DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN UGANDA

Interrogating Female Teachers' Experiences in Secondary Schools in Kitgum District

BY

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DECLARATION

I, AYOT GLADYS OYAT, declare that the work herein is presented in its original form and has not been presented to any other university or institution for any academic award.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my dear mother, Margaret Ayot Ongutti (23/8/1933 to 3/6/2019). Although you had to journey back home before completing this study, thank you for empowering me to live a purposeful life. I am what I am today because of your struggle. Thank you for being strong for your children, Mama.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AHRC	Arts and Humanitarians Research Council
AURC	Australian Human Rights Commission
DV	Domestic Violence
NCADV	National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
NGO	Non-Government Organization
REC	Research Ethical Committee
RFT	Radical Feminist Theory
SFP	Socialist Feminist Philosophy
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UN	United Nations
UNCST	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence can impact the survivors and the places where they work in many ways. A qualitative study interrogated domestic violence and the performance of female secondary school teachers in Kitgum District with a focus to assess how domestic violence affects the teaching roles of female teachers in secondary schools in Uganda, explore the female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles, describe how the female teachers affected by domestic violence cope with the challenges of domestic violence while performing duties and explore support available in school to survivors.

The study was conceived within the socialist feminist philosophy and underpinned by radical feminist theory, both contained in the applied ethics dominion. Narratives of 20 female teachers and 23 headteachers experiences were collected through in-depth interviews.

Findings reveals that the multiple roles of teachers, undertaken within a domestic violence environment greatly impacts service delivery of teaching and interpersonal relations resulting in poor performance in the roles of these teachers. Female teachers affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges using both formal and informal ways but with limited support from their places of work.

The study recommends for supportive policy frameworks mainstreamed as tools for remedy, coping and resolutions to empower female teachers and headteachers on support systems for female teachers affected by domestic violence to allow them supportive work environment.

This study adds international dimension to literature on domestic violence and suggests practical ways on strategies for intervention to mitigate the impact of domestic violence in schools.

The study suggests for a similar study on all female employees in school settings to be carried out, and on the male teachers as well. It further suggests that longitudinal studies on female teachers be conducted to consolidate the findings on experiences of female teachers and impact of domestic violence in schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Overview

This chapter gives the historical background of domestic violence and explains what domestic violence is, narrowing it to the study focus. The narrative spells out research on domestic violence for career and highlights the teachers' teaching and administrative roles. The statement of the problem prompting the study is given; the purpose and objectives with research questions to guide the study are highlighted. The chapter also spells out the justification and significance of the study.

1.1 Historical background

Domestic violence is experienced by women worldwide. It is a universal reality that has existed in all societies and human settlements regardless of class, income, culture, or educational status (Oni-Ojo et al., 2014). Domestic violence is not a modern phenomenon, and there are references to abuse spanning centuries back to biblical times (Muravyeva, 2013).

Before the late 19th Century, it was considered a necessary aspect of a husband's marital obligation to control and chastise his wife using physical force (Reid, 1998). This view is traced back to the Roman Empire and medieval times in many countries and in selected Bible passages endorsing male authority over women (Reid, 1998). It continues to be a serious and widespread global problem (WHO, 2010). Domestic violence permeates society, stretching socio-economic and cultural groups (WHO, 2005). Scottish and English

laws permitted a husband to discipline his wife physically without prosecution for assault or battery (Koening et al., 2003).

Domestic violence is a widespread global issue that crosses boundaries such as socioeconomic class, race, and religion (Swallow, 2017). Domestic violence has become an essential field of research in the last decades globally. This has mainly emerged as a global trend promoted by the United Nations, Human Rights activists, and feminist movements. The World Health Organization (WHO) has pronounced violence against women endemic (Garcia-Moreno & Jansen, 2005). Based on regional variance ranging from over 45% of women in Africa to 27.2% of women in Europe, about 30% of women at some point in their lives are affected by domestic violence (Garcia-Moreno & Jansen, 2005). Rayner-Thomas (2013) quotes a study documented by Garcia-Moreno and Jansen (2005), which examined the prevalence of domestic violence in ten countries with a broad range of social and cultural settings, where 24,097 women participated in the study. The findings were that between 13% and 61% experienced physical violence from a male partner, 6%-59% experienced sexual violence, and 20%-75% experienced emotional and psychological violence. These results expose women's challenges in their lives because of domestic violence.

