

**EFFECT OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
LOCAL GOVERNANCE: A CASE STUDY OF MBARARA CENTRAL DIVISION,
MBARARA DISTRICT**

DAVY ANABEL AMPAIRE

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, Ampaire Anabel Davy, affirm that this work is entirely my own and is the product of my individual efforts. It has not been presented to any institution for an academic qualification.

Signature: 

Date: 11/05/2026

APPROVAL

I hereby approve and submit this dissertation to the academic committee at Uganda Christian University, Mukono, Uganda.

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

Signed:

Date: 18/05/2026

MADAM EDITH NAGADYA

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for His abundant blessings bestowed upon my life, as well as to my family and friends for their generous support in my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I express my gratitude to Almighty God, who has been my source of strength and countless blessings. To my cherished parents, whose unconditional sacrifices and steadfast support have laid the foundation for my aspirations; your love has instilled in me the confidence to focus on my studies without succumbing to peer pressure. Lastly, I would like to honor my dear father; although you are no longer with us due to God's will, your presence continues to inspire me. I promise to make you proud as I pursue success in my academic endeavors.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GBV - Gender Based Violence

DLG - District Local Government

MCD - Mbarara Central Division

UCU - Uganda Christian University

DV - Dependent Variable

IV - Independent Variable

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the impact of gender-based violence on women's involvement in political processes within local governance, specifically focusing on Mbarara Central Division in Mbarara District. The study aimed to: assess how economic abuse affects women's political engagement in local governance, analyze the influence of emotional abuse on their participation, and evaluate the repercussions of physical abuse on their roles in governance.

Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the research incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires and interviews, utilizing purposive as well as simple random sampling techniques. A total of 60 respondents from Mbarara Central Division participated in the study.

Findings indicated that various forms of abuse—namely economic, emotional, and physical significantly hinder women's political participation in Mbarara Central Division. Economic abuse limits women's access to vital resources and diminishes their decision-making authority; emotional abuse negatively impacts their self-esteem and deters them from engaging in political affairs; while physical abuse fosters an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, further restricting their involvement in governance.

Finally, the study proposed several recommendations: implementing extensive financial support programs alongside legal protections to combat economic abuse; establishing targeted emotional support services and counseling for women facing emotional distress; and enforcing stringent laws against physical abuse while creating strong support networks for survivors.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research focused on analyzing the impact of gender-based violence on women's political engagement in local governance, specifically within the Mbarara Central Division of Mbarara District. This chapter outlines the study's background, presents the problem statement, defines the purpose and objectives, delineates the scope of the study, formulates research questions, discusses its significance, and introduces the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the Study

This section encompasses historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual backgrounds.

1.1.1 Historical Background

The evolution of women's political involvement in local governance has undergone considerable transformation over time (Hern, 2020). During the 19th and early 20th centuries, women across many European nations and the United States began advocating for their voting rights and participation in politics through suffrage movements that spurred significant legislative reforms (Cullen & McGing, 2024). In Africa, women's political participation has been influenced by colonial histories and post-independence reforms with varying success rates across different regions (Robinson & Gottlieb, 2021). In Uganda specifically, women's political participation has improved since affirmative action policies were introduced in the 1990s to allocate seats for women in local councils and parliament (Ahikire & Mwiine, 2019). However, despite these advancements, gender-based violence remains a formidable obstacle to women's full involvement in political activities (Anyidoho et al., 2021).

Historically noting, gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue deeply rooted in patriarchal systems and societal norms that have oppressed women for generations (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2020). In Europe and America, GBV has been documented extensively and addressed through evolving legal frameworks alongside feminist movements that underscore its detrimental effects on women's rights and engagement (Håkansson, 2021). In Africa at large and Uganda by extension, GBV continues to impede women's empowerment due to entrenched traditional practices coupled with inadequate enforcement of protective laws (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). Cultural legacies have perpetuated high levels of GBV in Uganda which obstructs women's active participation in politics despite existing progressive policies aimed at fostering gender equality (Bashford-Squires et al., 2022).

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

Feminist Theory As outlined by Egbert & Sanden (2020), feminist theories investigate how women experience oppression based on gender disparities while offering various perspectives for addressing these issues.

Categories of Feminist Thought:

Liberal Feminism: This perspective attributes gender inequality to restricted access to social opportunities such as legal rights and economic resources while advocating for equal rights across education and employment.

Radical Feminism: Proponents argue that gender oppression is entrenched in sexuality itself; they illuminate how violence against women manifests through objectification along with institutional controls from religion to medicine. This viewpoint calls for dismantling patriarchy as well as compulsory heterosexuality to eradicate discrimination against genders.

Marxist and Socialist Feminism: These theories assert that women's subjugation stems from their exploitation via unpaid familial labor. Socialist feminists scrutinize both patriarchy and capitalism as distinct yet interrelated systems contributing to this subjugation while advocating for structural reforms within family roles as well as equitable access to essential resources like education and healthcare.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

Gender-based violence encompasses physical, sexual, or psychological harm inflicted by intimate partners or others based on gender inequalities (Anyidoho et al., 2021); Enaifoghe et al. further define it as any detrimental act directed toward an individual due solely to their gender which results in physical or mental harm entrenched within cultural norms. For purposes of this study, GBV is identified as a range of harmful behaviors involving economic control or abuse including emotional distress or outright physical violence that collectively undermine women's capacity for political engagement. The dimensions examined include economic violence (such as financial manipulation), emotional abuse (including intimidation), and physical aggression all significantly affecting women's ability to participate actively in local governance processes.

Women's political participation refers specifically to their involvement in decision-making processes at a community level including voting behavior or candidacy efforts within local

government structures (Jabeen & Iqbal; Milazzo & Goldstein). This study defines such participation by assessing various dimensions like voter registration rates or leadership roles undertaken by women aimed at influencing local governance dynamics.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

In Uganda today, despite some strides towards improved representation women's participation remains hindered by persistent challenges; currently holding about one-third of local council seats shows progress but still falls short of achieving balanced representation (Women U.N., 2021). Societal expectations along with structural barriers continue obstructing active female engagement within politics (Ahikire & Mwiine). Issues such as GBV alongside political intimidation also diminish female willingness or ability to partake fully in these realms (Krook & Sanín).

While initiatives geared towards economically empowering women exist within Mbarara District they show potential benefits toward enhancing political involvement significant obstacles remain due largely to longstanding cultural biases paired with insufficient support networks designed explicitly for women's advancement (Sanín). Current statistics suggest improvements are evident yet systemic barriers persistently hinder more rapid change towards achieving equitable representation (Ebron et al.,2024). Addressing these complexities stands crucial if progress toward greater gender equality is desired within Mbarara Central Division's political landscape

1.2 Problem Statement

Ideally, women's involvement in local governance should be strong and equitable, ensuring equal representation and active participation (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2020). However, in Uganda, particularly in Mbarara district, women's political engagement is severely limited. Evidence indicates a notable decrease in women's political activity across various aspects. For example, only 24% of women in Mbarara Central Division are registered voters compared to 42% of their male counterparts (Cullen & McGing, 2024). Furthermore, the percentage of women running for local office has dropped to 15%, highlighting a significant inequality (Ahikire & Mwiine, 2019). The proportion of leadership positions occupied by women in local governance has also fallen to 20%, signaling a concerning trend (Håkansson, 2021). These issues may stem from enduring cultural norms, socio-economic obstacles, and occurrences of gender-based violence (GBV), which contribute to intimidation and further discourage

women's political participation (Bardall et al., 2020). If these challenges remain unaddressed, ongoing gender inequality in political representation will continue alongside weakened democratic processes and stunted community development (Robinson & Gottlieb, 2021).

Moreover, despite extensive research on women's political participation, there exists a considerable gap regarding the specific influence of GBV on this participation within local governance. Previous studies by scholars such as Ebron et al. (2024) and Bashford-Squires et al. (2022) have examined various facets of women's empowerment and political involvement. Nonetheless, the intersection between GBV and its direct effects on women's political activities especially within Mbarara Central Division has not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to bridge this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of how GBV impacts women's engagement in local governance specifically within Mbarara Central Division.

1.3 Major Objective of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the impact of gender-based violence on women's political participation in local governance: a case study focusing on Mbarara Central Division.

1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the impact of economic abuse on women's political engagement within local governance in Mbarara Central Division.
2. To analyze how emotional abuse affects women's political involvement in local governance within Mbarara Central Division.
3. To evaluate the influence of physical abuse on women's participation in local governance within Mbarara Central Division.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does economic abuse affect women's political engagement within local governance in Mbarara Central Division?
2. What is the impact of emotional abuse on women's involvement in local governance within Mbarara Central Division?

