Understanding the effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among primary school learners: A case of Rubavu District [Rwanda]

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Abstract

Family has long been said to have an influence on children's education. Thus, it can be understood that any difficult domestic situation may have repercussions on children's education. This study was undertaken to examine the effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among primary school learners in Rubavu District, Rwanda. It was carried out in 35 primary schools located in the district. This study adopted the correlational research design; its population comprised 14423 primary school learners, from whom a sample of 390 participants was chosen using stratified random sampling. The data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire with five-point likert scales. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics including analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression analysis. The findings revealed that domestic violence perpetrated against parents has a significant effect on learning effectiveness among primary school learners (= 0.676, p value <0.05) in Rubavu district. It was also found that domestic violence perpetrated against learners has a significant effect on learning effectiveness among primary school learners (= 1.024, p value <0.05) in Rubavu district.[1] Although the Government of Rwanda has taken serious measures to fight domestic violence, the study found that there are a few families in which this offence is still perpetrated. Therefore, the study recommended that there should be collaboration between local leaders, police, school managers and the affected children to apprehend and punish the perpetrators. It was also recommended that each primary school should hire a counsellor to help the affected learners. Each school should also accord special support to the affected students to enable them to succeed in their studies. The findings of this study imply that domestic violence has a detrimental effect on children's education and that more effort should be made to get rid of this danger among Rwandan families. This study was conducted during the period of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, therefore data collection was difficult; there were restrictions to moving from one district to another.

Key words: domestic violence, learning effectiveness, primary school, learners

Introduction

Educational achievement at an early age depends on the intellectual, social and physical abilities of each pupil. Development of these abilities by children has a potential impact on their prospects for learning outcomes. However, cases of domestic violence experienced the world over have negative effects on young children's education (Sambo & Isa 2016). The Nevada Attorney General's Office (cited by Powell 2011) defined domestic violence as a cruel offence perpetrated by people with whom the victim has a connection or relationship. Domestic violence is a worldwide and a prevalent crime that has had an effect on numerous children's lives (UNICEF

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2015). As Miller (2010) states, when children are learning well, they can obtain a variety of educational opportunities and experiences beneficial to social progress. This can lead to a good relationship with significant others. The Act on Protection against Domestic Violence (PADV, 2015) defined domestic violence as any kind of aggression against somebody or forthcoming menace by others with whom they have some connections. Abuya and Onsomu (2012) have claimed that in homes with domestic violence, children are frequently and invisibly abused. The study of Rada (2014) found that both males and females are guilty of domestic violence; however, women and children are more exposed to domestic violence than men.

UNICEF (2015) reported that between 500 million and 1.5 billion children are exposed to violence annually. In addition, 7 to 14 million children were exposed to domestic violence in their families. Most domestic violence is associated with early childhood, when violence can have an irreversible effect on young children's welfare and development (Richards 2011). Contributory factors such as poverty, stress, marital discord, adverse living conditions, poor law enforcement, psychological problems of the adults and lack of clear child protection policies ought to be looked at for finding the root causes of domestic violence (UNICEF, 2018). Research has revealed that domestic violence has an immense negative effect on children's academic performance (Sterne & Poole 2010) and this has a great impact on their learning outcomes. Domestic violence and child mistreatment are prevalent in sub-Saharan African countries; more than 80% of children in this part of the world have confirmed being exposed to violence in their homes.

The study of Sherr, Hensels, Skeen, Tomlison, Roberts and Macedo (2015) found that Malawi and South Africa have high rates of domestic violence. In Malawi, 28.5% of women were found to be mistreated by their husbands, whereas in South Africa 40% of women were found to undergo physical violence (Sherr et al. 2015). The same study found that 25% of children in these two countries had experienced their mothers being beaten by their fathers. In East African states, occurrences of domestic violence have been reported widely in the media. Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda were found to have more cases of domestic violence, including children as victims, than other countries in the region (Devaney 2015).

In Rwanda, the Government in 2011 initiated the Twelve Years Basic Education free of charge for all citizens. For that reason, each child in Rwanda has an opportunity to access education (UNICEF, 2015). This was in the framework of meeting the goal of Education for All (EFA) by 2015. However, UNICEF (2018) reported that more than 50% of children in Rwanda remain victims of sexual, physical or emotional violence. The same study found that in Rwanda, 5 out of 10 girls and 6 out 10 boys are exposed to at least some of these forms of violence – sexual, physical or emotional – before they are 18. According to Kimetto (2018), domestic violence has a negative influence on children's education. In spite of the rights of children, to protect them from all kinds of domestic violence, there are still repeated cases in different homes (Uwezo 2016). According to Lloyd (2018), children exposed to domestic violence are disrupted in their education and this compromises their learning outcomes. Any mistreatment of children may lead to emotional trauma, physical and mental blocks to their education, as well as bad behaviour in their schools.

The study of Gichuba (2017) recommended that further studies should assess the relationship between children's violence and educational outcomes and their lives. For that reason, this study was designed to fill the gap by assessing the effect of domestic violence on children's education in Rwanda.

Statement of the problem and purpose of the study

Although the Government of Rwanda has a political wish to eradicate the problem of domestic violence, it is still present in the country because of socio-cultural and societal variables. These include culture and tradition, inequality between women and men in terms of power, religious affiliations and practices, the financial reliance of wives on their husbands, and poverty (Ministry

of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF 2011). Furthermore, a number of studies, like those of Plan International (2013), Georgia (2015) and Human Right Watch (2001), show that incidents of domestic violence among families occur all over the world. In Rwanda, gender based violence is undeniably rife (Asemota & Randell 2011); and the latest data from MIGEPROF shows that approximately 17 000 incidents of domestic violence took place in Rwanda (Munezero 2017). Demographic and Health Survey (2020) reported that in Rwanda, more than a half of all girls and 6 out of 10 boys are exposed to some violence during the early ages. The Access to Justice Report by UN Women (2015) reveals that 72.6% of people who underwent domestic violence did not wish to go to court; only 5% of them opted to go to court due to a lack of awareness of the enforcement of the law regarding domestic violence (UN WOMEN, 2015). The statistics of MINEDUC (2018) have revealed that the dropout rate among boys was 12,2%, which is relatively high. The report also shows that among 99209 students who did the lower secondary education national examinations in 2018, 83,3% passed while 17,7% did not.

