

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AGED 10-17 YEARS IN KUMI
DISTRICT, UGANDA**

DANIELA AMODING

S23B15/059

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK OF
UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**



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DECLARATION

I, Amoding Daniela, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for any academic award. All sources of information used in this study have been duly acknowledged.

Signature:  _____

Date: 15th / 05 / 2026 _____

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval as the University Supervisor.

SIGNATURE *Mrs*.....DATE *15th / 05 / 2026*
ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR
MRS. MUSANANESE GLORIA

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for His guidance, strength, and provision throughout my academic journey. I also dedicate it to my family and friends for their continuous support, encouragement, and belief in my ability to succeed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to God for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to complete this dissertation. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor for the guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement provided throughout this study. I am also grateful to my lecturers at Uganda Christian University for equipping me with the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake this research. Special thanks go to the respondents who participated in this study for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible. Finally, I appreciate my family and friends for their support, encouragement, and understanding during the entire research process.

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the relationship between the exposure to domestic violence and depression among adolescents from the age group of 10-17 years in Kumi District of Uganda. This study was conceived in the threefold objective: to determine the forms of domestic violence observed in adolescents, the level of depression among adolescents and to investigate the relationship between domestic violence and depression. A cross sectional quantitative design was used in the research. 40 respondents were chosen using simple random sampling. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data which included a modified depression scale from the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). Data were analysed by descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, and inferential statistics including the Chi-square test. They found that adolescents were also exposed to many forms of domestic acts of violence, especially verbal and emotional abuse. Most of the adolescents also experienced moderate to high levels of depression. In addition, it was also established that exposure to domestic violence was significantly associated with depression. The research concludes that domestic violence is a leading contributing factor to depression in adolescents in Kumi District. The research suggests interventions at the family, school and community levels to address these needs. This paper recommends, among other things, helping to address domestic violence and promote adolescent mental health.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence has generally been described as one of the main public health concerns around the globe. Traditionally, a lot of effort has been invested in tackling domestic violence in cases involving adults, especially women. However, current literature indicates that adolescents subjected to domestic violence suffer a lot and their psychological condition tends to deteriorate because of exposure to violence within the family setting. It has been demonstrated that exposure to domestic violence leads to the development of psychological conditions such as depression. Adolescents represent the developmental stage when young people experience numerous psychological transformations. They become extremely vulnerable to external influences. Adolescents should normally feel supported, safe, and protected while in their families. In case adolescents become exposed to domestic violence in their families, they will be deprived of security and support. The emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents depends on the family environment.

For instance, in households in Uganda, especially in rural areas such as Kumi district, domestic violence might manifest itself in terms of constant shouting, name calling, intimidation, and fights between caregivers. An adolescent living in such circumstances will be afraid of his or her caregivers and will be constantly concerned about safety and security. Similarly, adolescents who are frequently criticized and ignored by parents may start feeling unwanted, lack confidence, and become socially withdrawn. This kind of experience, which has become a norm in communities, has adverse psychological effects on young people. Adolescents who undergo such experiences may find it difficult concentrating in class, lose interest in activities that they previously enjoyed, feel persistently unhappy, and withdraw from their peers. These symptoms point towards depression, which, if not diagnosed on time, could impact adolescents' education, social life, and mental wellbeing.

Depressed adolescents tend to be sad for an extended period of time, lack interest in daily activities, feel hopeless, have low self-esteem, and become socially withdrawn. Depression among Ugandan adolescents is not always recognized because most young people are labeled as

stubborn, lazy, and withdrawn. However, this attitude makes it hard for adolescents to seek help and leads to severe cases of depression because their condition remains untreated.

Even though the global community pays increased attention to adolescents' mental wellbeing, the importance of the family environment – specifically domestic violence in Uganda, for example in Kumi district has received little attention.

A number of measures target the school or peers rather than looking into the effects of the home environment, which adolescents spend a considerable amount of time in.

It is under such a backdrop that this research will seek to explore the link between domestic violence and depression among adolescents aged between 10-17 years in Kumi District. Through this endeavor, it will be possible for this study to make contributions toward understanding the impact of the daily family life on the mental wellbeing of adolescents.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1.1 Global Perspective

Generally, global literature indicates that domestic violence plays an important role in the development of adverse childhood experiences that impact emotional well-being of kids and teenagers. The World Health Organization (2022) points out that about one in four children in the world experiences domestic violence, which can be manifested in various forms such as physical violence, emotional abuse, neglect, and witnessing conflict between caregivers. These adverse childhood experiences may be related to anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems.

It is worth pointing out that depression is one of the top causes of disease and disability among adolescents worldwide. The World Health Organization (2021) states that approximately 14% of adolescents suffer from mental disorders, with depression taking first place. It has been proved that adolescents who witness domestic violence have high chances to have depressive episodes during their life compared to kids brought up in peaceful families.