3. In what ways does physical abuse influence women's participation in local governance within Mbarara Central Division?

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study encompasses three dimensions: content scope, geographical scope, and time scope.

1.6.1 Content Scope

This research focuses specifically on evaluating: The effect of economic abuse on women's political participation. The impact of emotional abuse on women's engagement and the relationship between physical abuse and women's involvement in local governance.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The investigation is centered around Mbarara Central Division located in Western Uganda. The community predominantly engages in subsistence agriculture coupled with small-scale income-generating activities. Women face significant barriers related to political engagement, economic empowerment, and access to social services challenges that are intensified by high rates of reported gender-based violence (GBV) prevalent throughout the area. By concentrating on this specific geographic context, the researcher seeks to conduct a thorough examination into how GBV influences women's experiences with an aim towards informing targeted interventions tailored to meet community needs.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The research draws upon scholarly works published between 2019 and 2024 to ensure a contemporary understanding of how gender-based violence (GBV) affects women's political participation alongside their economic conditions and social welfare within Mbarara Central Division.

1.7 Justification for the Study

This study is warranted due to an urgent need to address elevated instances of gender-based violence affecting households throughout Mbarara Central Division. Gaining insights into specific forms and consequences associated with GBV can facilitate more effective intervention strategies aimed at promoting women's active role in local governance.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings from this research will directly enhance governmental initiatives aimed at fulfilling national commitments towards gender equality and empowering women as outlined by frameworks like the National Gender Policy and Sustainable Development Goals. A thorough exploration into how GBV undermines women's engagement politically as well as their economic status will assist policymakers in crafting targeted strategies that effectively support these objectives.

Additionally, this study contributes valuable empirical evidence regarding the multifaceted impacts stemming from GBV within Uganda's context. By addressing this critical knowledge gap it encourages further scholarly investigation into related issues while supporting developments for more contextualized theories and frameworks.

Employing a participatory approach ensures that voices from affected communities are amplified; thus findings will be attuned directly to their needs fostering community-led strategies against GBV while enhancing female empowerment efforts.

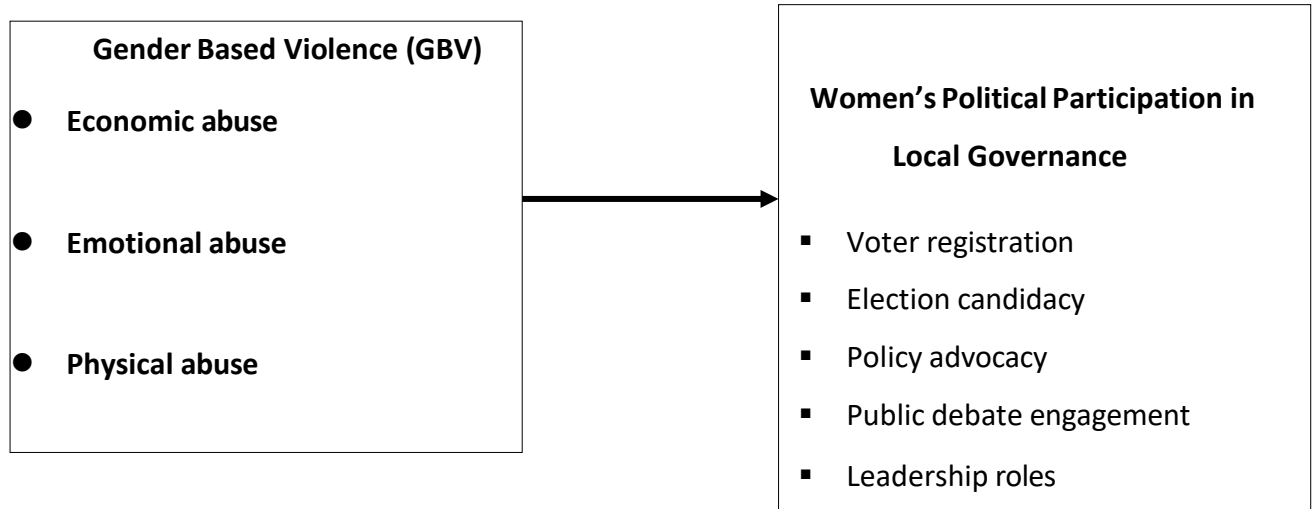
Finally, an exhaustive analysis connecting GBV with marginalized statuses experienced by women politically can empower NGOs and activists with necessary data required for designing inclusive interventions that better cater toward enhancing support mechanisms for these populations.

1.9 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variable

Dependent Variable



Source: Adapted from Nguyen (2022) with modifications made by researcher (2025)

The conceptual framework illustrates how different forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) including economic abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse negatively affect women's ability to engage politically at various levels such as voter registration rates or candidacy aspirations along with overall leadership roles held within local government structures.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter encompasses a conceptual review, an examination of relevant literature, a summary, and an identification of gaps in the existing literature.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a prevalent issue that has been analyzed and understood in various ways by different scholars. Jabeen & Iqbal (2020) define GBV as encompassing physical, sexual, and psychological abuse occurring in both public and private spheres, directed at individuals based on their gender or sex. This type of violence often stems from societal norms and power imbalances that perpetuate discrimination and inequality (Anyidoho et al., 2021). According to Sumbas & Koyuncu (2019), GBV includes a range of harmful actions such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, and human trafficking, which are prevalent across cultures and reflect deep-seated gender biases and power relations.

The concept of GBV is also tied to broader issues of gender equality and human rights. Håkansson (2021) notes that GBV not only infringes upon individual rights but also significantly hinders the progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Robinson & Gottlieb (2021) argue that effectively addressing GBV requires comprehensive legal frameworks, robust law enforcement mechanisms, and cultural shifts that challenge detrimental gender stereotypes. Bardall et al. (2020) highlight that GBV serves as a strategy to reinforce gender hierarchies while obstructing women's participation in various fields such as politics and governance, thereby undermining social justice and democratic processes.

Various researchers underscore the complex nature of GBV and advocate for a comprehensive approach to address it. Córdova & Kras (2020) emphasize the necessity for collaborative efforts among government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community entities to create environments conducive for survivors and ensure accountability for perpetrators. Enaifoghe et al. (2021) stress the importance of societal awareness and education in transforming attitudes and behaviors that sustain GBV. Krook & Sanín (2020) assert that sustainable advancements against GBV require tackling underlying socio-economic factors while promoting gender-sensitive policies aimed at protecting vulnerable

populations. Rezwana & Pain (2021) further assert that recognizing the intersectionality within GBV how it impacts different groups uniquely—is essential for crafting effective interventions and support systems.

2.1.2 Women's Participation in Local Governance

The term "women" encompasses a diverse array of identities beyond mere biological distinctions; it includes individuals who identify with femininity as well. Bonvillain (2020) notes that women form a heterogeneous group whose identities are shaped by various socio-cultural, political, and economic factors. The understanding of “women” has evolved to incorporate nuanced intersections with race, class, sexuality, among other social categories expanding beyond traditional gender confines into a more inclusive perspective that acknowledges all women’s identities regardless of their specific circumstances (Rioux et al., 2022).

Women's participation entails their active involvement across social, political, and economic landscapes (Yemenu, 2020). More specifically, women’s participation in governance refers to their roles in policy-making processes as well as their presence in leadership positions within both governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (Rasheed et al., 2020). Kabeer (2021) posits that meaningful participation necessitates not only adequate representation but also empowering women to influence outcomes effectively within governance structures underscoring the need for supportive environments where women can access opportunities freely express themselves publicly or privately.

Contemporary academic studies have extensively documented the significance of women's contributions within governance frameworks. For instance, Imburgia et al. (2021) affirm that increasing female representation in administrative roles fosters more inclusive policy-making reflective of community needs from diverse perspectives. Research shows that women engaged in governance tend to prioritize issues such as social welfare provision, healthcare accessibility, education enhancement, as well as combating gender-based violence (Imburgia et al., 2021). Furthermore, Bjarnegård & Donno's analysis emphasizes how women's involvement enhances inclusivity alongside accountability within governing institutions contributing positively towards democratic society formation. Bjarnegård & Donno(2024) argue holistically viewing women's engagement is vital for fostering social justice coupled with sustainable development initiatives.