According to statistics released by the Malaysian Royal Police to Parliament, 62,670 domestic violence cases were reported from 2000 to 2017, with an estimated 3800 cases per year, equivalent to 323 cases per month (Laws of Malaysia, 2017). In 2011, the National Crime Record Bureau reported 8,618 dowry deaths in India, but unofficial figures currently estimate that there are at least three times more dowry deaths than previously thought (Nyangoma, 2012).

A growing body of evidence has highlighted the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence in developing countries. The cases are more prominent in African countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, empirical evidence on the prevalence of domestic violence is limited and confined to a small number of speculations in the study population (Koening et al., 2003). In 1995, Egypt Demographic and Health Survey indicated that 35% of women reported being beaten by their husbands. A lack of understanding of the magnitude of domestic violence hinders the development of effort to address it.

Following significant events such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the 1994 World Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, domestic violence is now a Human Rights issue (Aldersey & Turnbull, 2011). Since then, the 21st century has witnessed various efforts to end domestic violence against women worldwide.

In Africa, domestic violence originated from dowry-related practices, marital rape, and other traditional practices harmful to women (Nyangoma, 2012) and was mainly associated with physical violence. Only in the 20th Century did laws finally condemn wife abuse and consider it a criminal offence. The women's movement in the 1970s identified and responded to wife abuse, recognising it as a social problem. For example, feminists documented the widespread incidence of wife beating and asserted that it was not just working-class husbands who assaulted their wives but all classes of men (Clark, 2011). They founded shelters where women could take refuge, demanded police to protect women and advocated for battered women in courts (Clark, 2011).

Domestic violence has a history in Uganda as well, with many women, irrespective of status, background, and age, experiencing the vices despite attempts by the government to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Over the past three decades, Uganda has made tremendous efforts towards promoting women's rights (Dunne, 2014). Uganda is a signatory to various international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform of Action. These and other commitments are entrenched through the Uganda Constitution and domesticated in the Domestic Violence Act of 2010 and Domestic Regulations of 2011.

Despite all the developments and laws against domestic violence, the vice remains a fundamental challenge and is bound to have several consequences on women's health and productivity. This is evident when UNESCO cited the Uganda Law Report of 2006, which established that domestic violence occurred frequently in 66% of homes in Uganda. Such evidence makes this study worthwhile (Dunne, 2014).

The Uganda Demographic Household Survey (UDHS) data and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2011) indicated a high rate of reported gender-based violence. The 2011 UDHS report further noted that overall prevalence rates by type of violence were 56% for physical violence, 27.7% for sexual violence and 42.9% for spousal violence. This figure differs slightly from the Uganda (2016) Demographic Health Survey, which indicates the portion of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 experiencing intimate partner physical and or sexual violence in a lifetime at 50% and that 39.6% had experienced it within the last year.

Uganda has invested a lot in ending violence against women. It has a solid normative legal framework informing the work on gender-based violence and harmful practices (UNFPA, 2018). Uganda's 1995 Constitution and a broader normative and policy framework reflect global standards. They are strongly supportive of gender equity, and within recent policy documents, they also address gender-based violence explicitly (UNFPA, 2018). The National Action Plan on Elimination of Gender-based Violence in Uganda (2016-2020) frames the issue of gender-based violence as an urgent development priority and factor to address in achieving Uganda's development goals (UNFPA, 2018). Gender issues in Uganda lean more toward females, and domestic violence issues are fully embraced. One would expect less domestic violence than what the figure portrays. Unfortunately, they do not address critical aspects of violence against women. These ineffective laws pose a big problem in fighting violence against women in Uganda.