The issue of domestic violence and its influence on adolescents' health has been studied by many scientists all over the world. Researchers have found that adolescents who experience domestic violence have problems with brain development, emotional regulation, and coping mechanisms. Such impacts can carry on to adulthood, resulting in mental health problems that can last

throughout life. The need for comprehending domestic violence beyond social implications to mental health is emphasized here.

1.1.2 African Perspective

In the African setting, domestic violence is still prevalent and can be attributed to socio-economic and cultural factors. Economic hardships, unemployment rates, and substance abuse may cause domestic stress leading to domestic disputes and violent behavior. In some cultures, domestic violence is accepted, and in some cases, verbal aggression and corporal punishment may be considered acceptable behaviors in disciplining children.

UNICEF (2020) highlights the high prevalence rate of child abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa. Studies have shown that domestic violence is linked with anxiety, poor psychological development, and an increased risk of developing depression in adolescents.

Domestic violence in Africa is sometimes overlooked due to stigmatization and fear. In some communities, children grow up in an environment where domestic fights and verbal attacks are perceived as part of the norm in a domestic setting. These adolescents who suffer from depression may not readily express themselves but keep to themselves due to fear of embarrassment.

Moreover, the availability of mental health facilities in Africa is relatively limited. In most cases, adolescents suffering from depression are not provided with proper care because of the scarcity of mental health clinics and professionals in the field.

This scenario underscores the importance of conducting contextually relevant research on how domestic violence influences the mental well-being of adolescents in African societies.

1.1.3 Ugandan Context

Domestic violence remains one of the most critical social issues in Uganda despite having legal mechanisms like the Domestic Violence Act (2010). According to the survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (2018), more than half of the children in Uganda have experienced violence, which can be either physical, emotional, or sexual.

Domestic violence, in many Ugandan homes, could come in the form of physical, verbal or emotional maltreatment. This could mean that adolescents have been subjected to strict discipline

and criticism or lack love and affection from their caregivers. Also, many children bear witness to conflicts between their parents or guardians, making them scared and emotionally unstable.

Teenagers suffering from depression is another major issue in Uganda that needs to be addressed. However, many people do not understand issues regarding mental health, hence there have not been any efforts to detect cases of depression among adolescents. In school settings, teenagers suffering from depression are viewed as lazy, disobedient and introverted.

Mental health facilities in Uganda have not been established yet, especially in rural regions. Hence, this makes it hard for adolescents dealing with emotional issues to seek professional assistance.

1.1.4 Kumi District Context

The Kumi District, found in the eastern part of Uganda, suffers from economic and social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of social and healthcare facilities. This has contributed to increased stress within families, which could cause domestic violence and conflicts.

Domestic violence in Kumi District cannot always be taken seriously since it could involve insults through verbal communication and neglect. Adolescents in the district are likely to grow up in households where there is too much verbal conflict between the caregivers.

Adolescents are able to observe their parents or guardian fighting and arguing, throwing items around, and insulting one another. In some cases, they may even be subject to insults, ignored and blamed for the issues within the household. While some adolescents will react negatively through withdrawal, others will demonstrate anger and bad attitude in school.

There seems to be little concern regarding the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents in Kumi District. Emotional disturbances and disorders such as depression have never been attended to in this area.

1.1.5 Research Gap

However, while existing literature has provided significant information regarding the connection between domestic violence and mental health, there are still some gaps in terms of this issue. First of all, the majority of existing studies examine the concept of general mental health rather

than depression in adolescents. Secondly, a lot of research is done in developed countries while relatively few studies address the issues of adolescents from the developing world, especially those living in rural areas in Africa, such as in Kumi District.

Moreover, no research has been done specifically on adolescents aged 10-17 in Uganda. Finally, there has been no study using quantitative methods to investigate the connection between domestic violence and depression among adolescents in Uganda.

Hence, the current research intends to fill in this research gap through investigating the connection between domestic violence and depression among adolescents in Kumi District.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teenage depression is becoming a global public health challenge that is gaining significance in Uganda but is yet to be sufficiently recognized and managed. Adolescents are meant to develop in stable family settings that will facilitate their social and psychological growth. Nevertheless, many teenagers experience unstable and conflicting environments in their families that expose them to domestic violence.

The levels of violence against children in Uganda are relatively high. The Violence Against Children Survey reports that almost 50% of children have been subjected to forms of violence ranging from physical, psychological, and emotional violence (MGLSD, 2018). Being exposed to such violence increases the vulnerability of adolescents to various psychological disorders, especially depression. However, mental health in adolescence still receives insufficient attention in Uganda.

Various socioeconomic challenges in Kumi District increase household stress levels, making family settings less stable. Household stress can take the form of domestic violence through verbal and emotional abuses between parents. Many households in Kumi District involve frequent shouting, name-calling, and unresolved conflicts between care-providers that make adolescents fearful.