Many studies have been conducted to examine the effect of domestic violence on children's education. However, there are very few studies on the effect of domestic violence on children's learning specifically in Rwanda. This study was conducted to contribute to the existing knowledge with regard to domestic violence and its effect on learning effectiveness. The author believes that the findings of this study will be very useful for the Rwandan Government by providing information regarding the status of domestic violence among Rwandan families and how this affects the education system. The information will then help the government find solutions.

Due to the above state of affairs, this author found that it is valuable to conduct a study for examining the effects of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among Rwandan primary school learners.

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

- What are the forms of domestic violence perpetrated against primary school learners as well as their parents in Rubavu district?
- What are the problems faced by primary school learners in Rubavu District?
- How does domestic violence influence learning effectiveness among primary school learners in Rubavu district?

Literature review

This section concerns the findings of previous studies regarding the effect of domestic violence on children's learning, forms of domestic violence perpetrated in Rwanda as well as common problems faced by primary school learners in Rwanda. In addition, this section explains the theoretical framework on which this study is grounded.

Theoretical framework

According to Tony (2002) the term "domestic" is derived from the Latin word 'domus' which means 'home'. Thus, the term domestic means anything happening at home or in a family residence. For Tony, violence refers to the use of force or threat to oblige somebody to do something. According to UNICEF (2014), domestic violence refers to the victimization of an individual with whom the abuser has or has had an intimate, romantic, spousal relationship. It basically refers to kinds of coercive behaviour applied by a powerful adult to exert power and control over another person.

This study was rooted in two theories, "Social Learning Theory" and "Object Relations Theory". Social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura (1977) and emphasizes the

importance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviour, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Mcleod 2016). In addition, the theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behaviour. This theory has been regarded as a popular way of explaining the origin of violent behaviour. The theory holds that human aggression is a learned feature that, like other forms of social behaviour, has a stimulus, reinforcement, and cognitive control (Nolan & Tracy 2004). According to the social learning theory, family violence arises due to many contextual and situational factors. Examples of such contextual factors include individual/couple characteristics, stress, or an aggressive personality. Situational factors include substance abuse and financial difficulties. This theory provided the researcher with knowledge concerning the causes of domestic violence based on which the research objectives and instruments were developed.

This study was also rooted in the "Object Relations Theory" developed by Ronald Fairbairn in 1952. This theory suggests that humans are motivated from earliest childhood by the need for significant relationships with others. In this theory, the term "Objects" refers to "others" or other individuals (Noran & Tracy 2004). According to the theory, individuals who lack sufficient nurturing during infancy and childhood may find it difficult to maintain a healthy self-esteem, regulate their emotional responses and manage anxiety in later life. Indeed, families in which domestic violence is perpetrated do not get enough time for nurturing their children; this can have an effect on their education. Violence in children's lives often causes disruption to their schooling and harms the quality of their educational experiences and outcomes (Lloyd 2018). Both the Social Learning Theory and Object Related Theory have influenced this study. While the former provided the foundation for the research questions, objectives and research instruments of this study, the latter served as the basis of the research problem which stimulated the researcher's interest in undertaking this study.

Forms of domestic violence perpetrated in Rwanda

Domestic violence has been reported to be a global issue by many authors and organizations. Sambo & Isa (2016) confirmed that cases of domestic violence are experienced worldwide. Freedom House (2013) reports that domestic violence specifically in Rwanda has become widespread. A number of forms of domestic violence are perpetrated in Rwanda, but gender based violence (GBV) is the most frequent, according to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF 2011). Despite remarkable progress toward addressing and eliminating GBV in Rwanda, it persists primarily affecting females, but also males, throughout the country. According to UNFPA (2020), GBV is a considerable threat in Rwanda though the Government of Rwanda is combating it. The country has adopted a gender sensitive constitution that promotes equality between males and females. According to Rudasingwa (2018), strong policies were put in place by the government to eradicate GBV.

The National Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2014-2015, under the auspices of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2016), reports that more than 35% of females and 39% of males are exposed to physical violence throughout their lives. Yet, less than half of both men and women report seeking assistance to stop the violence. The survey finds that current intimate partners are the most common perpetrators of physical and sexual violence for both men and women. These figures have remained fairly consistent since the DHS in 2005, despite the existence of more rigorous GBV laws and policies. Forms of GBV beyond physical and sexual violence also remain an issue in Rwanda. For example, 18.5% of women and girls over the age of 15 reported emotional violence caused by a current or former partner within the year. However, some important advances are being made, such as women taking ownership of property alone or jointly with their spouses, on decisions about their reproductive health (83%), and using modern methods of contraception (48%).

MIGEPROF (2011) reports that the forms of GBV perpetrated in Rwanda include: sexual violence, physical violence, economic violence and psychological violence. Sexual violence among minors remains the most dangerous kind of violence in Rwanda. Females under five and female teenagers are the most affected. The authors of this crime are frequently house girls and house boys. In addition, physical violence is rampant in 25 districts (of the 30 districts in the country). Female physical violence is perpetrated in about 83% of the whole country. The study found that alcoholism, poverty, drug abuse, ignorance and misinterpretation of the enforcement of gender balance are to blame.