The Uganda Domestic Violence Act No. 17 of 2010 puts stringent protection for domestic violence victims in place. It broadly defines domestic violence as physical, sexual, verbal, psychological and economic abuse of a victim or anyone related to them. The Act addresses all forms of violence, including sexual violence. It states that there is no excuse for Women to be victims of domestic violence and that there should not be any consent to acts of domestic violence. The National Policy on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence in Uganda and the associated National Plan of Action on Elimination of Gender-Based Violence in Uganda (2016) are aligned with all relevant prior policies and help summarise the broad body of national laws, policies and international commitments which support efforts to address Gender Based Violence (Chambel,2018). These policies focus on ending impunity for perpetrators of violence and creating an enabling environment for

accountability of stakeholders. Unfortunately, domestic violence in Uganda still goes on in many communities.

In the district of study, several reports on the conflict in Northern Uganda have noted domestic violence as one of the most pervasive violations of the rights of women and girls and a significant public health problem in the region (Kitara et al., 2009). The prevalence of violence against female teachers in secondary schools and how it impacts their performance remains to be confirmed and brought to light. Black et al. (2019) assert that domestic violence is prevalent in Northern Uganda, yet few studies have examined domestic violence in this setting. The study results indicated a high rate of emotional, physical, and sexual violence. The study states that 78.5% of women had experienced at least one type of domestic violence, and more than half of the participants had experienced violence in the 12 months before the survey. It is necessary to establish what percentage of these are female teachers in secondary schools and how it impacts their performances.

Female teachers live in these families and are most likely affected, yet no empirical data exists to establish this. If it exists, there is a need to document the impact on their productivity.

1.2 What is domestic violence?

Researchers have no universally agreed definition of domestic violence (Rayners-Thomas, 2013). It is a global problem that crosses cultural, geographical, religious, social, and economic boundaries and violates women's rights (Idris et al., 2018). Domestic violence is complex and can encompass a wide range of behaviours and relationships, and when

inflicted on women, it involves physical, financial, and emotional violence that disproportionately affects women. Domestic violence may leave the victim unable to make decisions, express their views, and protect themselves from the vice. The term is often used interchangeably with terms such as 'intimate partner violence', 'family violence', and 'spousal/domestic abuse' (Rayners-Thomas, 2013). It is characterised by acts of violence, power and coercion intended to control another person's behaviour (Smith & Powell, 1989). The word 'violence' may be misleading since many people consider only the physical violence aspect. However, Smith and Powell (1989) clarify that violence is generally categorised into physical, emotional, economic, and psychological dimensions.

Rayners-Thomas (2013) asserts power and control when he says that domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour that individuals use to gain power and control over a current or former intimate partner. However, power is taken negatively, bringing in another more precise definition that domestic violence is an abuse of power. It is the domination, coercion, intimidation, and victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual, or emotional means within an intimate relationship (Kippen et al., 2007). The negativity associated with it can make one deduce the prevalence of a negative impact on the survivor, bringing to light the need for this research.

Domestic violence is, therefore, coercive and controlling behaviour by a family member that causes physical, sexual and or emotional damage to the survivor and economic deprivation. Domestic violence can involve a continuation of controlling behaviour and violence, which can occur over several years before and after separation. These

definitions highlight some of the various descriptions of domestic violence. There are many other definitions in use which are specific to context.

Although both men and women can be battered and suffer domestic violence, in this study, domestic violence shall mean male partners inflicting physical, emotional, psychological, or economic violence on female teachers. Interest is taken in female teachers because of historical facts and our society's patriarchal nature, making women more vulnerable to domestic violence. Women are five to eight times more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence (Kats et al.,2017). Besides, they also represent an even more significant percentage of victims in the most severe assault cases by intimate partners (Kats et al., 2017). Gaps exist in the literature on the prevalence of domestic violence among female teachers in Northern Uganda. Gaps further exist in the impact of domestic violence on the female workforce in general and female teachers in this area specifically. How domestic violence impacts these teachers' teaching and administrative roles became a vital focus of this research.

