

The Relationship between Family Income Levels on Sexual Violence against Children and the Implication on Education Attainment

¹Oando S. O., ²Ogola W. O., & ¹Parsitau D. S.

¹Egerton University & ²Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract

Sexual violence against children occurs in the home, school, and workplace. Urban areas are reported to provide a more fertile ground for various types of violence. The vice is highly prevalent for the youth both male and female. Guided by resource theory of violence which suggests a relationship between wealth and violence at household level, this paper examines the relationship between family income levels on sexual violence against children and the implication on education attainment. It used descriptive survey design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide in-depth data and to determine how relationships exist between economic variables and variables of sexual violence. The study population comprised of high school students, who were selected through random sampling at cluster level. The high school students bear strong implication for TVET access as prospective students. Findings exhibit sharp gender based variations in recognizing different forms of violence. Assessment of the prevalence levels of sexual violence show that more girls than boys are affected. Linear relationship between family income levels and violence prevalence rate further shows a strong correlation between the two variables. Holding income as the independent variable, while acts of violence as dependent variable, the association exhibits an inverse relation. The trend of this association sheds light on the impact the two variables have on educational outcomes at tertiary levels. Sexual abuse bears a negative impact on children's educational attainment, at different levels from primary through tertiary institutions. It is therefore necessary to enhance equity in education at TVET level ensuring proportionate financing to realize equal returns and address the challenge of sexual violence in learning institutions.

Key words: *Internalized Stigma, HIV, social demographic characteristics*

Introduction

Sexual violence against children occurs in any setting including the home, school, and workplace or over the internet. Such violence is perpetrated by individuals such as parents and other caregivers, peers, intimate partners, authority figures and strangers or even groups (UNICEF, 2014). Day et al, (2005) indicated that violence is an issue that permeates every corner of society, is widespread and costly. The study further revealed that individuals affected by sexual violence pay out of pocket expenses, and their families experience a change in their consumption choices as a result.

World Health Organization (2013) further emphasizes that of all forms of violence sexual violence against children is particularly the most pressing issue. Currie and Widom (2010), in a study in the United States, confirmed the damaging economic consequences of child

abuse, after conducting a prospective cohort study in which they matched children who had experienced court-substantiated cases of physical and sexual abuse before age 11 with a non-abused control group. In a study of six cities in Central America by World Bank (2011), between 3-10% of men between 19-30 years old reported to have been sexually abused as a child. Urban areas are also reported to provide a more fertile ground for various types of violence, especially when high rates of growth overwhelm government capacity to provide basic services, including security, to residents.

Research in Africa (Arango, et al. 2014) suggest that the vice is highly prevalent for the youth both male and female. Rates of victimization from a series of National Violence against Children Surveys estimate that, among women 18-24 years old, 38% in Swaziland, 27% in Tanzania and 32% in Zimbabwe had experienced sexual violence before they were 18 years old. In Kenya, it is estimated that by the age of 15 years, approximately 49% of the population of women and girls experience some form of violence (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics {KNBS} and ICF Macro, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

This paper examines the relationship between family income levels on sexual violence against children especially in urban setting. Income factor was taken as the crucial measure of economic status at household levels. It thus examines the existing patterns in terms of differences in prevalence among teenagers in relation to their respective family income. Sexual violence in its various forms remains endemic in communities around the world, cutting across class, race, age, religion and national boundaries.

Study Objectives

The objectives of the paper focus on three dimensions:

- (a) To establish economic inequalities and prevalence of violence;
- (b) To determine the correlation between sexual violence experienced to the associated family income factors; and
- (c) To assess the implications of the correlation to educational achievement at different levels.

Literature Review

Awareness on Sexual Violence

Previous study by Zoneziwoh, (2011) of sexual violence affecting the children, with specific focus on university students, declared that sexual violence has gained both international and local recognition, over the past two decades. At international level comparable data by UNICEF (2014), report of 40 low and middle income countries confirm that exposure to certain forms of sexual violence is common in the lives of many girls. The proportion of those aged 15 to 19 who had ever experienced forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts in their lifetime varies widely across countries. The report reveals that in

13 of the 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with available data, prevalence rates of 10 per cent or more are found.