2.2 Related Literature Review

2.2.1 Effect of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

In their research, Jabeen & Iqbal (2020) highlighted the detrimental effects of economic abuse on women's involvement in local governance within Pakistan. They found that such abuse, which encompasses restrictions on financial access and control over monetary resources, significantly impedes women's political engagement. Anyidoho et al. (2021) affirmed this perspective, noting that women's political agency is often limited by their economic dependence on men. The study indicated that women subjected to economic abuse are less likely to attain financial independence, thereby perpetuating their marginalization in political spheres.

Sumbas & Koyuncu (2019) analyzed how economic abuse affects women's political empowerment in Turkey, concluding that it obstructs their access to vital resources and opportunities necessary for meaningful political participation. Håkansson (2021) echoed these findings, pointing out that women facing economic abuse are frequently excluded from political activities due to insufficient funds for campaigning or other forms of engagement. This cycle of economic control contributes to ongoing political disempowerment.

Robinson & Gottlieb (2021) examined the intersection of economic abuse and women's political roles within matrilineal societies in Africa, revealing that even in cultures where women traditionally wield more influence, economic abuse can significantly limit their participation. Bardall et al. (2020) supported this assertion by framing economic abuse as a specific form of political violence targeting women and hindering their full participation in the public arena. The authors stressed the necessity for policies aimed at mitigating economic abuse to promote greater female involvement in politics.

Córdova & Kras (2020) explored how economic abuse constrains women's political participation across Latin America, finding that manipulation of financial resources notably restricts women's capacity to engage politically. Enaifoghe et al. (2021) similarly identified economic abuse as a critical barrier deterring South African women from local governance involvement; they argued that without financial autonomy, women are less inclined to participate or pursue electoral positions.

Krook & Sanín (2020) investigated various countries' experiences with economic abuse's impact on female political engagement, concluding it acts as a form of political violence preventing essential access to resources needed for participation. Prillaman (2023) supported this viewpoint by asserting that such abuses limit women's abilities to join political organizations or seek office, ultimately constraining their representation within local governance structures.

Research conducted by Rezwana & Pain (2021) focused on the implications of economic abuse during disasters on women's civic engagement, highlighting how such circumstances exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and hinder participation. Michelis (2024) reinforced this claim by indicating that instances of economic control within gender-based violence services further diminish women's ability to engage locally.

Liu's (2022) investigation into gender disparities in Asian political landscapes underscored how significant a role economic abuse plays in widening the gender gap through limitations placed on women's financial independence and agency regarding politics. Dahlum et al. (2022) corroborated these findings as they outlined how addressing issues surrounding economic abuse is crucial for enhancing women's empowerment and advancing gender equality.

Cullen & McGing's (2024) research revealed similar trends specific to Ireland's local government dynamics; they found that control over financial resources severely restricts women's engagement opportunities and aspirations for public office roles. Hern's work from 2020 highlighted similar obstacles faced by African women under electoral regimes where access to necessary funding remains limited due to systemic abuses.

2.2.2 Effect of Emotional Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

Milazzo & Goldstein (2019) emphasized the adverse consequences emotional abuse has on women's civic involvement in developing nations—indicating it undermines self-esteem and willingness to participate actively within local government structures through verbal insults and psychological manipulation tactics observed during such abusive incidents.

Supporting this notion, Sumbas & Koyuncu (2019) argued emotional abuses not only compromise mental well-being but also foster an environment characterized by fear which discourages active political engagement among affected individuals. Mlambo & Kapingura's

study from 2019 similarly noted emotional maltreatment plays a pivotal role contributing towards diminished self-worth among women—a significant hurdle inhibiting their full-fledged incorporation into politics across regions like SADC.

Krook & Sanín's analysis explored instances wherein female politicians encounter emotional harassment impacting their careers negatively; they discerned patterns involving intimidation leading towards reduced activism levels or withdrawal from public life altogether—reinforced further by Bardall et al.'s assertion regarding emotional trauma serving as an instrument used perpetually maintaining existing gender hierarchies while stifling ambitions toward seeking office positions among females participants alike.

Furthermore, Enaifoghe et al. (2021)'s observations indicate societal norms often trivialize reports surrounding emotional abuses experienced politically—leading many instances unreported thereby fostering cycles endemic underrepresentation amidst marginalized groups engaged politically today.

According to Liu's (2022) study on gender inequalities in political participation across Asia, emotional abuse significantly hinders women's involvement in local governance. Liu found that women who experience emotional abuse are less inclined to engage in politics or pursue governmental positions. This observation aligns with Cullen & McGing's (2024) findings, which indicate that emotional abuse creates a hostile environment that discourages female political participation. Hern (2020) also highlighted that emotional abuse is often used to undermine the credibility of women candidates and deter them from seeking office, typically manifesting as public humiliation and derogatory comments.

Galligan & Buckley (2023) explored the impact of emotional abuse on women's political engagement in Ireland. Their research revealed that such abuse notably diminishes women's political activity, including instances of cyberbullying and defamation. Supporting this view, Michelis (2024) noted that emotional abuse cultivates a climate of fear and intimidation, inhibiting women's active participation in politics. Additionally, Ebron et al. (2024) pointed out that emotional abuse adversely affects not only individual women but also undermines women's movements and advocacy efforts, thereby weakening their influence within local government.

Robinson & Gottlieb's (2021) examination of the gender gap in political participation among matrilineal societies in Africa identified emotional abuse as a considerable barrier for women seeking careers in politics; it often manifests through familial pressures and social exclusion. Prillaman (2023) corroborated this by demonstrating how forms of emotional abuse—such as verbal assaults and public shaming—significantly reduce the likelihood of women pursuing public office. Similarly, Rezwana & Pain (2021) emphasized that incidents of emotional abuse can increase during natural disasters like cyclones, further exacerbating gender inequality and obstructing women's political involvement.

Burnet (2019) investigated the effects of emotional abuse on Rwandan women's representation within local politics and found it severely limits their participation. This includes both verbal threats and physical intimidation. Sharma (2020), supporting this conclusion, argued that such emotional trauma fosters a fearful atmosphere discouraging women from entering the political sphere. Kenyatta (2023) also noted that societal prejudice and stigma lead to emotional distress among women, hindering their pursuit of leadership roles and overall engagement in political activities.

Schneider & Carroll's (2020) research on violence against women during elections highlighted that emotional abuse is a widespread issue significantly affecting female political participation. They asserted that psychological intimidation and public disparagement discourage women from running for office or engaging in electoral processes. This finding is echoed by Ackah-Baidoo et al. (2022), who reported that social exclusion and verbal harassment serve as deterrents to women's political involvement. Furthermore, Burnet observed that such abusive dynamics contribute to the underrepresentation of women in local governance by perpetuating an unwelcoming political climate.

Dahlum et al. (2022) conducted a study examining the relationship between women's political empowerment and economic development, concluding that emotional abuse represents a major obstacle to female political engagement. They argued that this form of maltreatment not only adversely impacts mental health but also erodes women's confidence and ability to participate politically. Håkansson's (2021) findings support this notion by demonstrating how discrimination and gender bias associated with emotional abuse notably diminish women's political activity in Sweden. Moreover, Bashford-Squires et al. (2022) indicated that economic manipulation linked with emotional control further exacerbates gender disparities while preventing active female involvement in politics.

2.2.3 Effect of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

The influence of physical abuse on women's involvement in local governance in Pakistan was analyzed by Jabeen & Iqbal (2020). Their research revealed that physical violence significantly diminishes women's willingness to engage in political activities, alongside adversely affecting their health and overall well-being. Similarly, Anyidoho et al. (2021) noted that such violence creates an atmosphere of intimidation and fear, which deters women from participating in local government. Their study conducted in Ghana indicated that women who have experienced physical abuse are less likely to attend community meetings or seek local office due to the fear of further violence.

Håkansson (2021) supported these findings by showing that women facing physical abuse in Sweden are less inclined to pursue political careers because of the psychological trauma and fear of public scrutiny and retaliation they experience. In Turkey, Sumbas & Koyuncu (2019) examined women's empowerment at the local level and identified physical abuse as a major obstacle to political participation. They argued that while physical abuse impacts women's health, it also erodes their confidence and self-esteem key components for engaging politically.

According to Robinson & Gottlieb's (2021) study on matrilineal tribes in Africa, physical abuse is a significant factor contributing to the gender gap in political participation. Their findings indicated that the stigma surrounding physical abuse often discourages women from participating in local governance. Furthermore, Bardall et al. (2020) found that such violence constitutes gendered political aggression that maintains male dominance and discourages female political engagement.