Violence perpetrated against women by intimate partners is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behaviour. Working women are frequently harassed by their current and former intimate partners, which can disrupt teachers' performance (Oni-Ojo et al., 2014). Until employers and the public have a broader understanding of how domestic violence affects the lives of workers and the workplace, it is unlikely that workplaces will make wholesale changes in policies and procedures to protect the employees and the safety of women who are abused (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). When head teachers are not aware of what female teachers go through, and when the female teachers do not talk about how domestic violence affect them, supporting them may

become a big challenge, and this can have a bearing on the performance of such teachers in the schools.

This study considers domestic violence physical, psychological/emotional, and economic. Domestic violence can vary in how often it happens, the nature of the domestic violence and how severe it is. It can range from one episode of violence that could have a lasting impact to chronic and severe attacks over multiple years (UBOS, 2016). My study did not disaggregate the violence by severity and duration.

1.2.1 Physical violence

According to Cardina & Wicks (2004), physical violence occurs when a partner slaps a woman, throws something at her, pushes, hits, kicks, chokes, burns or harms her with objects or weapons. Signs of physical violence can be primarily obvious, including bruises, cuts, broken bones, and swellings (Smith & Powell, 1989).

This study takes physical violence to be slapping a woman, throwing something at her, pushing, hitting, kicking, choking, burning, harming her with objects or weapons, as well as behavioural elements, causing pain and injury.

1.2.2 Psychological/emotional violence

Psychological violence is done through intimidation and threat (Smith & Powell, 1989). This occurs when a woman is insulted, constantly belittled and humiliated, and faces threats of harm, deprivation, and shame. Other victims may not be physically touched, yet the threat of physical assault is so pervasive that it creates fear in the victim (Smith & Powell, 1989).

While this definition is acceptable, this study broadens and takes psychological/emotional abuse as actual or threatened manipulative behaviour, blaming, making one feel guilty, comparison with other people and acts that demean the victim like Verbal abuse, name calling and intimidation. Deprivation, neglect of spouse and children, and unreasonable control to participate in social life are also aspects of psychological violence. This gives a broader description that enriches the study.

1.2.3 Economic violence

Economic abuse is a unique form of intimate partner violence (IPV) and includes behaviours that control a survivor's ability to acquire, use, and maintain resources. These tactics can result in someone becoming economically dependent on their partner and may limit their ability to leave the relationship and establish independence (Johnson, 2022). It is a form of violence when one intimate partner controls the other partner's access to economic resources, which diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend on the perpetrators financially. It may involve preventing a partner from resource acquisition, such as restricting their ability to find employment, maintain or advance their career and acquire assets, preventing the victim from obtaining an education (Herron & Javier, 2013). Economic control prevents survivors from knowing or accessing their bank accounts, credit cards, and other shared assets. It can also include denying a survivor access to food, clothing, or medications and tracking a survivor's use of money (Sanders CK., 2015). Economic abuse, therefore, encompasses behaviours that control a survivor's ability to acquire, use, and maintain resources, thus threatening [their] financial security and potential for self-sufficiency (Adams et al., 2008)

This study recognised all these definitions and therefore takes economic violence as actual or threatened behaviours of a male spouse that deprives the survivor, who is a female teacher of a secondary school, from accessing resources, restricting them from work, and advancing in their career like promotions and further education; depriving them of acquiring assets and other necessities; seizure of income or assets; withholding or controlling the victim's money or spending her savings without permission as well as failing to provide for the family, leaving it to the survivor.

Although I am aware that domestic violence can take the form of sexual violence, this was excluded from this study because of the cultural context in which the study was conducted.

1.3 Teachers' Performance

Teachers' performance refers to duties performed by teachers at a particular period in the school system. Teachers can also combine relevant inputs to enhance teaching and learning (Gikunda,2016). This study takes teachers' performance to refer to the different roles they perform in school. It goes beyond the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs to enhance teaching and learning. Still, it includes the appropriate inputs outside the classroom that a teacher performs to raise a holistic child in discipline, mentoring, and routines for creating a conducive learning environment, like doing weekly duties.