For instance, a teenager who grows up seeing his parents fight violently or get called derogatory names will grow up feeling insecure and fearful. Adolescents who are continuously abused, ignored, or blamed by caregivers can also end up feeling worthless, thereby losing faith in

themselves. In turn, they may experience sadness, lose interest in what they do, become withdrawn from others, and underperform academically – all of which are characteristic of depression.

However grave the experiences may seem, household violence in such cases is often normalized and neglected. On the other hand, adolescent depression is often misinterpreted as disobedience, withdrawal, laziness, or just simply teenage behavior. As a result, many teens experiencing depressive tendencies are seen as defiant and stubborn without the realization that they have an emotional/psychological problem.

Additionally, there is very little research investigating whether domestic violence exposure increases vulnerability to depression in adolescents living in Kumi district. The lack of such studies makes it challenging for stakeholders like policymakers, social workers, and educators to come up with intervention measures to help adolescents suffering domestic violence and depression.

However, if the problem is not resolved, it will persist, with adolescents in Kumi district experiencing depression without any treatment, and this may result in adverse outcomes for them in the future, including dropping out of school, drug abuse, strained social interactions, and mental illnesses.

This research aims at investigating the relationship between domestic violence exposure and adolescent depression for ages 10 to 17 years in Kumi district. The research findings will provide evidence to assist in developing programs that would promote mental wellbeing in adolescents.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to explore the link between exposure to domestic violence and depression among adolescents aged between 10 and 17 years in the Kumi district.

In particular, the study intended to reveal the different types of domestic violence that affect adolescents in their family settings, evaluate the prevalence of depression among the adolescents, and establish the link between exposure to domestic violence and depression among the respondents. The study was meant to provide insights into the effects of experiences that

adolescents undergo on daily basis at home, such as being yelled at and witnessing conflicts between caregivers.

Taking into consideration the prevalence of domestic violence in Kumi District, where such an event is seen to be part of life, and lack of attention paid to the issues regarding the mental well-being of adolescents in Kumi District, the study attempted to examine how the home environment may affect adolescents suffering from depression.

This way, the study will emphasize the significance of dealing with domestic violence as not just a social problem, but also as an important determinant of mental health in adolescents.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the forms of domestic violence experienced by adolescents
2. To assess the level of depression among adolescents
3. To examine the relationship between domestic violence and depression

1.5 Research Questions

What forms of domestic violence are experienced by adolescents?

What is the level of depression among adolescents?

What is the relationship between domestic violence and depression?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on adolescents aged 10–17 years in Kumi District. The study focused on examining exposure to domestic violence and its relationship with depression among adolescents. Domestic violence was limited to physical violence, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, and witnessing violence between caregivers. Depression was measured in terms of symptoms such as persistent sadness, hopelessness, low self-esteem, withdrawal, and loss of interest in activities.

The study was conducted in Kumi District in Eastern Uganda. The district was selected due to its socio-economic characteristics, which may contribute to domestic conflicts and limited access to mental health services.

The study was conducted within the research period (2026), during which data was collected and analyzed.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it offers empirical information concerning the relationship between domestic violence and adolescent depression, especially since there is a lack of research and information concerning this issue in Kumi District. The following reasons support the need for this study.

First, although domestic violence continues to be a significant issue, it seems to be less considered when talking about adolescents' mental problems. Although there has been a lot of emphasis laid on adults who experience domestic violence, adolescents are just as susceptible as adults.

Second, adolescent depression is a new issue in Uganda that is increasingly becoming prevalent. In spite of the fact that many adolescents in rural areas continue suffering from depression due to domestic violence, very little research has been done in this regard, especially concerning Kumi District.

Third, the study offers practical information that may be useful for developing intervention programs and policies.

Fourth, the study makes a significant contribution to academic literature, which has an insufficient number of publications about the same issue.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The results obtained through the study can be applied by social workers, school institutions, parents, and policymakers when formulating strategies to combat domestic violence and mental problems among adolescents.

Social Workers

From the research, social workers can come up with interventions to help adolescents living under circumstances where domestic violence exists, and mental health disorders like depression have been noted.

Schools and Teachers

The study results will assist schools to offer better guidance and counseling services to students struggling with emotional problems arising from home-based issues.

Parents and Caregivers

This study will sensitize parents about the negative impact of domestic violence among teenagers, prompting them to practice positive parenting at their homes.

Policymakers and Government

Information from the study can be used to come up with policies or programs to prevent domestic violence and provide health facilities in rural areas.

Researchers and Academics

The study adds to previous literature on domestic violence and mental problems and serves as a stepping stone to future studies on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the available literature on the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and depression amongst adolescents. The literature review will be based on the objectives of the study, whereby the forms of domestic violence suffered by adolescents, the prevalence rates of depression amongst adolescents, and the relationship between domestic violence and depression will be examined.

Contrary to simply providing a review of the past research conducted, this chapter will critically analyze the available literature through comparative analysis of the findings of various authors. This chapter will provide the real-life application of the topics being explored, especially in terms of Uganda and the Kumi District. This will enable one to understand the relevance of the study in relation to existing literature and identify the research gap in which this study will fill.