Córdova & Kras (2020) highlighted the profound effect of physical abuse on women's political participation through their investigation into the effectiveness of women's police stations addressing violence against women. They discovered that those who reported experiencing physical abuse were more likely to withdraw from politics out of fear of retaliation. Enaifoghe et al. (2021) emphasized the prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa, arguing it fosters a culture of fear preventing women from engaging politically or taking part in local governance.

In their examination of harassment faced by female politicians, Krook & Sanín (2020) found that physical abuse presents a substantial barrier to women's entry into politics. They asserted

that both actual assaults and threats create a hostile environment deterring women from active political participation or candidacy. Research by Prillaman (2023) indicated that Indian women subjected to physical abuse within the political sphere are less likely to engage with or be represented in politics due to concerns for their safety.

Rezwana & Pain (2021) explored gender-based violence during cyclone events in Bangladesh and found that experiences of physical abuse hindered women's ability to participate politically. Their study concluded that heightened trauma associated with disaster situations led physically abused women to be less engaged politically due to fears surrounding potential further violence. Additionally, Michelis (2024) discovered among young women accessing services related to gender-based violence that experiences of assault significantly impaired their capacity for political advocacy and involvement in local governance.

Liu's (2022) research into gender disparities in Asia revealed that physical abuse is a critical factor dissuading women from participating actively in local governance. Liu noted a correlation between experiencing such abuse and reduced likelihoods for involvement in political activities or candidacy efforts a finding echoed by Cullen & McGing (2024), who observed how abusive environments deter female political engagement. Hern (2020) pointed out how tactics like public humiliation and assaults are commonly employed against female candidates as a means of undermining their credibility while dissuading them from seeking electoral positions.

Schneider & Carroll's (2020) analysis focused on violence against women during elections, revealing it as a pervasive concern impacting women's participation rates significantly. They argued both assaults and threats serve as deterrents against running for office or engaging fully within electoral processes. Ackah-Baidoo et al. (2022) similarly found social exclusion paired with harassment contributes substantially to hindering women's engagement politically; Burnet (2019) observed this type of violence perpetuates underrepresentation by fostering an unwelcoming atmosphere within local governance spheres.

2.3 Summary and Gap in Literature

The literature reveals notable gaps regarding the combined effects of economic, emotional, and physical abuses on women's political engagement. Research conducted by Jabeen & Iqbal (2020) along with Sumbas & Koyuncu (2019), indicates both financial and physical abuses obstruct individuals' political participation but often lack depth concerning

interactions with emotional forms of abuse. Moreover, there has been limited exploration into how various forms interact within different socioeconomic contexts or cultural settings.

While studies authored by Liu (2022) and Krook & Sanín (2020) acknowledge these issues, they do not sufficiently address how diverse types of abuses collectively influence women's agency across varied circumstances. This study aims to bridge these gaps by thoroughly examining interactions among different forms of abuse alongside their cumulative impact on women's engagement within politics.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the methodologies employed in this research. It covers the research design, target population, research area, sample size and selection techniques, types and sources of data, along with the instruments for data collection and analysis procedures utilized in the study.

3.2 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was implemented for this study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being examined and to ensure thoroughness in the instruments used. The qualitative approach articulated either explicitly or implicitly the aims of qualitative research, the role of the researcher, various stages of inquiry, and data analysis methods, while the quantitative approach remained objective, deductive, and focused on numerical quantification and result generalization.

3.3 Study Population

The intended study population consisted of 70 individuals from both management and non-management positions within Mbarara Central Division in Mbarara District.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

For this study, simple random sampling was employed to determine the sample size, alongside purposive sampling for selecting respondents when appropriate. The sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula (1960), which states:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{70}{1 + 70(0.05)^2} = 60 \text{ Respondents.}$$

n = 60

With n=number of sample

N=total population

e=level of significance 0.05

Thus, the resulting sample size was determined to be 60 respondents.

Table 3.1: Population and Selected Sample

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling technique	Method of Data Collection
Women elected leaders in different positions	23	20	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire
Opinion leaders	40	32	Simple random sampling	Interviews
NGOs Forum	5	3	Purposive sampling	Interviews
Gender Officer in MDLG	2	1	Purposive sampling	Interviews
TOTAL	70	60		

Source: Field data, 2026

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

Simple Random Sampling

In this study, simple random sampling facilitated obtaining a representative sample by randomly selecting employees and directors to prevent bias. This probability sampling method involves an initial random selection followed by subsequent selections at fixed intervals until reaching the desired sample size. This technique is robust as it minimizes bias.

Purposive Sampling

Respondents were chosen based on their presumed possession of specific characteristics believed to provide insight into how Gender-Based Violence affects women's participation in local governance. Purposive sampling was deemed suitable as it involved selecting participants who met predefined criteria established by the researcher.

3.5 Data Sources

The research utilized both secondary data from journals as well as primary data collected directly from respondents in Mbarara Central Division through self-administered questionnaires.

3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data was gathered using a survey questionnaire deemed appropriate for social survey research where participants are literate enough to complete it independently. The questionnaires included both structured questions for straightforward tabulation and open-ended questions allowing for richer responses pertaining to key variables under investigation.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were sourced from existing reports and journals relevant to this study's topic as well as insights gained from previous research conducted by various scholars on similar subjects within that particular institution.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire

The primary tool for data collection was a questionnaire designed specifically to align with the research objectives, aiming to elicit genuine responses to the research questions. This tool was distributed among both management and staff at Mbarara Central Division in Mbarara District. The choice of questionnaires was driven by their ease of use and convenience for gathering information from busy participants, such as those employed in the organization.

3.7 Measurement of Variables

The structured questionnaire incorporated a series of Likert scale statements ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to assess the variables under investigation. Each dimension of the variables was represented by multiple items, ensuring thorough coverage and depth. Responses were aggregated to generate composite scores for each variable, which facilitated statistical analysis. This methodology enhanced both the reliability and validity of the measurements, allowing for accurate quantification and comparison across different constructs within the study. The approach established a solid framework for hypothesis testing while reinforcing the overall rigor of the research.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

To verify that the data collection tools effectively captured accurate and clear information relevant to each study objective, they were pretested on a smaller sample drawn from various population categories, thereby assuring validity and reliability.

Validity

Validity refers to how accurately research outcomes reflect the intended phenomena being studied. It evaluates whether results derived from data analysis genuinely represent the target constructs. This study utilized content validity, assessing how well data collected through specific instruments reflects a particular conceptual domain or indicators. To ensure content validity, all items measuring study variables were carefully constructed. The researcher sought guidance from a supervisor before conducting pretests on these instruments; any ambiguous questions identified during this process were refined or eliminated to enhance data quality. To maintain rigor in qualitative assessment, a respondent validation process was implemented as suggested by Solomon & Podgursky (2016), ensuring stability in qualitative findings through checks for completeness after data collection.

Reliability

Reliability assesses the consistency of results yielded by research instruments over repeated trials. The test-retest method was employed to evaluate instrument reliability; this involved administering identical instruments twice to the same group of subjects. A suitable group of respondents was selected for this purpose—the instruments were administered initially and then readministered after one week, followed by correlating results from both administrations to determine reliability coefficients. A coefficient score of 0.6 or higher indicated that an instrument could be deemed reliable.

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Data

For addressing all study objectives, SPSS software was utilized for data entry, editing, cleaning, and sorting processes. This program facilitated univariate and bivariate analyses yielding descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations based on responses from a five-point Likert scale questionnaire—this provided insights into general trends regarding each question via mean values. To explore relationships

among variables further, bivariate multivariate analyses such as Pearson correlation and regression analysis were applied where appropriate to evaluate how dependent variables influenced independent ones; significance levels were set at $P=0.05$ according to Solomon & Podgursky (2016), who emphasize examining interrelations within datasets using correlations or regressions.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data analysis concerning three study objectives employed content analysis techniques whereby responses recorded in interview guides were meticulously reviewed for thematic classification; frequency counts determined response prevalence across themes.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured an introductory letter from UCU's Department of Human Resource Management presented to Mbarara Central Division's management along with permission obtained from local government officials in Mbarara District prior to engaging respondents—this authorization enabled her conduct of the study effectively. Questionnaires were distributed among targeted respondents across selected departments while maintaining strict confidentiality throughout participant interactions; appropriate introductions preceded engagement with all individuals involved. After two days, completed questionnaires were gathered for report compilation.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

Financial constraints posed significant challenges during data collection efforts as limited funding restricted necessary support activities; additionally, some respondents intentionally withheld information about organizational aspects

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings identified during the research. The results are aligned with the study's objectives and documented in percentage terms. Additionally, the data has been coded into frequency tables and figures, calculated as percentages and presented throughout this section.

