can advocate for the rights and safety of girls within their communities. They publicly condemn sexual violence, raise awareness about its consequences, and promote a culture of zero tolerance. Local leaders have the influence to engage the community in discussions about sexual violence prevention. They organize community meetings, workshops, or awareness campaigns to educate residents about identifying signs of abuse, supporting victims, and promoting safe environments for girls.

The results are in line with international Justice Mission that conducted a baseline and end-line study of the Guatemalan government's response to child sexual assault reports, evaluating case files from the period 2008—2012, and repeating the study for the period 2013—2017. The study found a 136% increase

in the number of SVAC complaints filed. Many key informants attributed the increase to a more prevalent reporting culture and more available information for victims and their families. The criminal justice system substantially increased its use of victim-sensitive practices when gathering victim testimony. Whereas the use of victim-friendly spaces for gathering victims' testimonies was uncommon at baseline (30% of cases), it became nearly universal at endline (98% of cases). The greatest improvement was seen in the use of Gesell Chambers (designated, trauma-informed facilities for victims to provide testimony outside the courtroom), which was non-existent at baseline (0 cases) but commonplace at endline (77% of cases).

The results are in agreement with Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) program offers adolescent girls (between the ages of 14 and 20) access to mentorship and microfinance training. Established by BRAC in Bangladesh, ELA combines both livelihood and life skills with economic empowerment. ELA is now being implemented in multiple countries. In Uganda, where 60% of the population is under 20 years old, the intervention aimed to relax human capital constraints that adolescent girls face by simultaneously providing them vocational training and information on sex, reproduction, and marriage. A rigorous evaluation by the World Bank has found lasting results. At four years post-intervention, adolescent girls in treated communities were five times more likely to engage in income-generating activities, corresponding to a 48% increase over baseline levels, an impact almost entirely driven by their greater engagement in self-employment. Teen pregnancy fell by a third, and early entry into marriage or cohabitation also fell rapidly. Strikingly, the share of girls reporting sex against their will dropped by close to a third and aspired ages at which to marry and start childbearing moved forward. The results highlight the potential of a multifaceted program that provides skills transfers as a viable and cost-effective policy intervention to improve the economic and social empowerment of adolescent girls over a four-year horizon (Bandiera, et al, 2018).

The results are in agreement with Walsh et al (2015) who found evidence that school-based sexual abuse prevention programs were effective in increasing participants' skills in protective behaviors and knowledge of sexual abuse prevention concepts. In addition, girl children exposed to a child sexual abuse prevention program had greater odds of disclosing their abuse than girl children who had not been exposed, and knowledge gains were not significantly affected one to six months after the intervention for either intervention or control groups. However, studies have not yet adequately measured the long-term benefits of programs in terms of reducing the incidence or prevalence of girl child sexual abuse.

Conclusion

Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

The study concluded that causes of sexual violence had a positive significant contribution with girl child completion of primary education. There is also a positive significant contribution of sexual violence on with girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

The study also concluded that schools that lack proper policies, procedures, and training on safeguarding children are more susceptible to incidents of sexual violence. Inadequate supervision, poorly maintained facilities, and gaps in staff awareness and accountability can create environments where abuse can occur unchecked. Girls who experience sexual violence develop fear and trauma associated with attending school. This fear can stem from concerns about encountering the perpetrator or facing harassment from peers, affecting their ability to concentrate on studies and participate in school activities. In severe cases, prolonged or repeated incidents of sexual violence leads to school dropout. Girls withdraw from school to escape continued victimization, protect their safety, or due to pressure from family members who

perceive the school environment as unsafe.

How girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

The study concluded that that that effect of sexual harassment had a negative significant contribution with girl child completion of primary education. The study also concluded that there is a negative significant contribution of effect of sexual violence on girl child completion of primary education. This implies that any negative decrease in girl child completion of primary education is as a result of effects of sexual violence results.