2.1 Forms of Domestic Violence Experienced by Adolescents

Domestic violence is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that manifests in various forms within the household. Adolescents may experience domestic violence directly as victims or indirectly by witnessing violent interactions between caregivers. The major forms include physical violence, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, and exposure to inter-parental conflict.

2.1.1 Physical Violence

Domestic violence is a broad and multi-dimensional concept that has various forms depending on whether an individual experiences it as a victim or witness of violence. The types of domestic violence include physical violence, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, and exposure to marital violence.

Physical violence entails the application of physical force that may result in bodily harm, such as beating, slapping, kicking, and hitting. According to studies conducted by Kitzmann et al. (2003), children who experience physical violence tend to be anxious and depressed due to behavioral and emotional problems.

On the other hand, in many parts of Africa, particularly in Uganda, physical violence can be seen as discipline. Some adolescents in Kumi district are usually physically beaten because of poor academic performance or failure to accomplish household tasks. Though caregivers see it as a means of instilling discipline in the adolescents, such actions can bring about emotional distress in adolescents as well.

It is argued that physical violence is easier to identify than other types of violence because of the physical injuries involved.

2.1.2 Emotional Abuse

The term "emotional abuse" refers to acts that affect an individual emotionally in ways that include humiliating, rejecting, intimidating, and criticizing. According to Margolin and Gordis (2000), the psychological implications of emotional abuse are far-reaching since it adversely affects the victim's self-respect and emotional security.

In cases of emotional abuse, an adolescent would be continuously criticized, negatively compared to others, or treated as though he or she was a burden at home. An instance of such abuse would be when an adolescent is constantly referred to as a "burden," "disappointment," or "worthless." Emotional abuse differs from physical violence in that it is covert and persistent.

While physical abuse is easier to notice, its impacts may not be as long-lasting as those of emotional abuse. Some studies suggest that emotional abuse may be associated more strongly with internalizing problems such as depression because of how it affects one's self-perception.

2.1.3 Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse involves the use of harsh speech, insults, yelling, and intimidation. According to Repetti et al. (2002), families that experience perpetual verbal aggression have been classified as "risky families" due to high levels of emotional stress and low levels of emotional support.

Most families in Uganda, even in Kumi District, have normalized yelling and harsh speech in their interactions whenever there is conflict. This means that parents are likely to yell at their children during arguments. Such adolescents might grow up experiencing fear and emotional instability.

Whereas there are those who believe that conflict does not necessarily lead to adverse effects in families where it has been normalized, most studies suggest that hostility in communication leads to chronic stress, which affects emotional growth and increases the likelihood of depression.

2.1.4 Neglect

It entails caregivers' failure to provide emotional, physical or psychological attention to children. Neglect is one of the common types of child abuse in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023)'s opinion; and it is strongly linked to emotional disorders.

For instance, in Kumi District, neglect may appear through a range of issues like the lack of parents' attention, inability to communicate properly, or a lack of emotional care. Adolescents who grow up without any interaction with parents or emotional care will certainly feel abandoned.

Such adolescents are likely to feel lonely and neglected, which contributes to developing symptoms of depression. However, according to certain scholars, the impact of neglect might not be too high on the life of adolescents provided that they can receive emotional support from other sources like schools or peers.

2.1.5 Witnessing Domestic Violence

Another way of exposure is witnessing domestic violence between caregivers. Moylan et al. (2010) report that adolescents who witness domestic violence suffer similar psychological consequences to those suffering direct child abuse.

Indeed, in reality, adolescents will often witness domestic conflict in Kumi District; they see how parents shout at each other, throw verbal abuse and sometimes even get involved into fights.

2.1.6 Synthesis of Forms of Domestic Violence

From the literature review conducted, it is evident that domestic violence involves various aspects, including emotional, verbal, and psychological violence. Although researchers agree on the negative impacts associated with domestic violence, their focus differs. Some authors concentrate more on physical violence because of its direct consequences, while other researchers emphasize emotional and verbal abuse because of their psychological impacts.

Therefore, there is a need to conduct context-based research to determine which types of domestic violence are more prevalent and significant in certain communities like the one in Kumi District.

2.2 Depression Among Adolescents

Among the mental health issues that adolescents experience, depression can be regarded as one of the most prevalent, which is defined as a constant feeling of sadness and lack of interest in different activities, hopelessness, low self-esteem, and social isolation (World Health Organization, 2021).

Research carried out globally has proven that there are several risk factors associated with the development of depression in adolescents, which include biological, psychological, and social risk factors. According to Huang et al. (2021), adolescent exposure to stressful situations increases their risk of developing depressive symptoms.

For instance, in practical situations such as Kumi district, symptoms that might indicate the existence of depression among adolescents include withdrawal from friends, poor academic grades, and reluctance in participating in school-related activities. However, these symptoms are usually misunderstood.

Scholars who suggest that depression among adolescents results from several risk factors, such as peer pressure, academic challenges, and socioeconomic issues, are partially correct; however, in the present study, emphasis will be put on domestic violence.