1.4 Teachers' roles

Roles can be defined as a set of functions an individual performs in response to the expectations of members of a social system or organisation and their expectations about their position in the system (Mohanity, 2018).

A teacher is a person who helps students acquire knowledge, competence, or virtue through instructions or the practice of teaching. Teachers have vital roles and responsibilities towards their students, imparting classroom knowledge and motivating and inspiring them to achieve. Norms and Standards for Education (NSA) policy (2002) defined seven roles that a teacher must be able to perform and describe in detail the knowledge, skills and values that are necessary to perform their functions successfully. The seven roles are learning mediation, interpreter and designer of learning programs, administrator and manager, assessor, pastoral role, and subject matter specialist. Together, these roles paint a picture of the knowledge, skills, and values by which a competent and professional teacher is judged (Parker, 2002). The role of a teacher therefore provides for the activities that a teacher conducts in school to help a learner acquire skills, knowledge and values that equips him or her for a long-life learning. For this to be effective, the teacher must create supportive learning environment where the child can learn effectively. These are roles that a teacher may not fully perform when experiencing domestic violence unless there are measures that can help them negotiate through to achieve in their places of work, in this context, secondary schools. These roles are executed through giving instructions, guiding, and facilitating learning in the classroom setting, and interacting outside the classes. The teacher, therefore, becomes the learning leader.

1.4.1 Teachers' teaching role

Mahuro (2016) gives variables of teachers' roles as practical teaching, lesson notes preparation, the effectiveness of schemes of work, lesson planning, presentation, and assessment. Others are adequate supervision and monitoring of students' work, attendance and execution of duties, and participation in co-curricular activities. For this study, teachers' roles included preparation that involved adapting the school teaching syllabus from the National Curriculum Development Centre's syllabus, drawing schemes of work, planning lessons, making lesson notes, and getting learning aids. It also involves interaction with the learner in class through teaching, creating a motivating classroom environment, paying attention, and supporting individual learners, engaging them in the learning, and having class control. Teaching roles also involve interacting with learners' work by checking the learner's book and assessing the learners' work, like giving classwork, assignments, tests, and examinations to determine the learners' progress. A teacher evaluates and provides feedback on learners' progress. Therefore, a female teacher of secondary school has to perform all these roles effectively to make the learners learn

1.4.2 Teachers' administrative roles

A teacher takes on administrative roles outside of their classrooms to assist in the functioning of the larger school system. A teacher must implement structure, develop positive student interaction, and take immediate action when problems arise. This means beyond the pedagogical roles of a teacher, which deals mainly with classroom interaction, a teacher has functions to perform outside the classroom to ensure the learner's holistic development.

Some of the managerial roles of a teacher, as stipulated in the Education Service Act 2002, Article 13 (Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct), are to protect learners from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the learners' health and safety; and to maintain a safe and challenging learning environment and assist in the implementation of school rules established by the governing body. This calls for activities that make this functional. The administrative roles of a teacher include attending school meetings, performing weekly duties, participating in students' assemblies, taking on roles of heads of classes, departments, and dormitories, being involved in co-curricular activities, interacting with parents, and mentoring as well as counselling and guiding the learner. A teacher is also crucial in ensuring learners are disciplined and responsible. Teachers must supervise and monitor key school activities and take up responsibilities assigned by the head of the school.

Clark (2011) observes that the teacher in a school takes responsibility for the nature and quality of the relationship with learners so that the learners can take the teacher as a valuable, trustworthy role model who treats them with integrity. This can happen when a teacher's emotional and physical needs are addressed. However, this is unlikely for a teacher facing domestic violence. Therefore, a teacher's job is to counsel students as they grow and mature, helping them integrate their social, emotional, and intellectual growth. This study takes all these roles as key for a female secondary school teacher.