The study also concluded victims of sexual violence often experience severe psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and feelings of shame and guilt. These mental health challenges can significantly impact their ability to concentrate in class, retain information, and participate in school activities in Mitooma County, Mitooma district.

The effectiveness of statutory instruments in place towards sexual violence against girl child

The study concluded that effectiveness of statutory instruments had a positive significant contribution to girl child completion of primary education. The study concluded that that there is a positive significant contribution of effectiveness of statutory instruments on girl child completion of primary education in Mitooma district.

The study also concluded that the effectiveness of statutory instruments in addressing sexual violence can significantly contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment that enhances girl child completion of primary education. By enforcing laws, promoting prevention strategies, providing support services, and raising awareness, statutory instruments empower girls to pursue their education without fear of violence, thereby promoting their overall well-being and academic success.

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child

The study concluded that school has provided learners with basic information on how to avoid situations leading to sexual violence; sign posts have been hung in the school compound bearing messages against sexual violence; the school provides a protective environment and free from risks of sexual violence.

The study also concluded that schools should have clear and robust policies in place that explicitly prohibit sexual violence, harassment, and misconduct. These policies outline consequences for offenders and establish reporting procedures that are accessible, confidential, and supportive of victims.

Still, local leaders can advocate for the rights and safety of girls within their communities. They publicly condemn sexual violence, raise awareness about its consequences, and promote a culture of zero tolerance. Local leaders have the influence to engage the community in discussions about sexual violence prevention. They organize community meetings, workshops, or awareness campaigns to educate residents about identifying signs of abuse, supporting victims, and promoting safe environments for girls.

Recommendations

Girl child sexual assault affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Sexual violence against girls in primary schools is a serious issue with multiple complex causes. Addressing these causes involves understanding a range of factors, from individual behaviors to broader societal influences. Basing on the findings, the study recommends that Government should promote gender equality and respect through incorporating gender equality and respectful relationships into school curricula. Teach children about consent, boundaries, and mutual respect from a young age.

The study also recommends that schools should strengthen school policies and procedures by developing

and implementing clear anti-abuse policies, including procedures for reporting and responding to incidents of sexual violence; providing regular training for teachers, staff, and school administrators on identifying signs of abuse, handling disclosures, and supporting victims; establishing confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms for students to safely report abuse.

How girl child sexual harassment affects the completion of primary Education in Mitooma Sub County

Sexual violence can have profound and detrimental effects on a girl's ability to complete primary education. Therefore, the study recommends that government through police and court should **ensure** Immediate and Comprehensive Support for Victims by providing immediate and ongoing psychological support to help victims cope with trauma and regain confidence in their ability to learn and participate in school; Ensuring that victims have access to medical care to address any physical health issues resulting from the violence and to offer preventive and supportive care; Maintaining strict confidentiality to protect the privacy of victims and reduce the risk of stigma or further trauma.

The study also recommends there should be safe and supportive school environment through implementing and enforcing anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies to create a safer school environment for all students; establishing and promoting confidential reporting channels for students to safely disclose instances of violence and seek help.

Effectiveness of statutory instruments towards sexual violence against girl child

The effectiveness of statutory instruments (laws, regulations, and policies) aimed at addressing sexual violence against girl children involves assessing how well these measures protect and support victims, prevent incidents, and promote justice. The study recommends that Government should periodically review and update laws and policies to address emerging trends and challenges related to sexual violence; ensure that statutory instruments cover all aspects of sexual violence, including prevention, protection, and prosecution, and address the specific needs of children.

Possible measures of controlling sexual violence against girl child in primary schools

Controlling sexual violence against girls in primary schools requires a comprehensive approach that involves prevention, intervention, support, and systemic change. The study recommends that there should be curriculum integration to include age-appropriate education on personal safety, boundaries, and respect in the school curriculum.

The study also recommends that there should be parent and caregiver workshops to offer workshops for parents and caregivers on recognizing signs of abuse, discussing safety with children, and understanding their role in prevention.

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