In Kenya, the first national survey on violence against children was designed to yield lifetime and current experiences of children in cohorts of two age groups. The first group comprised of 18 to 24 year olds who experienced acts of violence prior to age 18. The second category examined the current experiences of 13 to 17 year olds who experienced acts of violence during the 12 months prior to the survey (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Level of violence prior to age 18 as reported by 18 to 24 year olds was 32% of females and 18% of males.

The increasing coherence in the ways violence is understood has facilitated identification across boundaries of multiple forms of violence (Parkes J. et al 2013), leading to revelations about widespread violence against children. Rumbold (2008) argues that there is growing awareness of the links between sexual violence, health, human rights and national development. It has been thus argued that sexual violence continues to affect millions of children, destroying lives and damaging communities. Social, economic, and gender issues are increasingly recognized as significant factors in many countries (Mugawe and Powell, 2006).

The Link between Economics and Sexual Violence against Children

Socio-economic inequality is the manifestation of unequal distribution of resources socially, economically and politically, and vice versa. Unlike gender violence variables, there is a general agreement on the meanings of most socio-economic variables (Mukesh, 2014). Dolezal, T., McCollum, D., and Callahan, M. (2009), shows the connection between violence and economics arguing that violence occur in all age groups, at all socioeconomic levels, and throughout all of society's structure. They argue that experiences of violence impose a direct economic burden on the healthcare system. In an attempt to express the relationship between Gender and economic indicators, (Macdonald, 2012) emphasises that gender is sometimes peripheral to concerns about how economies perform. In this opinion, the problem is further highlighted by noting that mainstream economic analysis never mentions gender. Instead, academic disciplines that analyse economic activity have small contingents of gender specialists. Therefore, much analysis of gender variables like sexual violence is often carried out under the rubric of feminist analysis.

The Resource Theory of Violence

This study was guided by the resource theory of violence according to (Fergus, 2012) which suggests a relationship between wealth and violence at household level. The theory is fundamental in explaining the link between income levels and violence because adjustments at household levels often affect a large number of individuals (Ward J., Lee B, Baptist S., and Jackson H, 2010). Factors of socio economic status also play an important role because families and communities are often segregated by socio economic status, age, gender, and ethnicity (Ward et al, 2010). The resource theory is based on the proposition that individuals who control resources, such as money, property, or prestige, are in the dominant position in any relationship (Bott S., Morrison A., and Ellsberg M, 2005). It holds that the use of violence within a

relationship depends on the disparity of resources family member controls. The more resources individuals command, the more force or power they

can muster. However, with abundance of power there is less likelihood of them employing force. Those who have no resources such as high-paying jobs or status tend to resort to violence more often as a way of controlling their partners in a relationship. It is imperative in this theory that children in this study from poor families are more likely to face the challenge of sexual violence and hence less likely to achieve much in education.

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was used in this study using a mixed paradigm approach. This combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide in-depth data, and to generate findings which were comparable, and to determine how relationships exist between economic variables and variables of sexual violence. The quantitative data were collected using questionnaire to gather cross-sectional data, while the qualitative data were captured by Focus Group Discussion and key informant interviews. The focus was on students in secondary schools in Kasarani District (currently sub-county) of Nairobi County. The target secondary schools comprised of both mixed and single sex schools. Only the children (according to the Laws of Kenya) were targeted in order to capture their personal experiences and gauge the potential disparities that exist at family level. Children at this level were of importance because they were presumed to have better language and confidence level to speak out to the researchers.

Population and Sampling

The study population comprised of both girls and boys in high school from Kasarani District of Nairobi County. The focus was on students in secondary schools in Kasarani District (currently sub-county) of Nairobi County. The target secondary schools comprised of both mixed and single sex schools. Only the children in secondary schools aged 13 to 17 years were targeted in order to capture their personal experiences. The respondents were selected through random sampling at the cluster level. The required sample size was calculated using the formula: Where: The vulnerable population (p) in Kasarani = 29%; the desired level of confidence (z) = 95%; and the scientifically acceptable margin of error (m) = 6% for a small heterogeneous population. The actual sample size of (n) = 220 participants was thus found sufficient to allow detection of difference between clusters within the population.