4.1 Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The background characteristics of the respondents were crucial since they included individuals of both genders, varied marital statuses, and different age groups from diverse backgrounds. This approach aimed to capture a wide range of perspectives and objective feedback, enhancing the validity of the study.

4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

The research examined the gender distribution among respondents in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara District.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Males	36	60
Females	24	40
Total	60	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, it was revealed that 60% of respondents were male and 40% were female, indicating that males contributed more information than females during this study.

4.1.2 Age of the Respondents

The investigation also focused on determining the respondents' ages within Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara District.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage%
20-29	28	46.7
30-39	24	40.0
40 and above	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2026

According to Table 4.2, a significant portion (46.7%) of participants fell within the age range of 20-29 years old, while those aged between 30-39 years made up 40%. Furthermore, only 13.3% were aged 40 or older, suggesting that most employees in Mbarara Central Division are predominantly in their youth.

4.2 Level of Education of Respondents

The study also aimed to assess educational attainment among respondents and its potential influence on women's political participation within Mbarara Central Division.

Table 4.3: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage%
University/college diploma	25	41.7
Bachelor degree	20	33.3
Master degree	8	13.3
Phd	7	11.7
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data, 2026

As shown in Table 4.3, a substantial proportion (41.7%) completed a University or College diploma; followed by those holding bachelor's degrees at 33.3%. Additionally, Master's degree holders constituted only 13.3%, while PhD holders represented the smallest group at

11.7%. This indicates that a large percentage of respondents possess a commendable level of education which equips them to understand and engage with the topic effectively—thus ensuring their responses are credible.

4.3 Effect of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Table 4.4: Response on the Effect of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation

STATEMENT	Mean	Std. dev
Women in this community are financially controlled by their partners, which limits their ability to engage in political activities	4.02	0.996
Lack of access to personal or family funds prevents women from participating in local governance	3.91	1.085
Economic abuse affects women's ability to campaign effectively for political positions	4.15	0.589
Financial threats or manipulation by partners discourage women from pursuing political roles	4.28	0.510
Economic dependence on partners limits women's decision-making power in political matters	3.88	1.033
Economic abuse prevents women from attending political meetings and events	3.91	1.085

Source: primary Data (2026)

Mean interpretation guide

Mean ranges	Response mode	Interpretation
3.5-5.0	Strongly Agree and Agree	High/large extent
2.5-3.4	Not sure	Moderate
0-2.4	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Low /small extent

The results in table 4.4 indicate that, on average, a significant number of respondents reported experiencing financial control or limitations imposed by their partners, which restricts their involvement in political activities (Mean = 4.02). This suggests that a primary barrier to women's participation in politics is economic control.

The research also revealed that many respondents believe that limited access to personal or family finances has obstructed their engagement in local governance (Mean = 3.91). This emphasizes the influence of financial dependency on women's roles in governance.

Moreover, the data show that a considerable portion of respondents agreed that economic abuse has adversely affected their ability to effectively campaign for political office (Mean =

4.15). This highlights the challenges women face in securing the necessary resources for political engagement.

A notable number of respondents strongly concurred that threats or manipulation concerning finances by their partners have deterred them from seeking political positions (Mean = 4.28). Such high levels of agreement illustrate the profound effects of economic abuse on women's political aspirations.

Additionally, the findings suggest that most respondents feel that dependence on their partners financially has constrained their decision-making authority regarding political issues (Mean = 3.88), indicating how financial reliance can diminish women's agency in political contexts.

Finally, it was noted that, on average, many respondents agreed that economic abuse has prevented them from attending political meetings and events (Mean = 4.00). This indicates that economic abuse significantly hinders women's active participation in political processes.

Overall, these findings imply that economic abuse serves as a significant obstacle to women's involvement in local governance within Mbarara Central Division, considerably limiting both their engagement and effectiveness in political roles.

4.3.1 Economic Abuse and Women's Ability to Participate in Local Governance

In interviews conducted with selected opinion leaders within district-level organizations, NGOs, and the Gender Officer at Mbarara District Local Government, perspectives were gathered regarding how economic abuse affects women's participation in local governance within Mbarara Central Division.

Some responses included:

“Economic abuse is one of the most effective ways to silence women. How can they be expected to take on leadership roles when they struggle with managing their own finances?”

— **Gender Officer**

“The financial dependencies fostered by economic abuse trap women in a cycle where they cannot afford to engage politically or even consider leadership opportunities.”

— **Opinion Leader**

4.4 Emotional abuse and women's political participation

Table 4.5: Responses regarding the effect of emotional abuse on women's political participation

STATEMENT	Mean	Std.dev
Emotional abuse from partners diminishes women's confidence in participating in local governance	3.99	0.967
Negative comments and psychological manipulation discourage women's political involvement	3.78	1.050
Fear of emotional repercussions affects women's willingness to engage in political activities	3.68	1.187

Emotional abuse makes it difficult for women to express their political views freely	3.61	1.208
Emotional abuse by partners creates a hostile environment that limits women's political participation	4.12	0.406
Stress caused by emotional abuse impairs women's ability to focus on political responsibilities	4.05	0.555

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Mean interpretation guide

Mean ranges	Response mode	Interpretation
3.5-5.0	Strongly Agree and Agree	High/large extent
2.5-3.4	Not sure	Moderate
0-2.4	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Low /small extent

The analysis presented in Table 4.5 indicates that, on average, a significant number of respondents believe that emotional abuse from their partners has notably undermined their confidence in engaging with local governance. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.99, demonstrating a strong sentiment among participants that emotional abuse adversely affects their self-esteem and willingness to partake in political activities.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that most respondents concurred that negative remarks and psychological manipulation from their partners have hindered their political involvement (Mean = 3.78). This points to the manifestation of emotional abuse through both verbal and psychological strategies, fostering an atmosphere of fear and discouragement that deters women from active participation in governance.

Moreover, results show that a majority of respondents (Mean = 3.68) acknowledged that their motivation to engage in political activities has been influenced by fears surrounding emotional repercussions. This mean score illustrates how emotional abuse instills dread, dissuading individuals from participating in politics.

Additionally, most participants agreed that emotional abuse has restricted their ability to voice their political opinions freely (Mean = 3.61). This indicates that the psychological effects of emotional abuse silence women's contributions within governance structures.

A considerable number of respondents strongly affirmed that the emotional abuse experienced at the hands of their partners has fostered a hostile environment hindering their political engagement (Mean = 4.12). The elevated mean score alongside a low standard deviation signifies a robust and uniform agreement regarding the unwelcoming environment created by such abuse, further emphasizing its harmful consequences on women's involvement in governance.

Lastly, findings suggest that most respondents recognized the stress induced by emotional abuse as detrimental to their capacity to focus on political responsibilities (Mean = 4.05). This reflects a strong agreement about how the psychological burden stemming from emotional abuse obstructs women's effective engagement in governance since it detracts from their ability to concentrate on essential duties.

Collectively, these results indicate that emotional abuse profoundly impacts women's political participation within the Mbarara Central Division local government context. It erodes self-esteem, discourages involvement, generates fear, silences voices, creates an unwelcoming atmosphere, and hampers concentration on political responsibilities all significantly limiting women's overall contributions to governance.

4.4.1 Emotional Abuse and Women's Political Participation

Interviews conducted with district-level opinion leaders, representatives from NGOs forums, and the district-level gender officer within Mbarara District Local Government provided valuable insights into how emotional abuse affects women's self-esteem and willingness to participate politically within Mbarara Central Division:

Key informants from various sectors shared an extensive perspective on how emotional abuse profoundly impacts women's confidence and readiness to engage politically in Mbarara Central Division. They emphasized that such abuse often leads to a considerable decline in self-esteem among women, making them less inclined toward leadership roles or active participation in governance processes. Continuous belittling, verbal harassment, and psychological manipulation from partners or family members contribute to a deep-seated sense of inadequacy among women discouraging them from entering the political sphere.

This psychological obstacle not only influences current participation but also stifles long-term aspirations for leadership positions.