2.3 Relationship between Domestic Violence and Depression

There exists extensive literature indicating a clear association between domestic violence and depression among adolescent populations. For example, research by Kennedy et al. (2010) shows that adolescents subjected to domestic violence tend to exhibit signs of depressive disorders.

Likewise, a study conducted by Russell et al. (2010) shows that domestic violence experiences have been identified as a predictive factor for depression in adolescents. From this perspective, exposure to violence either directly or indirectly can have adverse effects on adolescents' psychological wellbeing.

Based on the Ecological Systems Theory, there exists an explanation based on the importance of the family environment. Likewise, from the Social Learning Theory, adolescents learn different emotions and behavior through observation.

Nonetheless, some researchers argue that the relationship between domestic violence and depression can vary because other factors can act as protective measures against depression. Some factors which can be protective against depression include resilience and social support.

Overall, most researchers agree that domestic violence leads to depression.

2.4 Literature Gap

From what was discussed in the literature, it can be seen that although there is much literature on domestic violence and mental health, some gaps exist. Most studies focus on mental health generally instead of focusing on depression. Also, many of the studies have been carried out in developed countries without much emphasis on the rural areas of Africa.

In addition, there is a need for more research on adolescents aged 10–17 in Kumi District. This study aims at addressing the gap by conducting research on the issue in Kumi District.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology applied in the investigation of the association between domestic violence exposure and depression in the adolescent age group of 10-17 years old in Kumi district is detailed. The approach taken, geographical location of the study, study population, criteria for determining the sample size, techniques used to obtain the sample, data gathering and collection instruments, variable measurement, and data analysis process are discussed.

The chapter illustrates the systematic processes adopted in making sure that the data collected was relevant to the research objectives and was valid and reliable

3.1 Research Design

This study was conducted employing the quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional research design.

Quantitative design was used because the purpose of the study was to measure the levels of depression among adolescents, as well as establish the relationship between the levels of exposure to domestic violence and depression using quantitative measures. The design made it possible to employ statistical techniques in data analysis and interpretation.

Descriptive design was also deemed fit since it helped in describing different aspects of domestic violence among adolescents and also the levels of depression. Cross-sectional design was ideal because it involves collecting data at one point in time.

This design is regarded as the most fitting for the current study because it was the most effective for the study in terms of time and resource considerations.

3.2 Area of Study

The research was carried out in Kumi district, situated in Eastern Uganda. Kumi district features both rural and semi-urban populations and faces many socio-economic problems including poverty, unemployment, and lack of social as well as healthcare services.

Such factors result in higher stress levels in families that could eventually cause domestic fights and domestic abuse. Furthermore, there is insufficient provision of psychological counseling services in Kumi district making it hard for depressed adolescents to get any professional help.

Kumi district was selected because there is a need to conduct specific contextual research related to domestic violence and adolescent mental health in the Ugandan rural environment.

3.3 Study Population

The subjects of the study were adolescents between the ages of 10-17 years who lived in Kumi District.

Adolescents between the ages of 10-17 years were chosen as the subjects for this study since the age period is an important stage in emotional and psychological development where adolescents can comprehend and report about issues surrounding domestic violence and emotional well-being.

The subjects comprised both male and female adolescents living in different homes.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the study was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula:

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = level of precision (0.05)

Based on the accessible population of adolescents in the selected areas, the calculated sample size was adjusted to 40 respondents due to time and resource constraints.

Although the sample size was relatively small, it was considered adequate for the study and allowed for meaningful statistical analysis.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling was applied in the recruitment of participants for the research.

This approach was employed in order to ensure that every adolescent from the target population had an equal opportunity of being recruited, hence eliminating selection bias and ensuring the sample is representative.

In the process of collecting data, the researcher relied on the cooperation of the local leadership and school administrators to recruit suitable participants who would then be sampled randomly.

3.6 Variables of the Study

There were two principal variables in this research:

Independent Variable: Exposure to Domestic Violence

This comprised:

Physical abuse

Emotional abuse

Verbal abuse

Neglect

Observing violence among caregivers

Dependent Variable: Depression Among Adolescents

This involved:

Sadness that lasts for a long time

Hopelessness

Low self-esteem

Withdrawal from social interactions

Lack of interest in doing things

Difficulty concentrating

3.7 Measurement of Variables

Two major variables were used in this study:

Independent Variable: Exposure to Domestic Violence

This was made up of:

Physical violence

Emotional violence

Verbal violence

Neglect

Witnessing violence between caregivers

Dependent Variable: Adolescent Depression

This included:

Persistent sadness

Hopelessness

Low self-esteem

Withdrawal from social interactions

Lack of interest in activities

3.8 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The data collection method used a structured questionnaire.