Furthermore, psychological violence is either verbal or non-verbal. MIGEPROF (2011) revealed that this violence is displayed in 50% of the society. The sources of this violence are mainly sexual perversion, ignorance, drug abuse and culture-related practices. Authors of this kind of violence are mainly men; many of them are educators and employers. Thus, one can conclude that authors of this violence are in superior positions of authority vis-a-vis the victims. The culprits utilize their authority to impose oppression on their employees. With regard to economic violence, this takes place when the perpetrator has total control of the victim's financial resources. This violence also entails stopping the victim from completing his/her education or getting a job, or deliberately squandering their collective property

With regard to violence against children, the Rwanda Ministry of Health (MOH 2017) reports that half of all girls and six out of ten boys are exposed to violence at an early age. Physical violence against boys is the most common, followed by physical violence against girls, sexual violence against girls and emotional violence against boys. The same report indicates that 37.2% of girls and 59.5 boys experience physical violence; 23.9% girls and 9.6% boys experience sexual violence; 11.8% girls and 17.3 boys experience emotional violence. In Rwanda, youngsters of all ages are exposed to domestic violence. However, teenagers have more risks than others. The child victims are most likely mistreated by the people they are acquainted with. These include fathers or mothers, neighbours, educators and friends. This study shows that physical and emotional violence are mostly perpetrated by parents or caregivers. One third (1/3) of all boys' physical violence is perpetrated by their peers. One third (1/3) of physical and emotional violence is committed by parents or other caregivers. One third (1/3) of sexual violence against girls is committed by boyfriends or husbands.

Main problems faced by primary school learners in Rwanda

Different reports have highlighted the challenges faced by primary schools in Rwanda. According to Bower (2019), education remains a crucial component of economic growth policy. Nevertheless, the implementation of education in Rwanda has to surmount some challenges such as dropout rates, feeding children, teacher's workload, managing and staffing teachers, as well as fostering a reading culture among children. This author concluded that the challenges faced by primary school in Rwanda include a discordance between age and grade because of the repetition rate policy. The study found that just 10% of students aged 13 delayed entering secondary school as they have repeated some school years during their primary schooling. Another challenge is a high dropout rate of P6 learners, children's lack of feeding facilities at school and teachers' large workload due to the double-shifting system (Bower 2019). All these challenges as mentioned above have a negative effect on children's learning effectiveness in primary schools in Rwanda.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA 2012) reported that compared to the other 10 nations in sub-Saharan Africa, Rwanda offers better access to primary education, although an improvement should be made with regard to repetition and dropout rates, pupil-teacher ratios and access to secondary school. UNICEF (2021) reported that in sub-Saharan countries, Rwanda has emerged the best performer in the education sector. For instance, 98% of children are registered in primary schools. However, there are still numerous challenges in this

area. Though almost every child enters primary school, only 71% of them manage to finish primary school. Classes are too large, have a high student-teacher ratio (about 62 students per teacher). Other problems include: inadequate facilities for primary school, scarcity of budget for primary education, insufficient qualified primary teachers, primary school learners' poor performance in numeracy and literacy exams; teachers' inability to deliver courses using English, which is the required medium of instruction.

Teenagers' pregnancies remain a rampant problem faced by primary school learners in Rwanda. Uwizeye, Muhayiteto, Kantarama, Wiehler and Mrangwa (2020) opine that when a girl gets pregnant, particularly in a low-income country, she misses the opportunity to continue or go to school and therefore limits herself in achieving the economic benefits of education. Once they fall pregnant, young girls in the majority of the developing nations probably drop out of school and this defeats their likelihood of getting better job opportunities (Ajala 2014). The study of Nkurunziza *et al*. (2020) indicates that although the country has managed to improve its health sector, teenagers' pregnancies recur. The study reports that around 85% of all teenagers' pregnancies occur among schoolgirls. According to Uwizeye, Muhayiteto, Kantarama, Wiehler and Mrangwa (2020) the rate of teenage pregnancies is still relatively high in the majority of third world countries.

In Rwanda, research indicates a rapid increase of this crime during the past two decades in spite of the country's efforts in promoting gender balance, female empowerment, as well as the effort to curb child sexual violence. These days the increase in the rate of adolescents' pregnancies is worrying. The NISR reported that in 2007/2008 to 2014/2015 adolescent pregnancies increased from 5.7% to 7.2% of all the adolescent girls in the country, and from 14% to around 21% amongst female teens who are 19 years old (NISR 2009; 2012; 2015). The majority of these young girls who get pregnant are compelled to stop their studies, and the same victims are prone to get into this problem again, especially when they are not provided with proper guidance (UNFPA 2021).

Effect of domestic violence on children's education

Domestic violence has been found to have negative effects on children's learning. This is because children who are exposed to domestic violence react with anxiety, little concentration on their lessons, an increase in aggression (Carlson 2012) which has an effect on their academic performance. Domestic violence affects children's education in a number of ways and these are discussed below.

Regular class attendance was found to be essential in order to succeed; it was also found to be an important tool to save all children from household work (Oketch & Ngware 2010). School attendance also promotes children's cognitive and social development and is very important in helping children get a good start in life. Being exposed to domestic violence has an indirect effect on a child's adaptation by restraining them from regular class attendance (Margolin and Gordis 2014). The negative results of domestic violence give rise to children's misbehaviour, emotional problems and poor academic achievement in school. Narae (2013) found that 50% of people who practise domestic violence harm their children as well, whereas 25% of the victims of the domestic violence are likely to harm their children as well. The author also notes that domestic violence may cause wounds to children which may be grave and prevent them from attending classes, hence hindering their academic achievement. Abuya and Onsomu (2012) argue that emotional problems of children exposed to domestic violence, like low self-esteem and depression, influence their absenteeism and school dropout rate.

As Kameri (2011) states, the incapacity of families to satisfy their basic needs such as schooling have made many children find some employment opportunities in order to get money to pay for exams and to pay school fees. Thus, missing classes undoubtedly causes children's poor performance and lower attainment in other areas of growth (Oketch & Ngware 2010). In

general, pupils who attend classes regularly perform well and take pleasure in learning, more than children exposed to domestic violence. Learning is a continuous action and it is crucial for children to attend school on a regular basis in order to gain maximum benefits from it. Regular class attendance in primary school has demonstrated an early provision of essential skills for learning and positive learning results (Richards 2011). Goddard and Bedi (2010) have found that children who saw the fathers perpetrating any physical harm to their mothers have shown considerable emotional as well as behavioural problems.