1.5 Coping

Coping refers to people's ongoing efforts to meet external and internal stressors perceived as challenging or exceeding their resources (Lazurus, 2013). Coping is generally called behaviours or responses that protect individuals from being harmed by problematic life events (Pearlin & Schooler,1978). It refers to a range of cognitive and behavioural strategies used to reduce, minimise, master, or tolerate the internal or external demands of a stressful or threatening situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When facing stressful or traumatic events, humans are motivated to use different strategies to cope with bad situations that are impinged upon them. It can prevent, avoid, or control emotional distress during duress (Zhou et al., 2017).

My study refers to coping as strategies, productive or destructive, that female teachers take to reduce, minimise, master, or tolerate the impact of stress placed on them by their spouses manifested by the different forms of violence, to protect their feelings, emotions, and the pain they go through to enable them to wade through to perform their roles as teachers in schools where they teach.

1.6 Support by school

This refers to any form of assistance that the female teachers with experience of domestic violence receive from the school where they teach. This includes material support, guidance, and moral support rendered to the female teachers by the structure, system and routines in the school, support by personnel within the school like headteachers, co-workers and school patrons. All this is done to make the female survivor of domestic

violence remain functional as she performs her teaching and administrative roles in the school.

1.7 Research on domestic violence for careers

Domestic violence is also common among the working class. In a study conducted on domestic violence against white-collar working women in Turkey, approximately 10,000 were found to have experienced severe physical violence from their partners every year (Ararat, et al., 2014). This confirms that domestic violence affects all women regardless of status, religion, position, or economic level.

An emerging literature demonstrates domestic violence as a form of violence that impacts and occurs in the workplace. Estimates of domestic violence victims being bothered in some way by their abuser at work (e.g., harassing phone calls) range from 36% to 75%, and most victims report that DV negatively affects their work performance (Swanberg et al., 2005)

Domestic violence can also be a concern in the school and community context. In the United States of America, a national news media report states that a gunman entered an elementary school in San Bernardino 765, California and shot his estranged wife, a teacher, inside her classroom (Alaniz & Santoes, 2015). The authors mention that, in March 2017, an instructional aide from Albany, New York, died after her husband allegedly threw gasoline on her and set her on fire. These are tragic examples of domestic violence against teachers in the United States of America. Yet, the journal states that domestic violence victims suffer silently and choose not to share their secrets. This means that violence is a problem of significant concern in our society today, and schools form part

of a community threatened by domestic violence that spills over from home, yet the magnitude of domestic violence and its impacts on the female teachers are not well documented. Teachers are core in providing education, and when domestic violence becomes an issue in their lives, it may affect the teaching and learning process.

Domestic violence as a form of workplace violence is increasingly being recognised, and surveys to gather specific data about the prevalence and impact of workplace domestic violence have been conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Turkey, Peru, and Australia (MacGregor, et al., 2014; Wathen & MacGregor, 2014). These studies come from mainly international sources that may not provide context to workers in Uganda in general but specifically to female schoolteachers.

Women suffer the most from domestic violence, as evidenced by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the media, and the police. In a 2009 study by the Uganda Law Reform Commission, one-half of the women surveyed reported experiencing violence daily or weekly, and 35% of working women reported marital violence (Black, 2019). Female teachers form part of the working group, yet we do not have evidence of the proportion and how domestic violence may impact their teaching and administrative roles.

The researcher's experience with female teachers interacted with shows that domestic violence is present in our community. Yet, it has not been documented to establish how it impacts the female teachers, their work, and the schools. In many secondary schools in Uganda, teachers live in residential areas where the houses are close. In such circumstances where spouses fight, it is most likely that fellow staff and sometimes

students can witness such embarrassing situations and can become very stressful. Even where domestic violence happens to non-resident staff, it may not escape the attention of parents and other stakeholders who may be members of the same community. Since teachers are role models to learners and are respected by community members, domestic violence can affect their ego and social standing. The context of Uganda, the high prevalence of domestic violence against female teachers, and the literature gaps concerning its impact on female teachers and the workplace make this study worthwhile.