Findings

Understanding Inequalities and Prevalence of Violence

The concept of 'correlation' is used in this study as a statistical tool which examines the relationship between two variables (income and violence). The correlation analysis involves

various methods and techniques used for studying and measuring the extent of the relationship between the two variables. Instead of the specific ratios used by the Gini coefficient used to assess inequality in income and consumption (Gakuru and Mathenge, 2012), frequency charts have been used to express the income disparities in this study since the ratio would lead to overgeneralization. On the other hand before establishing the prevalence levels of violence, the study sought to establish the respondents understanding and knowledge of different forms of violence, based on what was recognized as an act of violence. Findings exhibit sharp gender based variations in recognizing different forms of violence, both girls and boys relatively showed stronger knowledge on defilement and indecent touch than they do for peeping and sexual comments.

Majority of the children recognized several forms of sexual violence as more than 90% knew about forced sex, followed by influenced sex and indecent touch recognized by more than 80% of the respondents respectively. Boys were more likely to reason that female genital mutilation (FGM), peeping and sexual comments are forms of violence than girls. On the other hand more girls than boys recognized indecent touch, forced sex and influenced sex as forms of violation. Findings in this study confirm high prevalence levels of different forms of sexual violence experienced by children. The most prevalent forms of violence experienced by all children were sexual comments, forced sex and indecent touch. Defined according to the (Republic of Kenya, 2006) Sexual Offences Act 2006, then defilement (combining both forced sex 19% and influenced or coerced sexual intercourse

14%) was the most serious, having been cumulatively reported by 33% of the children interviewed. The least reported form of violence was Female Genital Mutilation, only experienced by 2% comprising of girls only.

The gendered dimension in the children's experience of violence was exhibited by the patterns of each form of violence experienced by girls and boys differently. More girls than boys experience peeping, sexual comments, forced sex, and sex influenced by different favors like gifts, money, food or coerced by threats. Boys on the other hand experienced more indecent touch than that reported by girls. On the same note, Female Genital Mutilation is reported by girls only as the boys report to have experienced sodomy.

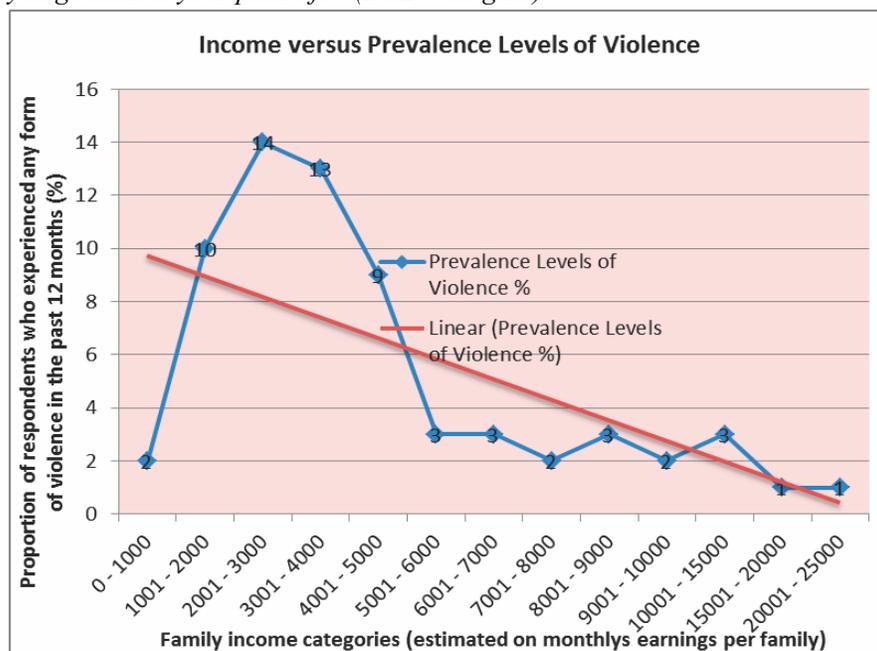
Correlation between Family Income and Prevalence of Sexual Violence