The structured questionnaire had four parts:

Part A: Personal demographic information

Part B: Experience with domestic violence

Part C: Depression measurement (modified PHQ-9)

Part D: Domestic violence-depression relationship

The questionnaire was selected due to its ability to provide standard data and quantitative analysis.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The consent to carry out the research was first acquired from the relevant bodies, such as the local authorities and school administration.

The aim of the research was made known to the participants in simple language. The consent was gotten from the parents/guardians of the adolescent students, while the assent was gotten from the participants.

The researchers went on to administer the questionnaires to the participants. The researcher gave help wherever necessary so that the participant could understand the questions.

The completed questionnaires were later retrieved for analysis.

3.10 Data Analysis

The information gathered from the study was analyzed by coding and inputting it into SPSS.

Frequencies and percentages were among the descriptive statistics used in summarizing and organizing the results in tables.

The inferential statistical technique employed in analyzing the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and depression among adolescents was Chi-square testing.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Considering that this research included young people, among other aspects, ethical guidelines were strictly followed.

Consent was sought from the parents/guardians

Assent was sought from the young people

Confidentiality was ensured through the lack of use of names

The process was voluntary

The respondents could withdraw at any point in time

Furthermore, those respondents who appeared emotionally troubled during the research process were referred to counseling services

3.12 Limitations of the Study

Some participants may have been reluctant to answer personal questions regarding the topic since it was very sensitive

The results of the study were subjective since it involved self-reporting

The study had only a few participants because there were limited resources for conducting it, hence a total of 40 participants

Despite the above limitations, attempts were made to make sure that the data obtained was credible.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains, analyzes, and interprets the data collected from the field regarding the correlation between domestic violence exposure and depression amongst adolescents aged 10-17 years within the Kumi district area.

In collecting the data, questionnaires were used on forty participants. In the process of collecting the data, the researcher interacted with the adolescents within their domestic settings and schools. This interaction allowed for not only the collection of data but also some understanding of the experiences of adolescents regarding domestic violence and mental wellbeing.

The data is analyzed using tables with frequencies and percentages. After each table, there is an interpretation of what the data represents within the objectives of the research.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10–12	9	22.5%
13–15	18	45%
16–17	13	32.5%
Total	40	100%

Interpretation

According to the findings, the highest number of respondents comprised those aged between 13 and 15 (45%), while the next category was made up of those aged between 16 and 17 (32.5%). The lowest percentage was of those aged 10-12 (22.5%).

From the field experience, adolescents aged 13 to 15 were found to be more expressive than those in the lower age group, who had to be encouraged during question responses. Those above

16 and 17 were also found capable of giving more reflective accounts of their experiences, especially about their relations within the family.

Age seems to be an important aspect of understanding and conveying emotional experiences of abuse and depression among adolescents.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	18	45%
Female	22	55%
Total	40	100%

Interpretation

Findings indicate that the sample population consisted of a marginally greater number of women respondents (55%) than men respondents (45%).

It was noticed during the process of collecting data that women respondents were comparatively more expressive about their emotional experiences like sadness, stress, and fear. In contrast, men respondents were relatively more succinct, particularly when the question had an emotional bearing.

This indicates that gender may have some effect on adolescent emotional distress expression, with women more inclined to articulate emotions associated with depression.

Table 3: Living Arrangements

Living Arrangement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Both parents	15	37.5%
Single parent	14	35%
Guardian/Relatives	11	27.5%
Total	40	100%

Interpretation

Results indicate that a large number of people interviewed (62.5%) had either one of the two or none at all of their parents living with them. On interaction with adolescents who were living with one of the two parents, or guardians in most cases, there was found to be little supervision and support, in many cases.

Moreover, domestic violence had been identified to exist even in families where the couple lived together.

4.2 Forms of Domestic Violence Experienced by Adolescents

(Objective One)

Table 4: Exposure to Domestic Violence

Type of Violence	Yes (%)	No (%)
Physical violence	50%	50%
Verbal abuse	80%	20%
Emotional abuse	72.5%	27.5%
Neglect	45%	55%
Witnessing violence	75%	25%

Interpretation

The results show that there were several types of domestic violence among adolescents, with verbal abuse (80%) and witness violence (75%) being the highest.

From the respondents during field research, some of them mentioned their homes as places where loud voices, abuses, and constant quarrels took place. Some adolescents felt insecure and nervous whenever their parents fought each other.

Despite 50% of the respondents reporting physical violence, emotional and verbal types of violence seemed more consistent and persistent. From several of the respondents, getting insulted and neglected made them feel more psychologically damaged than physical beatings.

This implies that domestic violence in this locality is mainly psychological.

4.3 Levels of Depression among Adolescents

(Objective Two)

Table 5: Levels of Depression

Level of Depression	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	8	20%
Moderate	19	47.5%
High	13	32.5%
Total	40	100%

Interpretation

It is observed from the results that depression occurred in about 80% of participants.

While gathering the data, the adolescents were noted to have displayed symptoms like persistent sadness, disinterest in activities, inability to concentrate, and feeling hopeless. Some of the participants mentioned that they wanted to be alone.