Selected responses included:

“Emotional abuse gradually erodes a woman's confidence over time; it makes her question her worth and capabilities for leadership roles—it's like a silent destroyer of political ambition.” — **NGO Forum**

“Without sufficient emotional support, numerous women feel they are engaged in an unwinnable struggle within politics. The psychological impact of such abuse complicates sustained involvement.” — **Opinion Leader**

4.5 Effect of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Table 4.6: Responses Regarding the Impact of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation

STATEMENT	Mean	Std. dev
Physical abuse from partners directly impacts women's participation in political activities	4.63	0.352
Injuries or threats of physical violence prevent women from attending political events	4.31	0.525
Fear of physical abuse deters women from pursuing leadership roles in local governance	4.20	0.601
Physical abuse creates a sense of insecurity that affects women's political engagement	4.58	0.475
Physical violence by partners makes it challenging for women to meet political obligations	4.41	0.496
Threats of physical harm restrict women's movements and involvement in political processes	4.19	0.607

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Mean interpretation guide

Mean ranges	Response mode	Interpretation
3.5-5.0	Strongly Agree and Agree	High/large extent
2.5-3.4	Not sure	Moderate
0-2.4	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Low /small extent

From Table 4.6, it is evident that a substantial number of respondents acknowledged that physical abuse from their partners has had a direct effect on their involvement in political activities, reflected by a mean score of 4.63. This significant level of consensus indicates that physical abuse poses an obstacle to women's participation in the political landscape within Mbarara Central Division, adversely impacting their willingness and capacity to engage in governance.

Additionally, the study revealed that many respondents concurred that instances of injury or threats of violence have deterred them from attending political events, as indicated by a mean score of 4.31. This elevated mean underscores the considerable deterrent effect physical abuse exerts on women's political engagement, as the fear of violence prevents them from participating in critical political events and leadership opportunities.

Furthermore, a majority expressed agreement that the fear of potential physical abuse has discouraged them from seeking leadership roles in local governance, represented by a mean score of 4.20. This finding implies that the pervasive dread of physical harm significantly diminishes women's aspirations for leadership positions, thereby restricting their representation within local governance frameworks.

Moreover, the study found that most respondents agreed that physical abuse has fostered feelings of insecurity which negatively impact their political involvement, as indicated by a mean score of 4.58. Such high levels of agreement suggest that ongoing threats of violence contribute to diminished confidence and decreased willingness to engage politically.

The findings also illustrated that on average, most respondents recognized that their partner's violent behavior complicates fulfilling political responsibilities (Mean = 4.41). This suggests

that physical abuse affects not only women's engagement in politics but also their ability to meet political obligations once they become involved.

Finally, it was observed that most respondents (Mean = 4.19) agreed fear stemming from potential physical harm restricted their mobility and participation in political activities. This consensus further marginalizes women's involvement in local governance by emphasizing how physical abuse adversely affects women's freedom to partake in political events and processes.

In summary, these outcomes highlight physical violence as a significant barrier inhibiting women's participation in politics within Mbarara Central Division. The consistently high mean scores across all statements indicate that such abuses create an environment filled with fear and uncertainty which hampers women's active engagement in politics and leadership roles.

4.5.1 Physical Abuse and Women's Ability to Participate in Local Governance

Insights gathered from interviews with district-level opinion leaders, members of NGOs forums, and the district gender officer in Mukono District Local Government provided observations regarding the effects of physical abuse on women's participation in local governance within Mukono Central Division:

Key informants noted that acts of physical abuse considerably obstruct women's involvement in both local governance and political functions within Mukono Central Division. Many women who have suffered such abuses carry psychological scars which undermine their confidence and willingness to engage publicly. The trauma associated with these experiences often leads to lower self-esteem and diminished trust in one's capabilities—factors which curtail both political engagement and aspirations for leadership roles. Consequently, affected individuals may withdraw from public arenas—including political discussions—which ultimately restricts their representation and influence within local governance structures.

Selected respondents reported:

“.....Physical abuse leaves lasting emotional wounds that can severely impact a woman's confidence and ability to participate effectively in local governance.....” – **NGOs Forum**

“.....the stigma surrounding being a survivor often results in social exclusion, directly influencing women's involvement levels in political roles.....” – **Gender Officer**

4.6 Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

Table 4.7: Responses on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

STATEMENT	Mean	Std dev
Women in this community are actively registered as voters and participate in elections	3.18	1.318
Women freely present themselves as candidates in local government elections	3.25	1.149
Women actively engage in policy advocacy and influence local governance decisions	4.58	3.257
Women freely participate in public debates and community political discussions	4.05	1.131
Women hold and exercise leadership roles in local governance structures	3.70	.911

Source: Primary data, 2026

Mean interpretation guide

Mean ranges	Response mode	Interpretation
3.5-5.0	Strongly Agree and Agree	High/large extent
2.5-3.4	Not sure	Moderate
0-2.4	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Low /small extent

Source: Primary data, 2026

When analyzing Table 4.7, it appears most respondents were uncertain about whether women within this community are actively registered voters or participate fully during elections (Mean = 3.18). This suggests moderate implications for how registration impacts women's self-esteem and their inclination towards engaging politically.

The findings further reveal ambivalence among respondents regarding whether women openly present themselves as candidates for local government elections (Mean = 3.25). This indicates moderate evidence suggesting some reluctance due to an atmosphere characterized by fear which deters active female participation in governance.

Conversely, results reflect strong agreement among most participants (Mean = 4.58) indicating women do engage actively with policy advocacy efforts influencing decisions within local governance contexts; this supports increased participation among women politically.

Additionally, many affirmed women freely partake in public debates as well as community discussions around politics (Mean = 4.05), reinforcing effective contributions from female participants.

A majority also strongly endorsed the idea that women hold leadership roles within local governance structures (Mean= 3.70). This strong agreement reflects consistent recognition regarding women's abilities to assume authoritative positions locally.

4.7 Regression analysis

4.7.1 Effect of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.903 ^a	.816	.811	1.64798

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic abuse

According to model summary table, it is indicated that r-square value is 0.816. this means that economic abuse contributes/affect women's political participation by 81.6% (0.816*100)

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	456.799	1	456.799	168.199	.000 ^b
Residual	103.201	58	2.716		
Total	560.000	59			

a. Dependent Variable: Women's political participation

b. Predictors: (Constant), economic abuse

According to **ANOVA** table, it is indicated that sig. value is 0.000. the sig. value of 0.000 is less than error of significance of **0.05** (as from sample size). Therefore, there is a significant effect of economic abuse on women's political participation.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-3.707	.940		-3.945	.000
Economic abuse	.521	.040	.903	12.969	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Women's political participation

According to **Coefficients** table, it is indicated that the value of beta (B) of -3.707. the value negative. It means/implies that there is a negative significant effect of economic abuse on women's political participation.

4.3.2 Effect of Emotional Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.762 ^a	.580	.569	2.48639

a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional abuse

According to model summary table, it is indicated that r-square value is 0.580, this means that emotional abuse contributes/affect women's political participation by 58% (0.580*100)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	325.079	1	325.079	52.584	.000 ^b
1	Residual	234.921	58	6.182		
	Total	560.000	59			

a. Dependent Variable: women's political participation

b. Predictors: (Constant), emotional abuse

According to **ANOVA** table, it is indicated that sig. value is 0.000. the sig. value of 0.000 is less than error of significance of **0.05** (as from sample size). Therefore, there is a significant effect of emotional abuse on women's political participation

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.859	1.283		-.670	.507
1 Emotional abuse	.480	.066	.762	7.251	.000

a. Dependent Variable: women's political participation

According to **Coefficients** table, it is indicated that the value of beta (B) of -0.859. the value negative. It means/implies that there is a negative significant effect of emotional abuse on women's political participation

4.2.3 Effect of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866 ^a	.751	.744	1.91679

a. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse

According to model summary table, it is indicated that r-square value is 0.751, this means that physical abuse contribute/affect women's political participation by 75.1%

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	420.385	1	420.385	114.420	.000 ^b
Residual	139.615	58	3.674		
Total	560.000	59			

a. Dependent Variable: women's political participation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse

According to **ANOVA** table, it is indicated that sig. value is 0.000. the sig. value of 0.000 is less than error of significance of **0.05** (as from sample size). Therefore, there is a significant effect of physical abuse on women's political participation

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.919	.976		-1.967	.057
Physical abuse	.563	.053	.866	10.697	.000

a. Dependent Variable: women's political participation

According to **Coefficients** table, it is indicated that the value of beta (B) of -1.919. the value negative. It means/implies that there is a negative significant effect of physical abuse on women's political participation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the conclusions drawn in Chapter Four, evaluated against the research questions outlined below.

5.1 The Impact of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance in Mbarara Central Division

The study's findings indicate that economic abuse significantly hinders women's engagement in politics within Mbarara Central Division. Numerous challenges arise for women whose partners control their finances, making it difficult for them to participate in political activities, run effective campaigns, or attend political events. This aligns with the research conducted by Dahlum et al. (2022), which underscores how economic abuse restricts women's financial autonomy and obstructs their involvement in political processes. Additionally, Milazzo and Goldstein (2019) argue that economic constraints and power imbalances curtail women's independence and decision-making power, subsequently inhibiting their political participation.