As Gichuba (2017) sees it, the consequences of domestic violence are discernible in the classroom situation. The children who experience domestic violence are prone to copy and apply the learned behaviours at their schools while interacting with their peers. It is necessary for educators to foster the practice of positive imitation in their learners who are at some points exposed to domestic violence. Domestic violence threatens children's need for protection and stability; being exposed to unfriendly climates in their families reslults in poor academic achievement (Sambo *et al.* 2016). Therefore, domestic violence can hinder children's capacity to study in a secure and helpful learning setting.

In their study, Jacinta and Rotich (2015) confirm that more than 70% of children's failures at school were caused by pupils' class attendance rate. In addition, these children might not be able to concentrate, have a limited ability to relate positively to other children and might be troublesome while interacting with other children at school (Bancroft & Silverman 2013). Additionally, students who go to school on a regular basis can learn new concepts quicker than those who miss quite a large number of classes. Disturbance in the usual operations of a family has a close relationship with bad behaviours of children, both in the families and any other social settings like school (Gichuba 2017). Concurring, Miller (2010) found that domestic violence has more effect on young kids than on the grown-up ones because of their great reliance on parents or caregivers and due to the lack of sufficient cognitive ability to facilitate their understanding of the world around them. In the study of Holt *et al.* (2008), some primary school children that are affected by domestic violence internalize or externalize their emotions. Those who internalize their emotions are reserved, have limited self-esteem and seldom socialize with other children.

According to Gichuba (2017), learners exposed to domestic violence may experience difficulties in accomplishing their academic activities, a lack of concentration and worse grades on measurments of motor, social and speaking skills. Narae (2013) and Gichuba (2017) find that domestic violence affects children's class attendance and concentration. Most the children exposed to domestic violence resort to not go to school in order to protect their victimized parents. Other children can be horrified at what might occur when they leave home for school. Similarly, the affected children who manage to attend might experience poor concentration because of anxiety and sometimes a sleeping crisis, thus impinging on their studies (Miller 2010). Welch *et al.* (2016) recommend the requirement to eradicate the danger of domestic violence as it brings a threat to children's psychological, physical and emotional welfare.

Methodology

This study has adopted the correlational research design to find the effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among primary school learners in the Rubavu district (Rwanda). According to Cresswell (2012), correlational research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators measure the degree of association (or relation) between two or more variables using the statistical procedure of correlational analysis. This degree of relationship, presented as a number, indicates whether the two variables are related or whether one can predict another. Thus, this study used correlational analysis (analysis of variance and regression analysis) to measure the effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among primary school learners in Rubavu district.

The study was conducted in January-April 2021 in the Rubavu District, Western Povince, in Rwanda. Currently this district has 115 primary schools in total but this study was conducted examining 35 primary schools (private and public) which were selected using systematic sampling. That means that the schools were arranged on alphabetical order, then a fixed interval was used in selecting the schools to be involved in the study. The schools that were located at intervals of three numbers were selected. According to St. Ollaf College (2021), for populations under 1 000, a minimum ratio of 30 percent is advisable to ensure the representativeness of the sample. The number of the schools to be involved in the sample was chosen in accordance with this premise. The choice of the Rubavu District as area of the study was based on the fact that this district is among those where domestic violence has become rampanty.

The target population of this study was consisted of 14 423 subjects (all primary school learners from the 35 primary schools of the Rubavu district). The researcher used the Yamane formula of sample size determination. According to Kasunic (2005), the formula involves a 95% confidence level and the maximum variance (p = 0.5). The formula is stated as follows:

$n = N/1 + N (e)^2$

Where: **n** is the sample size, **N** is the population size, **e** is the margin of error preferred by the researcher and specifies the desired level of precision, where precision e = 1- precision, p = 0.95.

In this study, N is equal to 15 344, e=margin of error=1-0.95 = 0.05

Thus, $n = 14423/1 + 14423 (0.05)^2 = 390$

As per the above calculation, this study used a sample of 390 primary school learners that were selected from 35 primary schools (8 private and 27 public). In addition, a stratified (probability) sampling technique was used in selecting the students. By this technique the researcher divides (stratifies) the population into sub-groups (strata) having the same characteristic, and then from each group a particular sample is randomly chosen (Creswell, 2012). In fact, the researchers divided the students into 3 strata, according to the years of study (P4, P5 and P6). These strata were chosen in order to have diversified and reliable data. Within each group, the researcher used a simple random method to select the students for inclusion in the sample. The researcher decided to involve primary school learners because they are more likely to speak the truth against their families than their older siblings in secondary and tertiary levels of study. Similarly, the learners in upper levels of the primary school were involved instead of those in lower levels as the former are better at filling in questionnaires than the latter.

In data collection, the researcher used a structured questionnaire which contained close-ended questions only in 5 point Likert Scales (1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree). The respondents were asked to tick in the appropriate boxes in accordance with their understanding. Before collecting the data, the researcher sought authorization from relevant authorities to carry out this activity. Furthermore, the researcher sought informed consent from the respondents using an appropriate form. To establish the validity of the research instruments, the researcher used a panel of experts to view them and make comments for their improvement. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher used Cronbach alphas analysis along with a pilot study which was conducted by having 20 respondents (primary school students) fill in the questionnaire. Later the results were analysed to measure whether the questionnaire would generate reliable information. This exercise was conducted in one primary school that was randomly selected. However, the school that was selected for the pilot study was not involved again in collecting the main data.The data from the questionnaires was entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The following table shows the Cronbach alphas scores obtained.