1.8 Statement of the problem

The primary role of a secondary school teacher is to educate students and prepare them for further studies and the job market (Delener, 2013). Teachers impart knowledge, skills and values and inspire students to achieve by giving instructions, guiding, and facilitating learning. A teacher plans and teaches all their lessons, assesses students' knowledge, evaluates their performance, and recommends them in co-curricular activities (Otwine et al., 2018). When done successfully, the learners become productive community members, well-equipped for lifelong learning. For such a teacher to perform well, s/he must be physically and emotionally sound, yet this may not be possible for a teacher experiencing domestic violence. When a survivor of domestic violence is an employee and comes to the place of work, s/he often finds herself/him at a troubling intersection where concerns about the survivor's and the organisation's interests can collide and how these impact teaching and learning become of paramount importance.

Domestic violence has been found to have negative consequences on employees in many sectors of banking (Oni-Ojo et al., 2014), in health (Rayners, 2013; Fitzgerald, Dienemann

& Cadorette, 2008), workers in industries (Ajala, 2008) and workers in transportation industries (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2009. Similarly, studies elsewhere show that such workers are affected through increased absenteeism, low productivity, low motivation, loss of concentration, low self-esteem, late coming, and anxiety, which can then impact work performance and the employee's overall well-being, as well as having a bearing on relationships between the victim and peers, administration at work (Barret & St Pierre, 2011; Raynes-Thomas, 2013). However, it is unknown what impacts domestic violence poses to female teachers and schools in the study area.

Workers who suffer violence may experience emotional problems that can keep them from performing their work. The effect on their performance will be immense in a society with limited support. If this is to occur among female teachers, then learners' progress will be disrupted since teachers determine students' future academic success and lifetime outcomes (Chetty et al., 2014; Rockoff, 2004). Unfortunately, there is little known about domestic violence for teachers in Uganda. This gap in literature needs to be addressed if our learners are to have meaningful education.

1.9 Purpose of the study

This study aimed to explore the experiences of female teachers affected by domestic violence, focusing on how domestic violence affects the teaching and administrative roles of female teachers in secondary schools, how they cope, and how administrators manage the situation for affected staff in schools in Northern Uganda.

1.10 Objectives of the study

This study sought to meet four objectives, namely:

1. Assess how domestic violence affects female teachers' teaching roles in Kitgum District secondary schools.

2. Explore the female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles.

3. To describe how the female teachers affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties.

4. Explore the support available to female teachers affected by domestic violence in the school.

1.11 Research Questions

Four research questions (RQ) were advanced to guide the study:

RQ1: How does domestic violence affect female teachers' teaching roles in Kitgum District secondary schools?

RQ2: What are the female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles?

RQ3: How do the female teachers affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties?

RQ4: What support is available to female teachers who experience domestic violence in schools?

1.12 Justification of the study

Most of the research exploring the frequencies of domestic violence among workers, its impact on workers and the workplace and assessing the policies and procedures regarding domestic violence as a workplace issue comes from international sources, mainly the USA and Australia (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). This leaves gaps in the other parts of the world because the contexts are different, and therefore the outcome may differ. This study examined domestic violence against female teachers in secondary schools to pave the way for how this challenge can be handled in schools as workplaces.

Domestic violence results in significant loss of paid and unpaid work, loss of productivity and safety, negativity of workplace interpersonal relationships, decreased concentration, or job performance difficulty (Oni-Ojo et al., 2014). Teachers, just like any other members of a community, also suffer domestic violence. The researchers' experience as a head teacher also points to this, yet there is no clear documentation on how domestic violence may affect female teachers and how they cope. This, therefore, justifies the study.

A culture of silence surrounds cases of violence in the workplace, making it difficult to get an accurate picture of the extent of the vice (Oni-Ojo et al., 2014). The relationship between the survivor and perpetrator is historically construed as a private matter and, therefore, beyond the reach of many. Women who complain of domestic violence frequently face intimidation, retaliation, and stigmatisation; thus, domestic violence

incidents are notoriously under-reported and under-prosecuted worldwide (Kats et al., 2017). This study helped expose such challenges and recommended how they can be addressed.