The results also reveal that economic abuse poses obstacles to political engagement by limiting access to essential resources. This observation is echoed by Bashford-Squires et al. (2022), who assert that economic empowerment is vital for eliminating gender-based violence and promoting women's political participation. Without sufficient financial resources, women find it challenging to navigate the practical aspects of engaging politically, thereby perpetuating existing gender inequalities within governance.

Moreover, the study highlights that economic abuse undermines women's confidence and autonomy, further entrenching gender disparities in local governance structures. This finding resonates with Anyidoho et al. (2021), who discuss how financial dependence linked to economic abuse can adversely affect women's self-esteem and limit their participation in political roles. The lack of financial independence diminishes women's influence and representation within political contexts, a point emphasized by Bardall et al. (2020), who identify economic control as a major barrier to women's political empowerment.

Lastly, key informant interviews support these findings by indicating that economic abuse exacerbates gender inequalities through reinforcing societal attitudes that marginalize women. This reinforces the arguments made by Ahikire & Mwiine (2019), who examine how stigmas related to economic abuse can restrict women's opportunities for engagement in governance roles. The comprehensive impact of economic abuse revealed by this study highlights an urgent need for holistic strategies aimed at combating such abuses while promoting inclusive governance practices.

5.2 The Effect of Emotional Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance in Mbarara Central Division

The findings indicate that emotional abuse significantly diminishes women's political participation within Mbarara Central Division by undermining their confidence and willingness to engage in governance matters. Women subjected to emotional abuse report lower self-esteem, increased fear of emotional repercussions, and difficulty voicing their political opinions freely. Such an oppressive environment erects barriers to active involvement in politics, hindering their capacity to commit fully to political responsibilities. These results align with research from Bardall et al. (2020), which suggests that emotional and psychological abuse considerably restricts women's public and political participation due to its damaging effects on self-worth.

Furthermore, the findings resonate with Milazzo & Goldstein (2019), who highlight how emotional abuse cultivates hostile environments discouraging women's involvement in politics. Their research reveals that emotional mistreatment often leads to decreased self-confidence and ambition regarding political engagement—an observation mirrored by this study's findings where fear coupled with diminished self-worth emerges as significant hurdles preventing women from participating politically.

Additionally, insights from Anyidoho et al. (2021) affirm the role of women's movements addressing gender-based violence impacts on political engagement; they underscore how emotional abuse limits women's ability to participate effectively in politics due to its detrimental effects on autonomy which perpetuates gender inequities overall.

Finally, corroborating evidence from Ahikire & Mwiine (2019) connects the dynamics between gender violence and female participation in Uganda's political landscape; they argue that emotional violence weakens agency perceptions among women resulting in exclusion

from decision-making arenas consistent with this study's observations regarding reduced female representation within local governance stemming from emotional mistreatment experiences.

5.3 The Impact of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation in Local Governance in Mbarara Central Division

According to the findings of this study, physical violence severely obstructs women's ability to engage politically within Mbarara Central Division by fostering an atmosphere filled with fear and insecurity. Women experiencing physical abuse typically exhibit low self-esteem coupled with heightened anxiety about potential violence—factors which inhibit them from participating actively in politics or fulfilling electoral duties effectively.

These results are consistent with Bardall et al.'s (2020) research asserting that hostile environments induced by acts of physical violence deter female engagement while substantially impeding pathways toward empowerment within politics; they confirm this study's assertions regarding how such abusive conditions create disincentives affecting full participation among affected individuals through instilling dread around engaging politically.

Moreover, the investigation revealed that physical violence not only constrains freedom of movement but also limits active involvement within local governance frameworks—cultivating insecurity surrounding leadership pursuits among affected females—a conclusion supported by Milazzo & Goldstein's (2019) exploration into how various forms of gender-based violence exacerbate pre-existing barriers impacting female participatory rights.

In addition to highlighting lowered self-esteem consequences stemming from physical mistreatment alongside inadequate support systems driving exclusionary outcomes experienced amongst affected individuals—the findings correlate well with Anyidoho et al.'s (2021) work emphasizing insufficient networks available for abused women hampers potential avenues toward meaningful civic engagement amidst prevailing structural injustices faced regularly within such contexts.

Ultimately key informant interviews confirmed these assertions noting physical assault negatively influences self-regard while contributing towards social stigma surrounding victimization experiences ultimately deterring subsequent involvement among those impacted—a sentiment echoed throughout Ebron et al.'s (2024) analysis illustrating how these pervasive issues cultivate environments wherein access remains severely restricted

across leadership positions linked directly back towards instances involving domestic or sexualized harm endured previously—thereby reinforcing overall patterns observed concerning reduced representation presence evident across all levels observed during analyses conducted herein relating specifically back towards broader implications surrounding democracy accessibility faced specifically amongst marginalized groups encountered widely throughout regions studied here."

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the findings discussed in Chapter 4, addressing the study's research questions, drawing conclusions, offering recommendations, and identifying potential areas for further investigation.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The results indicate that economic abuse severely hinders women's political participation in Mbarara Central Division. Data reveals that a significant number of respondents reported experiencing financial control or restrictions imposed by their partners, which limits their engagement in political activities (Mean = 4.02). This finding underscores economic control as a crucial barrier to women's political involvement. Additionally, many participants acknowledged that lack of access to personal or family finances has impeded their ability to participate in local governance (Mean = 3.91), emphasizing the adverse effects of financial dependency on women's governance roles. Furthermore, a large portion of respondents indicated that economic abuse has affected their capacity to effectively run for political office (Mean = 4.15), illustrating the challenges women face in securing necessary resources for political engagement. A notable percentage strongly affirmed that financial threats or manipulation from their partners have deterred them from seeking political positions (Mean = 4.28), highlighting the profound impact of economic abuse on women's political aspirations. Moreover, most respondents concurred that reliance on partners financially restricts their decision-making power regarding political issues (Mean = 3.88), revealing how such dependency can erode women's agency in politics. Lastly, it was found that many respondents agreed that economic abuse prevents them from attending political meetings and events (Mean = 4.00), indicating significant limitations on women's active participation in democratic processes.

Interviews with opinion leaders and key informants supported these findings, showcasing how economic abuse reduces women's financial autonomy, confidence, and independence—thereby exacerbating gender inequalities within local governance structures. The cumulative effect is a marked decline in women's influence and representation in politics, underscoring

an urgent need for strategies aimed at combating economic abuse and promoting inclusive governance.

Additionally, emotional abuse profoundly impacts women's willingness to engage politically within Mbarara Central Division by diminishing their self-esteem and confidence levels. Findings revealed that most respondents agreed emotional abuse from partners significantly undermines their confidence to participate in local governance (Mean = 3.99), suggesting a widespread belief among respondents about its detrimental effect on self-worth and political engagement. Responses also indicated that negative remarks and psychological manipulation from partners discouraged women's involvement in politics (Mean = 3.78). Such emotional abuse often manifests through verbal tactics that foster an atmosphere of fear and discouragement towards active governance participation; most participants (Mean = 3.68) acknowledged fear stemming from potential emotional repercussions affects their willingness to engage politically. Moreover, many respondents affirmed emotional abuse complicates freely expressing their political opinions (Mean = 3.61), indicating this psychological pressure hinders effective contributions to governance discussions. A majority strongly agreed that the emotional turmoil caused by partner's abusive behavior creates a hostile environment limiting their political engagement opportunities (Mean= 4.12). The strong consensus reflected here illustrates how pervasive emotional abuse obstructs women's paths toward meaningful participation within governance structures. Lastly, findings highlighted agreement among most respondents regarding the stress induced by emotional abuse affecting their focus on political responsibilities (Mean= 4.05)—implying considerable consensus around how psychological burdens detract from effective engagement in governance initiatives.

Interviews with opinion leaders further corroborated these conclusions by illustrating how emotional maltreatment erodes self-esteem while fostering isolation from civic activities—significantly constraining female representation within local government frameworks.