Table 1: Pilot study results			
Variables	**Number of items**	**Cronbach Alpha**	**Comments**
FDV	20	0.911	Accepted
LP	20	0.903	Accepted
Note: FDV=Forms of Domestic violence, **LP**=Learners' Problems			

The results in Table 1 indicate that the Cronbach alphas were above 90%. This means that most items in this questionnaire had high squared multiple correlations, an indication that the questionnaire passed the reliability test. A Cronbach alpha score above 0.7 is considered satisfactory (Taber 2018). The tool was adequate for measuring the forms of domestic violence and learners' problems. The results in Table1 helped the researchers ensure that the instrument is reliable. The observations from the pilot study, by the participants, helped the researcher to eliminate all the errors and make any other necessary adjustments.

In data analysis, the research used the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to do all necessary calculations and generate relevant tables. In addition, the researcher used descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation) and regression analysis in measuring the effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness in Rwandan primary schools.

Findings

Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the demographics of the respondents of this study. It provides the distribution of respondents in terms of age, gender, sex and class. In fact the study involved 390 respondents (upper primary school learners) in total. According to their age, 334 (85.6%) respondents were below 13 years old and 56 (14.4%) respondents were 13 years old and above. Due to the strict enforcement of the law regarding children's education in Rwanda, almost all parents send their children to school. In addition, due to the implementation of the "Educational for all" programme in Rwanda, every child or adult is allowed to study at all levels of education irrespective of his/her age. For that reason, the sample of this study was composed of some children above 13. In terms of sex, the study involved 172 (44.2%) girls and 218 (55.8%) boys. This discrepancy resulted from the fact that in Rwandan primary schools girls are still fewer than boys, although a great effort has been made to promote gender balance in the access to education. Considering their classes, the study involved 130 learners (33.3%) from P4, 130 learners (33.3%) from P5 and 130 learners (33.3%) from P6 to total 390.

Descriptive statistics

This section presents the data with regard to descriptive statistics for each objective. The descriptive statistics presented below include the mean and standard deviation which were based on to answer the research questions of this study. For that reason, the statistics presented below are those on:

- Forms of domestic violence perpetrated against parents
- Forms of domestic violence perpetrated against children and
- Learners' problems in Rubavu district primary schools.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for forms of domestic violence perpetrated against parents					
Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
My father sometimes hurts my mother by beating her, slapping or any other physical abuse	390	1.00	5.00	1.8077	.98390
My mother sometimes hurts my father by with beating him, slapping or any other physical abuse	390	1.00	4.00	1.7256	.90931
My father sometimes hurts my mother with insults or abusive language	390	1.00	5.00	2.1538	1.30332
My mother sometimes hurts my father with insults or abusive language	390	1.00	5.00	1.7564	.93471
My father sometimes hurts my mother by telling her off and bullying her	390	1.00	5.00	2.4846	1.55566
My mother sometimes hurts my father by telling him off and bullying him	390	1.00	5.00	1.7436	.92988
My father sometimes hurts my mother by belittling or dehumanizing her	390	1.00	5.00	1.9564	1.13403
My mother sometimes hurts my father by belittling or dehumanizing him	390	1.00	5.00	1.7744	.95415
My father does not help my mother in household activities	390	1.00	5.00	4.2974	.77807
My mother does not help my father in household activities	390	1.00	5.00	1.6897	.88323
My father sometimes applies sexual harassment against my mother	390	3.00	4.00	3.0462	.21009
My mother sometimes applies sexual harassment against my father	390	3.00	5.00	3.0179	.16720
My father does not help my mother in providing all the family requirements	390	1.00	5.00	1.8282	.99289
My mother does not help my father in providing all the family requirements	390	1.00	5.00	2.2154	1.35850
My father sometimes locks my mother in a room as a punishment	390	1.00	4.00	1.6513	.79616
My mother sometimes locks my father in a room as a punishment	390	1.00	4.00	1.6026	.76120
My father sometimes does not give (enough) food to my mother	390	1.00	3.00	1.6333	.76317
My mother sometimes does not give (enough) food to my father	390	1.00	5.00	2.5154	1.50014
My father sometimes intimidates or threatens my mother	390	1.00	5.00	2.7026	1.59972
My mother sometimes intimidates or threatens my father	390	1.00	5.00	1.8897	1.04925
Overall	390			2.1746	1.95645
Note: Strongly Disagree=[1-2[=**Very Low Mean;** Disagree= [2-3[=**Low mean;** Neutral= [3-4[=**moderated mean;** Agree= [4-5[=**High mean;** Strongly Agree = [5-[= **Very High mean** Source: Research data					

The results in Table 2 indicate that most of the respondents disagreed strongly that:
- Their fathers sometimes hurt their mothers by beating them, slapping or any other physical abuse (μ=1.8077);
- Their mothers sometimes hurt their fathers with beating them, slapping or any other physical abuse (μ= 1.7256),

- Their mothers sometimes hurt their fathers with insults or abusing language (μ=1.7564);
- Their mothers sometimes hurt their fathers by telling off and bullying (μ=1.7436);
- Their fathers sometimes hurt their mothers by belittling or dehumanizing (μ=1.9564);
- Their mothers sometimes hurt their fathers by belittling or dehumanizing (μ=1.7744);
- Their mothers do not help their fathers in household activities (μ=1.6897);
- Their fathers do not help their mothers in providing all the family requirements (μ=1.8282);
- Their fathers sometimes lock their mothers in a room as a punishment (μ=1.6513);
- Their mothers sometimes lock their fathers in a room as a punishment (μ=1.6026);
- Their fathers sometimes do not give (enough) food to their mothers (μ=1.6333) and;
- Their mothers sometimes intimidate or threaten their fathers (μ=1.8897).

The results in Table 2 indicate that the most of respondent disagreed that:
- Their fathers sometimes hurt their mothers with insults or abusive language (μ=2.1538);
- Their fathers sometimes hurt their mothers by telling them off and bullying them (μ=2.4846),
- Their mothers do not help their fathers in providing all the family requirements (μ=2.2154),
- Their mothers sometimes do not give (enough) food to their fathers (μ=2.5154)
- Their father sometimes intimidate or threaten their mothers (μ=2.7026).