A regression of income levels and the prevalence levels of violence demonstrated that very high levels of violence were experienced by low income earners of below Ksh. 6000/= (US \$ 71) per month. The lower income categories proved to be the most affected with the highest prevalence of violence of 14% children having experienced forced sex and influenced/coerced sex (defilement). Those falling within the higher family income category of Ksh. 10,000/= (US \$118) and above exhibit prevalence level of less than 4%. This shows that one in every ten children in such families have experienced at least some form of violence. In this income category, indecent touch against girls is the most common followed by influenced sex against girls and sodomy affecting boys at relatively equal rates. The highest level of sodomy was experienced by boys from the lowest income category of at most Ksh.3000/= (US \$35) a month, which reflects an aspect of domination. The low income categories also exhibited the highest levels of sexual violence against both girls and boys, which was an indicator that low income levels perpetuate the levels of vulnerability to violence. A linear trend line (below) provides

the clear picture on the linear relationship that exists between family income levels and the prevalence level of sexual violence against children. The data was directly collected by the researcher from the schools using questionnaire, which were cleaned and analyzed to ascertain reliability of the findings.

The linear relationship between the family income levels and the prevalence rate of sexual violence gives a clear correlation between the two variables. Holding the income variables as the independent variable while the acts of violence reported as the dependent variable, the association exhibits an inverse relation. This means that the prevalence of violence is likely to be high at lower income levels, and decreases as the family income increases. Qualitative data from girls reinforces the high prevalence levels of violence as a consequence of low incomes. Girls in a focus group discussion reported that;

“If a girl comes from a poor family and she gets a boyfriend who promises to provide everything she needs, then she is likely to ‘move’ (start a sexual relationship) with him, whether through influence with money or by force. This relationship would finally expose the two of them to forced sexual intercourse. Even if it were you!....you cannot stop him because if you say no then you may lose everything he is providing and then you go back to your poor life” (FGD with girls).



N=Male-59; Female-62; Total-121; Correlation Coefficient $r = -0.638$

Fig 1: Linear Relationship between Family Income and Prevalence of Violence

The discussion does not only link the possibility of girls from families of low income categories to high prevalence, but also connects the findings to possible causes of influenced sex among

peers or between children with adults who are more endowed with material resources. Boys in another FGD further give a different dimension that

Sexual violence do not just occur as a result of poverty, but can also be induced by wealth. It is thus imperative that both poor and affluent families can be possible victims of sexual violence but in different contexts. The FGDs indicate that;

“If parents have so much money they don’t care or look after their children, because they don’t have time. It is therefore easy for someone to ‘do drugs’ (get into drugs and get addicted) and even go to unsafe places and get raped. If parents give you a lot of money and freedom, you will obviously go out to drink and find yourself in such a situation” (FGD with boys).

Measures of defilement in terms of forced sex and influenced sex with gifts money or favours are highly correlated with measures of income inequality. Income inequality is therefore a strong indicator on the probability of occurrence and the level of sexual forms of violence, especially in cases of defilement. This evidence can be useful in policies linked poverty reduction and, more specifically, to household income redistribution. The levels of disparity in family income levels are actually useful to explain how the inequality can lead to other constraints in society. The connection between sexual violence and income levels shows (Kevane, 2004) how economic factors link with gender issues. Mukesh (2014) extrapolates the idea arguing that as a single powerful explanatory socio-economic variable, income alone has a great influence on state violence.

Implications of Violence and Income Factors to TVET Education

Keeping girls children in school, beyond primary, into secondary is critical as well as ensuring that schools remain safe and empowering spaces for girls and women, (who are still disadvantaged) where they can learn free from all forms of violence and discrimination (Oando et al, 2014). In order to reach the millions of women and girls that are out of school or have never received any formal schooling, it is equally important to diversify women’s and girls’ educational opportunities throughout life by ensuring their access to quality technical, vocational, literacy and life skills education and training (Own and Associates, 2011). Addressing sexual violence against children promotes gender equality and human rights (Mudlay and Goddard, 2006), and equips the youth with evidence-based knowledge, skills and resources necessary to enable them to make responsible choices about their social and sexual relationships.