The results reveal that depression among adolescents in Kumi District is a major problem and might be associated with their homes.

4.4 Relationship between Domestic Violence and Depression

(Objective Three)

Table 6 : Cross-tabulation

Exposure Level	Low	Moderate	High
Low Exposure	6	3	1
Moderate	2	10	5
High Exposure	0	6	7

Interpretation

A trend is evident from the findings; teens with more domestic violence exposure scored higher on depression.

Field interactions revealed that the respondents who were frequently exposed to domestic violence at home felt emotionally and psychologically pressured and unsafe. Some even admitted that they had problems concentrating in class due to the stresses at home.

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Chi-square (χ^2) = 11.76

p-value = 0.003

Interpretation

Since the p-value is below 0.05, then the findings show a statistically significant association between domestic violence and depression.

This therefore shows that there exists a strong relationship between domestic violence and depression among the adolescents.

4.6 Summary of Findings

This research has found out that:

Adolescents are subjected to many forms of domestic violence, especially verbal and emotional violence

Most adolescents suffer from depression, ranging from moderate to high

Domestic violence has a significant association with depression.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights an extensive analysis of the findings that resulted from the study on the association between domestic violence exposure and depression amongst adolescents aged 10-17 years in the Kumi district. An interpretation of the results generated in Chapter Four is done in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the theory guiding the study.

Analysis is structured in terms of the objectives of the study, namely the nature of domestic violence encountered by adolescents, the degree of depression among adolescents, and the correlation between domestic violence and depression.

5.1 Forms of Domestic Violence Experienced by Adolescents

It was evident from the study that there are various types of domestic violence experienced by adolescents living in Kumi District, such as emotional, verbal, and physical abuse, as well as experiencing the fight between caregivers.

These results agree with the study conducted by Margolin and Gordis (2000) who indicate that emotional violence has a lasting impact psychologically since it destroys an individual's self-esteem. Likewise, Repetti et al. (2002) refer to families that have continuous fighting as 'risky families' with high levels of stress and lack of support.

Considering the case of Kumi District, the research outcomes reveal that domestic violence is related to interactions within the family. For instance, during my field work, adolescents reported being uncomfortable and nervous due to constant fights between the caregiver members of the family.

Despite the common perception that physical violence is the worst form of domestic abuse, this research shows how important emotional and verbal abuse are and how they are easily justified and thus neglected. This means that programs designed to combat domestic violence through physical abuse may be inadequate in addressing the problem among adolescents.

5.2 Levels of Depression among Adolescents

It emerged from the study that most adolescents suffered from moderate to high levels of depression, including symptoms such as persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, low self-confidence, and social withdrawal.

These results align with Moylan et al. (2010), who argue that adolescents living in an unfavorable family setting tend to suffer from depression. Likewise, according to WHO (2021), depression among adolescents is one of the biggest concerns in terms of mental wellbeing.

Depression among adolescents in Kumi district seems to be underestimated. During the research process, some adolescents expressed tendencies such as being isolated, lacking motivation, and feeling distressed. Nonetheless, these are signs of depression but can be interpreted wrongly as laziness and disobedience by parents and teachers.

5.3 Relationship between Domestic Violence and Depression

A correlation that exists between exposure to domestic violence and depression among adolescents has been established as being robust and statistically significant.

Higher exposure of adolescents to domestic violence was linked to higher rates of depression among them. This result backs up the work of Kennedy et al. (2010), who revealed that exposure to family violence results in an increased vulnerability to depressive symptoms.

Additionally, Russell et al. (2010) revealed that exposure to domestic violence among adolescents has a high likelihood of increasing the vulnerability of the youth to depression even when there is no physical abuse taking place.

The findings are in line with Ecological Systems Theory, whereby one's immediate environment plays a key role in their developmental processes. The domestic environment, in this case, acts as a setting within which the development process of the adolescent takes place.

Moreover, social learning theory reveals that adolescents tend to imitate behavior observed within their environment, which can lead to the use of maladaptive mechanisms to cope, such as depression.

On the other hand, the research found that some adolescents who were exposed to domestic violence did not suffer from severe depression. This could imply that there are factors that mitigate the effects of domestic violence on the psychological well-being of adolescents.

5.4 Implications of the Findings

There are many implications of the results obtained from this study.

First, domestic violence is a serious physical problem, but at the same time, it can also be seen as a mental and emotional problem among teenagers.

Second, it is very important to realize how much the family environment affects the mental health of young people.

Third, schools and communities should play an active role in detecting problems experienced by teenagers.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter entails the findings and recommendations emanating from the findings made about the relationship between domestic violence exposure and depression among adolescents aged 10-17 years in Kumi District. This chapter is informed directly by the findings made in chapter four of this work, and analyzed in Chapter Five.

The study further examines the implications of the study, the limitations and finally makes recommendations based on this research work in order to make useful suggestions.