The results in Table 2 indicate that most of respondent were neutral about the fact that:
- Their fathers sometimes apply sexual harassment against their mothers (μ=3.0462) and;
- Their mothers sometimes apply sexual harassment against their fathers (μ=3.0179).

Finally, the results in Table 2 indicate that most of the respondents agreed that their fathers do not help their mothers in household activities (μ=4.2974.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for forms of domestic violence perpetrated against children					
Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	STD
My parents sometimes beat me or commit any other physical abuse as a punishment to me	390	1.00	5.00	2.2256	1.31253
My siblings sometimes beat me or commit any other physical abuse as a punishment to me	390	1.00	5.00	1.9692	1.14908
My parents sometimes lock me inside a room as a punishment	390	1.00	5.00	1.8282	.99289
My siblings sometimes lock me inside a room as a punishment	390	1.00	5.00	1.7744	.95415
My parents sometimes hurt me with insults or abusive language	390	1.00	5.00	2.3615	1.47823
My siblings sometime hurt me with insults or abusive language	390	1.00	5.00	2.3436	1.37547
My parents sometimes hurt me by telling me off and bullying me	390	1.00	5.00	1.9000	1.01036
My siblings sometimes hurt me by telling me off and bullying me	390	1.00	5.00	1.7923	.92129
My parents sometimes hurt me by belittling or dehumanizing me	390	1.00	5.00	1.7718	.90796
My siblings sometimes hurt me by belittling or dehumanizing me	390	1.00	5.00	1.8436	.96395
My parents don't love me because I am a girl/a boy	390	1.00	5.00	1.9846	.99602

My siblings don't love me because I am a girl/a boy	390	1.00	5.00	1.7974	.91404
My parents force me to do very difficult and tiresome tasks	390	1.00	5.00	2.1846	1.33444
My siblings force me to do very difficult and tiresome tasks	390	1.00	5.00	1.8513	1.03831
My parents do not give me food as a punishment	390	1.00	5.00	2.1051	1.25501
My sibling do not give me food as a punishment	390	1.00	5.00	1.9103	1.12446
My parents sometimes intimidate or threaten me	390	1.00	5.00	2.8179	1.63829
My siblings sometimes intimidate or threaten me	390	1.00	5.00	2.2436	1.39394
My parents do not care about me and my studies	390	1.00	5.00	2.0872	1.23887
My siblings do not care about me and my studies	390	1.00	5.00	3.3821	1.53960
Overall	**390**			**2.1087**	**1.17694**

Note: Strongly Disagree=[1-2[=**Very Low Mean;** Disagree= [2-3[=**Low mean;** Neutral= [3-4[=**moderated mean;** Agree= [4-5[=**High mean;** Strongly Agree = [5-[= **Very High mean**
Source: Research data

The results in Table 3 show that most the of respondents disagreed strongly that:
- Their siblings sometimes beat them or do any other physical abuse as a punishment to them (μ=1.9692);
- Their parents sometimes lock them inside a room as a punishment (μ=1.8282);
- Their siblings sometimes lock them inside a room as a punishment (μ=1.7744);
- Their parents sometimes hurt them by telling them off and bullying them (μ=1.9000);
- Their siblings sometimes hurt them by telling them off and bullying them (μ=1.7923);
- Their parents sometimes hurt them by belittling or dehumanizing them (μ=1.7718);
- Their siblings sometimes hurt them by belittling or dehumanizing them (μ=1.8436);
- Their parents don't love them because they are girls/boys; their siblings don't love them because they are girls/boys (μ=1.7974),
- Their siblings force them to do very difficult and tiresome tasks (μ=1.8513) and
- Their siblings do not give them food as a punishment (μ=1.9103).

The results in Table 3 show that most of respondents disagreed that:
- Their parents sometimes beat them or commit any other physical abuse as a punishment to them (μ= 2.2256);
- Their parents sometimes hurt them with insults or abusive language (μ=2.3615);
- Their siblings sometimes hurt them with insults or abusive language (μ=2.3436);
- Their parents force them to do very difficult and tiresome tasks (μ=2.1846);
- Their parents do not give them food as a punishment (μ=2.1051),
- Their parents sometimes intimidate or threaten them (μ=2.8179);
- Their siblings sometimes intimidate or threaten them (μ=2.2436) and;
- Their parents do not care about them and their studies (μ=2.0872).

The results in Table 3 show that most respondents were neutral about the fact that their siblings do not care about them and their studies.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on learners' problems					
Statements	**N**	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std.**
My performance in internal exams has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.7897	.96568
My performance in district tests has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.8744	1.02268

My concentration in the lessons has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	2.0026	1.13259
My participation in classroom activities has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.8077	.99946
My attitude towards learning has been negative in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	2.0590	1.22069
My discipline in school has been bad in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	2.0231	1.14814
In the last five years I have been late for class very often	390	1.00	5.00	1.9103	1.12446
In the last five years I have been absent from classes very often	390	1.00	5.00	2.1000	1.22642
In the last five years I have missed many examinations	390	1.00	5.00	1.8769	1.05880
In the last five years I have missed many quizzes	390	1.00	5.00	2.0744	1.20073
My motivation to studies has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.9462	1.02145
My cooperation with other students has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.9513	1.13608
My self-engagement for studies has been very low in the last five years	390	1.00	5.00	1.8564	1.06590
In the last five years I have had difficulties in understanding the lessons	390	1.00	5.00	2.2179	1.34954
In the last five years I have had difficulties in raising school fees	390	1.00	5.00	2.0051	1.13599
In the last five years I have been feeling shy to ask questions in class	390	1.00	5.00	2.2103	1.36119
In the last five years I have had difficulties in interacting with other students	390	1.00	5.00	1.9641	1.09156
In the last five years I have had difficulties in recalling the information related to my studies	390	1.00	5.00	1.8256	.96486
In the last five years my competitive spirit was very low	390	1.00	5.00	2.3718	1.47741
In the last five years I have had difficulties obtaining scholastic material	390	1.00	5.00	1.9051	1.04831
Overall	**390**			**1.98859**	**1.13759**