The findings here imply that estimating the extent of sexual violence against the youth in relation to the economic factors sheds some light on the possible impact the two variable have on educational outcomes (Acemoglu and Angrist 2000) at different levels including TVET and University. Economists interested in the benefits of schooling have traditionally focused on the private return to education. However, researchers have recently started to investigate whether schooling generates benefits beyond the private returns received by individuals and the determining factors to those returns (Acemoglu and Angrist 2000). While sexual abuse has been also reported to bear a negative impact on children’s educational attainment, the survivors

are also shown to experience reduced income in adulthood as a result of victimization in adolescence, with a lifetime income loss (NAESV, 2011). However, Sub – Saharan African countries are unfortunately reported to be facing

challenges to compile the data of such crimes based on costs due to lack of sufficient capacity in the state facilities handling reported incidents (Dolezal et al, 2009). This gap notwithstanding, education remains to be an essential foundation for economic empowerment. Unfortunately, too many girls and women, remain under-served educationally (Republic of Kenya, 2014) in Kenya.

While some indicators do point to women's advancement educationally particularly in higher education enrollment and degree attainment, they remain few at TVET level because the courses are gendered and presumed to be male oriented. In 2013 there were 50,431 female enrolled in public TVET institutions against 77,260 males (Republic of Kenya, 2014). The Gender parity index was 0.55. Other indicators continue to underscore the need for serious and prolonged attention to the educational agenda for women. Children also bear the burdens of poverty, parental illiteracy worsened by impacts of sexual violence to impede educational progress. In particular, children with illiterate parents are the ones struggling with poverty and often domestic violence. Exploitation and violence against women and girls in specific prevent their successful participation in educational and economic opportunities, thus diminishing their ability to support their families, raise their children well and ensure the future educational and economic success of the next generation. Women continue to confront barriers to full equality at all levels of education. Supporting and strengthening programs that address violence thus would improve enrollment of women (Wainaina, 2006) in post-secondary education. Such efforts shall also provide improved welfare, and childcare support to improve on educational outcomes for the most children at-risk.

It is therefore necessary to enhance equity (Wainaina, 2006) in higher education levels such TVET and University education financing to open up equal opportunities for all students to ensure equal returns. This can be achieved through robust financial aid policies that work for the realities of millions of college students today. This should cover those who are self-sponsored, attending part-time, taking accelerated programs, earning credit for experiential learning, attending online, regular students to complete their programmes.

Conclusions

This research considered the relationship between socio-economic inequalities and violence in a restricted form. Neither regression nor correlation analyses used herein can be interpreted as establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Rather, they only indicate how or to what extent variables are associated with each other. While the relevant variables for the scope have been analysed, there are of course many interesting variables that have not been examined and further analysis may require greater systematic analysis of existing data, enabling us to better understand the context of violence and socio-economic inequality that affects all citizens directly or indirectly. It is however clear from the empirical findings that the prevalence levels of violence against children have inverse relationship with the family income endowment, and

direct relationship with income disparities in society. The proportions of sexual violence incidents against children therefore reduce as the family incomes get higher. The correlation estimating the effect of sexual violence against the youth in relation to the economic factors sheds some light on the possible impact the two variables have on educational outcomes at different levels including TVET education.

Recommendations

While sexual abuse has been reported to bear a negative impact on children's educational attainment, the survivors are also shown to experience reduced income in adulthood as a result of victimization in adolescence with a lifetime income loss. This gap notwithstanding, education remains to be an essential foundation for economic empowerment especially at TVET and University Levels. It is therefore logical to argue that the burdens of poverty and impacts of sexual violence impede educational progress hence it must be addressed through equity measures. This necessitates the need to enhance equity in TVET education financing to open up equal opportunities for all students to ensure equal returns on education. This can be achieved through robust financial aid policies that take into account adequate enlightenment to address sexual violence.

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