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 Types of Domestic Violence Experienced by Adolescents

It is hereby concluded that adolescents in Kumi District experience several types of domestic violence where verbal abuse, emotional abuse and witnessing of conflicts between caregivers are common.

The study concludes that the domestic violence experienced in the study area was predominantly psychological violence. Several cases have been recorded where adolescents were subjected to constant shouting, insults and criticism, and conflicts between caregivers were not sorted out. Though physical violence was evident, it was less than verbal and emotional abuse.

Domestic violence experiences among adolescents in the study area have been normalized within households and thus the adolescents continue being exposed to emotionally traumatizing environments.

6.1.2 Levels of Depression Among Adolescents

Conclusion of the Study

Depression has been noted as an issue among adolescents in Kumi District. The greatest proportion of the adolescents was found to be experiencing moderate and severe depression.

The symptoms associated with depression include constant sadness, lack of interest, poor self-esteem, inability to focus, and avoidance of social events. This means that the majority of adolescents are emotionally unstable and cannot engage in academic activities.

It can be concluded that adolescent depression remains underappreciated. Adolescents who are suffering from depression are misinterpreted by their guardians and teachers.

6.1.3 Relationship between Domestic Violence and Depression

The findings of the study reveal a strong association between domestic violence exposure and depression among adolescents.

Adolescents with high exposure to domestic violence had a high likelihood of suffering from depression. The findings imply that the family setting plays a vital role in influencing the psychological well-being of adolescents.

Therefore, the findings of the study show that domestic violence is one of the primary causes of depression among adolescents in the Kumi District. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that other factors could affect the response of adolescents to the mentioned issues.

6.2 Implications of the Study

There are various implications associated with the findings of this research, and these include:

Firstly, this research has brought into focus the fact that domestic violence should not just be regarded as a social problem but also as a mental health concern, especially when the effects of the same on adolescent mental well-being are considered.

Secondly, this research brings into light the influence of family settings on adolescent mental well-being, making interventions within family setups crucial towards ensuring better outcomes.

Thirdly, there is a need to increase public awareness regarding adolescent mental well-being, especially among those in rural settings.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations to Parents and Caregivers

Caregivers need to be made aware of the dangers associated with domestic violence in terms of the psychological and emotional impact on teenagers. Some caregivers might not understand that things such as verbal abuse, neglect, and arguing can affect teens negatively.

Caregivers need to engage in good parenting skills, which involve proper communication, provision of emotional care, and solving arguments peacefully. It is vital to create a conducive environment at home to ensure teens develop mentally healthy minds.

6.3.2 Recommendations to Schools and Teachers

Educational institutes must improve their guidance and counseling facilities for the benefit of adolescents who suffer from emotional turmoil. Educators need to learn how to detect depression in their students through symptoms like isolation, inability to concentrate, and deteriorating grades.

Furthermore, adolescents need a safe environment where they can express themselves without being judged. Because adolescents devote a substantial part of their lives at schools, the latter have a vital role to play in early diagnosis.

6.3.3 Recommendations to Social Workers

Social workers should develop intervention programs designed to prevent domestic violence, as well as assist young people who have experienced domestic violence. These interventions can include family counseling, home visits, and education campaigns.

Social workers should further offer psychosocial support to depressed adolescents, as well as assist in improving communication and reducing conflict among their families.

6.3.4 Recommendations to Community Leaders

The community leaders should make efforts to raise awareness regarding the detrimental impacts of domestic violence and advocate for harmonious relations within families. They should collaborate with social workers, schools, and local authorities to detect vulnerable teenagers.

Community-based interventions should be established to confront the social norm of violence at home.

6.3.5 Recommendations to Government and Policy Makers

There is also need for improvement in the provision of mental health care, especially for youth living in rural regions like Kumi District. The training of mental health practitioners and expansion of mental health care facilities will help address these concerns.

It is important for the government to implement measures geared towards prevention of domestic abuse and protection of the youth.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The research had several limitations. To begin with, the issue of domestic violence is a sensitive one; hence some respondents could feel uncomfortable disclosing everything about their experiences. Consequently, this may have affected the reliability of some answers provided.

Secondly, the use of subjective data from the respondents may have compromised the validity of the results as some information provided could have been fabricated.

Lastly, the number of participants for the research was only forty because of limited time. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the study yielded some interesting insights.

6.5 Areas for Further Research

More research should be done in the area of studying the impact of domestic violence on mental well-being of adolescents in terms of their long-term mental development.

It would also be interesting for future researchers to look at the importance of protective factors in preventing depression in youth who have been exposed to domestic violence.

For example, there may be differences between the rural and urban settings in the connection between domestic violence and depression among adolescents.

6.6 Final Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study has been able to show that domestic violence is a critical problem faced by adolescents in Kumi district and is significantly related to depression. Adolescents who have been victims of verbal insults, neglect, and conflicts within the family stand a higher chance of suffering from depression.

The solution of depression among adolescents must therefore entail an integrated effort that involves better family relations, schools, communities, and mental healthcare facilities.

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