Note: Strongly Disagree=[1-2[=**Very Low Mean;** Disagree= [2-3[=**Low mean;** Neutral= [3-4[=**moderated mean;** Agree= [4-5[=**High mean;** Strongly Agree = [5-[= **Very High mean**

Source: Research data

The results in Table 4 show that the most of respondents disagreed strongly that:
- Their performance in internal exams has been very low in the last five years (μ=1.7897);
- Their performance in district tests has been very low in the last five years (μ=1.8744);
- Their participation in classroom activities has been very low in the last five years (μ=1.8077);
- In the last five years they have been late for class very often (μ=1.9103);
- In the last five years they have missed many examinations (μ=1.8769);
- Their motivation to study have been very low in the last five years (μ=1.9462);
- Their cooperation with other students has been very low in the last five years (μ=1.9513);
- Their self-engagement for studies has been very low in the last five years (μ=1.8564);
- In the last five years they have had difficulty in interacting with other students (μ=1.9641);
- In the last five years they have had difficulty in recalling the information related to their studies (μ=1.8256) and;

- In the last five years they have had difficulty obtaining scholastic material (μ=1.9051).

The results in Table 4 show that most of the respondents disagreed that:
- Their concentration in the lessons has been very low in the last five years (μ=2.0026);
- Their attitudes towards learning has been negative in the last five years (μ=2.0590);
- Their discipline in school has been bad in the last five years (μ=2.0231);
- In the last five years they have been absent for classes very often (μ=2.1000);
- In the last five years they have missed many quizzes (μ=2.0744);
- In the last five years they have had difficulty in understanding the lessons (μ=2.2179);
- In the last five years they have had difficulty in getting school fees (μ= 2.005);
- In the last five years they have been feeling shy to ask questions in class (μ=2.2103) and;
- In the last five years their competitive spirit was very low (μ=2.3718).

Effect of domestic violence perpetrated against parents on children's learning effectiveness

Table 5: Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.580[a]	.337	.300	.67011
a. Predictors: (Constant), Domestic Violence against parents				

Results in Table 5 showed that 33.7 % of the variation in the dependent variable (learning effectiveness) can be explained by domestic violence perpetrated against parents, while the remaining percentages can be attributed to other variables which are not contained in the model.

Table 6: Analysis of variance of domestic violence perpetrated against parents and children's learning effectiveness						
ANOVA[b]						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	4.100	1	4.100	9.131	.007[a]
	Residual	8.083	18	.449		
	Total	12.183	19			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Domestic Violence against parents						
b. Dependent Variable: Learning Effectiveness						

The analysis of variance in Table 6 revealed that domestic violence perpetrated against parents has a significant relationship (F= 9.131, p value <0.05) with children's learning effectiveness.

Table 7: Regression coefficients on domestic violence perpetrated against parents and children's learning effectiveness					
Coefficients[a]					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.

	(Constant)	.854	.499		1.714	.104
1	Domestic Violence against parents	.676	.224	.580	3.022	.007
	a. Dependent Variable: Learning Effectiveness					

The results in Table 7 revealed a significant effect of domestic violence against parents (**=0.676** and p value **<0.05**) on children's learning effectiveness. The results came from the following model.

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta x + \varepsilon$$

Y=0.854 + 0.676X + €

Where Y= children's learning effectiveness, X= Domestic violence against parents and €= error term

Effect of domestic violence perpetrated against children on their learning effectiveness

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.563[a]	.317	.279	.69026
a. Predictors: (Constant), Domestic violence against children				

Results in Table 8 showed that 31.7 % of the variation in the dependent variable (learning effectiveness) can be explained by domestic violence against children; the remaining percentages can be attributed to other variables which are not contained in the model.

Table 9: Analysis of variance of domestic violence perpetrated against children and children's learning effectiveness

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.981	1	3.981	8.355	.010[a]
	Residual	8.576	18	.476		
	Total	12.557	19			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Domestic Violence children						
b. Dependent Variable: Learning Effectiveness						

The analysis of variance in Table 9: Analysis of variance of domestic violence perpetrated against children and children's learning effectiveness
Table 9 revealed that domestic violence against children has a significant relationship (F= 9.131, p value <0.05) with children's learning effectiveness.

Table 10: Regression coefficients on domestic violence perpetrated against parents and children's learning effectiveness

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.173	.900			-.192	.850
	Domestic against Violence children	1.024	.354	.563		2.891	.010
a. Dependent Variable: Learning Effectiveness							

The results in Table 10 revealed a significant effect of domestic violence against children (**=1.024** and p value **<0.05**) on children's learning effectiveness. The results came from the following model.

$$\widehat{Y} = \alpha + \beta x + \varepsilon$$

Y= - 0.173 + 1.024X + €
Where Y= children's learning effectiveness, X= Domestic violence against children and €= error term

Discussion

This section discusses the main findings of the study as per its research questions. These are:
- What forms of domestic violence are perpetrated against primary school learners as well as their parents in Rubavu district?
- What are the problems faced by primary school learners in Rubavu District? And
- How does domestic violence influence learning effectiveness among primary school learners in Rubavu district?

Forms of domestic violence perpetrated against primary school learners as well as their parents in the Rubavu district

As revealed by the results of this study, there are few primary school learners who are exposed to domestic violence in Rubavu district. The study revealed that most of the respondents disagreed that domestic violence is perpetrated in their homes. Currently the government of Rwanda has taken drastic measures to fight against domestic violence; it has reduced the prevalence of domestic violence. This is because whoever who commits this crime is punished by the law. Despite these drastic measures, there are still some cases of domestic violence in some families. The results of this study indicate that the most common forms of domestic violence against parents are namely:
- Husbands who hurt their wives with insults or abusive language (19%),
- Husbands who hurt their wives by telling them off and bullying them (30.9%),
- Husbands who do not help their wives in household activities (the most prominent, 81.8%),
- Wives who do not help their husbands in providing all the family requirements (21%),
- Wives who do not give (enough) food to their husbands (35.3%) and
- Husbands who intimidate or threaten their wives (38.6%).