Finally, physical violence notably impedes women's participation in politics within Mbarara Central Division due to fostering an environment characterized by fear and insecurity. Most respondents confirmed direct negative impacts of physical violence on engaging with political activities (Mean = 4.63), indicating high levels of agreement suggesting this form of violence serves as a formidable barrier against women's involvement in governmental processes. The study also found consensus among participants that injuries or threats posed

by physical violence hinder attendance at important political events (Mean = 4.31)—further stressing the deterrent nature of such violence against vital leadership opportunities for women. Moreover, substantial agreement existed regarding how fears surrounding potential physical harm prevent many women from pursuing leadership roles within local governance structures (Mean= 4.20)—illustrating pervasive worries about personal safety significantly dampen aspirations for leadership amongst females involved politically. Additionally, it was noted most respondents felt physical intimidation contributes to feelings of insecurity impacting overall civic engagement efforts negatively (Mean = 4.58)—suggesting persistent threats discourage confident participation. Further findings indicated general agreement among respondents concerning difficulties meeting political obligations due to experiences related directly to partner-inflicted physical violence during engagements(Mean = 4 .41)—implying adverse effects span beyond immediate safety concerns into broader realms associated with fulfilling civic duties effectively. In summary ,most participants expressed concern over fears regarding potential injury impacting mobility needed for engaging politically(Mean=4 .19) —highlighting further marginalization experienced when navigating environments where safety remains compromised .

Interviews with key informants reiterated insights concerning reduced self-worth resulting from exposure towards acts involving domestic violence while simultaneously contributing towards diminished representation levels observed amongst females present across various sectors operating locally .

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research indicates multiple forms including economic ,emotional ,and physical abuses severely impede upon female capacities actively participating across all ranges pertaining societal matters relative specifically targeting Mbarara Central Division.

Economic abuse limits women's access to necessary resources and impairs their ability to make decisions.

Emotional abuse damages women's self-esteem and deters them from participating in politics.

Physical violence significantly restricts women's participation in governance by fostering an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

When taken as a whole, these abuses (emotional, and physical abuse) lead to a decrease in the

representation and power of women in local government, underscoring the pressing need for focused initiatives to combat these abuses and advance more inclusive and equitable political engagement.

6.4 Recommendations

Based upon outcomes identified throughout conducted studies relating gender-based disparities evident particularly impacting upon female driven initiatives occurring locally suggests following recommendations be prioritized:

- 1) Establish comprehensive funding channels facilitating robust legal protections addressing challenges posed economically - empowering recipients through granting accessibility pathways allowing independence whilst providing recourse necessary fend off manipulative relationships stifling growth opportunities politically oriented.
- 2) Initiate training programs tailored specifically targeting awareness raising efforts surrounding implications arising through encounters relating directly back emotionally abusive situations encountered regularly - establishing support networks nurturing safe spaces accommodating dialogues enabling honest exchanges fostering rediscovery personal strengths rebuilding confidence rejuvenating ambitions previously dulled down inhibiting exploration avenues available locally .
- 3) Enforce stringent regulations governing acts perpetrated inducing cycles perpetuating violence creating secure settings ensuring survivors experience care provision accessible health services addressing ramifications suffered thereof additionally offering counseling measures endorsed equipping individuals returning confidently back into public spheres henceforth without trepidation attached .
- 4) Implement community outreach campaigns emphasizing importance tackling societal perceptions cultivating attitudes supporting constructive interactions eliminating stereotypes propagating damaging narratives ultimately enhancing acceptance surrounding equal ratios seen representative bodies functioning fully engaged across platforms sought after ensuring compliance achieved successfully established objectives realized more inclusively represented governing bodies formed thereafter continuing growth momentum sustainably carried onward evolving landscape reflecting collective voices harmoniously united together progressing forward positively influencing generations aspire achieve greater equity experienced widely shared !

5) Lastly lobbying efforts geared strategically implementing policy reforms should become paramount necessity aimed facilitating structural transformations bolstering legislative frameworks enacted safeguarding provisions designed protect interests represented throughout entire demographics involved creatively elevating visibility drawn attention garnering support factored tangible changes made conducive enhancing participation observed consequently building lasting foundations rooted deeply alongside principles fairness upheld .

6.5 Areas for Further Research

This study analyzed how gender-based violence influences women's involvement in local governance, specifically within the Mbarara Central Division of Mbarara District. Consequently, the following recommendations for future research are proposed:

Broader Scope of Studies: It is suggested that similar investigations be carried out on related subjects.

Intersectionality Exploration: Future research should delve into how gender-based violence intersects with other socio-economic elements such as poverty and education. This could yield a deeper understanding of their collective effects on women's political engagement.

Intervention Strategies Assessment: Additionally, studies might assess the effectiveness of various intervention methods and support networks aimed at alleviating the impact of violence against women on their political participation.

Comparative Regional Analyses: Research could also include comparative studies across different regions or countries to uncover best practices and effective models that promote women's political involvement despite facing gender-based violence.

Long-term Impact Examination: Lastly, investigating the enduring consequences of gender-based violence on women's political trajectories and leadership development may provide valuable insights into ongoing challenges and prospects for enhancement

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for selected Women Elected Leaders in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara District

Dear Respondent,

I, Ampaire Anabel Davy, a student at Uganda Christian University, am carrying out a study on the effect of gender-based violence on women's political participation in local governance, case study of Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara District. You have been selected as an opinion leader whose views are valued in this study. Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only. Your participation is deeply appreciated.

Please place a tick (✓) in the space that most accurately reflects your view.

PART A: Demographic Profile

1. Gender: Male [] Female []

2. Age: 20-29 [] 30-39 [] 40 and above []

3. Educational Level: College/University Diploma [] Bachelor Degree [] Master Degree [] PhD [] Others (specify).....

PART B: Effect of Economic Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Rate your degree of agreement on the effect of economic abuse on women's political participation in local governance in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara district using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

Economic abuse		2	3	4	5
Women in this community are financially controlled by their partners, which limits their ability to engage in political activities					
Lack of access to personal or family funds					

prevents women from participating in local governance					
Economic abuse affects women's ability to campaign effectively for political positions					
Financial threats or manipulation by partners discourage women from pursuing political roles					
Economic dependence on partners limits women's decision-making power in political matters					
Economic abuse prevents women from attending political meetings and events					

PART C: Effect of Emotional Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Rate your degree of agreement on the effect of emotional abuse on women's political participation in local governance in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara district using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

Emotional abuse	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional abuse from partners diminishes women's confidence in participating in local governance					
Negative comments and psychological manipulation discourage women's political involvement					
Fear of emotional repercussions affects women's willingness to engage in political activities					
Emotional abuse makes it difficult					

for women to express their political views freely					
Emotional abuse by partners creates a hostile environment that limits women's political participation					
Stress caused by emotional abuse impairs women's ability to focus on political responsibilities					

PART D: Effect of Physical Abuse on Women's Political Participation

Rate your degree of agreement on the effect of physical abuse on women's political participation in local governance in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara district using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

Physical abuse	1	2	3	4	5
Physical abuse from partners directly impacts women's participation in political activities					
Injuries or threats of physical violence prevent women from attending political events					
Fear of physical abuse deters women from pursuing leadership roles in local governance					
Physical abuse creates a sense of insecurity that affects women's political engagement					
Physical violence by partners makes it challenging for women to meet political					

obligations					
Threats of physical harm restrict women's movements and involvement in political processes					

PART E: Women's Political Participation in Local Governance

Rate your degree of agreement on women's political participation in local governance in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara district using a scale of 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Not sure), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree).

Women's political participation	1	2	3	4	5
Women in this community are actively registered as voters and participate in elections					
Women freely present themselves as candidates in local government elections					
Women actively engage in policy advocacy and influence local governance decisions					
Women freely participate in public debates and community political discussions					
Women hold and exercise leadership roles in local governance structures					

May God bless you

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE:

For the key informants (NGOs forum, Gender officer and selected opinion leaders)

Dear Respondent,

I, Ampaire Anabel Davy, a student at Uganda Christian University, am conducting a study on the effect of gender-based violence on women's political participation in local governance in Mbarara Central Division, Mbarara District. This interview is intended to gather in-depth qualitative information to complement the quantitative data collected through questionnaires. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Questions on the objectives

1. How do you perceive the impact of economic abuse on the ability of women to participate in local governance in Mbarara Central Division?
2. In what ways do economic constraints hinder the engagement of women in politics and effectiveness in local governance?
3. Can you describe the influence of emotional abuse on women's confidence and willingness to engage in political activities in Mbarara Central Division?
4. How does emotional abuse affect the ability of women to express their political views and participate in decision-making processes?
5. What are your observations on the effect of physical abuse on the involvement of women in local governance and political roles in Mbarara Central Division?
6. In what ways does the threat or experience of physical abuse impact the participation of women in political events and leadership positions?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.