Similarly, the findings revealed that most of the respondents were neutral regarding the occurrence of sexual harassment in the family (98.7%). This is because sexual matters are rarely discussed as many do not like to answer this kind of question or give false answers in order to keep their image positive. In the same view, Rwandese find it difficult or against their culture to utter sexual terms.

These findings showed that only few primary school learners in Rubavu District are exposed to domestic violence. As earlier mentioned, the government of Rwanda punishes

whoever commits this crime severely. Thus, there is a decrease of domestic violence observed many families in Rwanda. The results of this study indicate that the most common forms of domestic violence against children by parents and siblings are:

- Physical abuse against children (24%),
- Insults and abusive language against children (26.4%),
- Giving children difficult and tiresome tasks (20%),
- Not giving food to children as a punishment (17.1%),
- Intimidating and threatening the children (40.9%) and;
- Parents who do not care about their children's' life and studies (16.3%)

It was also found that wives and children are exposed to domestic violence more than husbands, and found that men commit domestic violence more than women. Similar findings were found by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF 2011) whose study concluded that fathers or male relatives are the most frequent practitioners of domestic violence. Although commendable efforts to fight domestic violence have been made in Rwanda, there still exist some husbands or men who consider themselves kings or leaders of the family. For that reason, they sometimes use dictatorship, intimidation or threatening behaviour in order to have total control over their wives and children.

Problems faced by primary school learners in Rubavu District

With regard to problems faced by primary school learners learners in Rubavu District, this study found that few learners are faced with the following problems:

- Few learners have a low rate of concentration in class (11.2%),
- Few learners have a negative attitude towards learning (14.8%),
- Few learners are indisciplined (10.5%),
- Few learners miss classes very often (13.2%),
- Few learners miss many quizzes (14.9%),
- Few learners have difficulty understanding lessons (18.4%),
- Few learners have difficulty raising school fees (11.5%),
- Few learners feel too shy to ask questions in class (20.7%) and,
- Few learners have a very low rate of competition (27.1%).

These findings were partially reiterated by Bower (2019) who found that one of the challenges facing the Rwandan education system is the high dropout rate among P6 students. Similar results were found by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAICA, 2012), which concluded that the main issues in the Rwandan education system are notably: the higher pupil-teacher ratio in basic education, high drop-out and repetition rates and insufficient hours of instruction.

Effect of domestic violence on learning effectiveness among primary school learners in Rubavu district

Finally, the study found that domestic violence perpetrated against parents has a significant effect on learning effectiveness among primary school learners (= 0.676, p value <0.05) in Rubavu District. It was also found that domestic violence perpetrated against learners has a significant effect on their learning effectiveness (= 1.024, p value <0.05) in Rubavu. These findings complement those of Kanchiputu and Mwale (2016), whose study found that learners exposed to domestic violence are negatively affected in terms of their emotional, psychological and physical status. In the long run, this hinders the victims' learning process in many ways, such as causing the victims to lose interest in education. Similar findings were reported by Lloyd (2018) whose study concluded that domestic violence may have a negative effect on cognitive

abilities, the mastery of language skills as well as academic achievement, while Jambi (2014) found that domestic violence is the main source of absenteeism and this causes a learner's poor academic performance.

Overall, the findings of this study are different from previous studies on the same topic. The former focused on primary schools only while the latter focused on learning in general without specifying any educational level. The findings of this study are similar to the previous ones in that all confirmed that domestic violence affects children's learning. However, this study revealed that there exist few cases of domestic violence among children, which again lowers the number of students whose learning is affected by domestic violence.

Conclusion and recommendations

As per the results of this study, it was concluded that domestic violence (both against parents and against children) has a significant effect on learning effectiveness in Rwandan primary schools. It was also concluded that although the government of Rwanda has set some measures to combat domestic violence, there are still some families in which this crime is still perpetrated. It was concluded that wives and children are more exposed to domestic violence than husbands. This is most likely caused by the fact that some men are still considering themselves kings and leaders of their families. Therefore, they seem to dominate their spouses and apply some dictatorship on their wives, which in most cases brings about domestic violence. This implies that there is still a need for the government to tighten the measures so that this crime may be restrained successfully. It was also concluded that some student do not learn effectively in Rwandan primary schools, and that domestic violence is among the contributing factors. This also implies that significant measures are needed to address this issue. The findings of this study will inform the government on the forms of domestic violence which are still being perpetrated in some families in Rwanda and their effect on learning effectiveness in primary schools. The findings of this study will also indicate rates of learning effectiveness in Rwandan primary schools. In fact, the findings of this study will help the government in developing suitable policies to mitigate these issues.

Based on its findings, the study recommended that primary school management in Rwanda should strive for identifying students with unusual behaviour and study them carefully. Once they discover that these students are exposed to domestic violence, the management of the school should set up special mechanisms to address this issue, to include calling upon the parents for some counselling, reporting the culprit parents to police or to local authorities, and assisting the affected learners in a special way, like according them additional care in their studies. In order to help the learners exposed to domestic violence, there should be collaboration between local leaders, police, school managers and the affected children. Once they are identified, the school should immediately be in touch with the parents for some counselling. If this does not work, the school should immediately inform the local leaders as well as the police to follow up and solve the issue. Finally, for a special support to the learners who are affected by domestic violence, each school in Rwanda should hire a counsellor whose main function is to help students with psychological problems including those exposed to domestic violence. The counsellor should have the ability to handle the issues related to domestic violence. The findings of this study imply that domestic violence has a detrimental effect on children's education and that more effort should be made in order to get rid of this danger in Rwandan families. This study was conducted during the period of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, data collection was difficult because there were restrictions to moving from one district to another in addition to other related measures that had to be respected.

Acknowledgement

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