Domestic violence is, therefore, a workplace issue, and those suffering need to be helped, yet this cannot be done unless what the victim goes through is brought to light. Until such a time, teaching and learning in our secondary schools will continue to be affected with a negative impact on education, with students being the innocent victims and, in the long run, society suffers because of poor education standards. Besides, co-workers, administrators, and the entire school may be affected if the victims are not helped. If people do not see domestic violence's impact on female teachers' productivity, it will continue to damage the system. This hidden crisis in the teaching profession requires attention.

Although research on violence against women and girls has advanced considerably over the past two decades (Fulu & Heise, 2015), there is no sufficient evidence to show advances in research on domestic violence among secondary school teachers. Little is known about the magnitude of the problem on their productivity, coping mechanism, and support system they can access. Unless such difficulty is brought to light, the female teacher will continue to suffer silently, adversely affecting the teaching and learning process in the school where she works. The child being taught in the long run suffers the consequences. Statistics relating to this problem among female teachers would not be available without motivating female teachers to report what they go through. This research is, therefore, a good attempt in that direction.

In terms of study population, studies on school violence have focused on students. Consequently, the precursors and consequences of violence experienced by teachers are less documented. Previous research indicates that violence at school impairs teachers' emotional well-being and that support from the principal and colleagues reduces these difficulties and fosters wellbeing (Galand et al., 2007). Aware that our well-being impacts professional involvement, there is a need to explore how domestic violence can affect teachers' performance in Uganda because there is very little evidence documented on how domestic violence impacts the performance of such teachers.

The researcher's experience as a teacher and a head teacher, who had worked in secondary schools and has had the opportunity to interact with female teachers who are victims of domestic violence, calls for ways to address the challenges of domestic violence. I had the chance to interact and share with a few female teachers about their experience of domestic violence. I had witnessed how they try to cope with their domestic challenges and perform their professional roles in school, and I have realised their pain. Therefore, I know these women struggle and may not have a clear channel to seek support and address the problems affecting them and their work. How they cope is an issue of interest that needs to be addressed. These scenarios justify this study to explore their experiences and how they continue performing their professional roles. The findings exposed what goes on and provided answers on how to handle issues of domestic violence that can be helpful to individuals, learners, and the school community at large.

This study unearthed the gaps, exposed the prevalence of domestic violence among

teachers, and explored how they coped to perform their work. It is meant to provide leaders with information on how they may address the challenges in schools so that there is no spill over to the students, co-workers, and the entire school.

1.13 Significance of the study

At the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, it was concluded that combatting and eliminating domestic violence should be a national priority. The government should call on the private sector to empower employers, organisations, and other relevant actors to take appropriate actions, such as investing in programs to prevent domestic violence and empower victims and survivors. This research is a response to such a call.

The study is also significant because it contributes to the sustainable development goals three, four and five. Goal three talks about good health and well-being but this study focuses more on target 3.4 on promoting mental health and well-being. In this case focusing support mechanism for female teachers whose metal health are impacted by domestic violence. Besides, the sustainable development goal five offers opportunity to achieve the commitment on the prevention of violence against women. This is with special emphasis on target 5.1, 5.2 and 5.9 which points to ending discrimination , ending all violence and exploitation against women as well as adopting and strengthening policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality respectively. This study brings narratives from the women and from their voices, different stake holder can devise means of enforcing measures to address the problem that the women go through and by doing this will be contributing to the sustainable development goal. When the women needs are

addressed, then they can be part of implementing quality education which then answers some key concerns in sustainable development goal number four. This study is therefore important because it seeks for ways of addressing key issues in sustainable development goals three, four and five.

The Government of Uganda has also made tremendous efforts toward this appeal, among which are the national guidelines for providing psychosocial support for gender-based violence victims/survivors put in place by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. However, the Ministry recognises that gaps in the coordination of psychosocial support to gender-based violence survivors still exist. The guidelines recognise that educational institutions are the custodians of pupils and students for most of the year and are expected to offer guidance and protection to pupils and students. However, this should also include the staff. Besides, the guidelines recognise that the Ministry of Education and Sports has developed and issued guidelines on dealing with violence against children in schools. Yet, no focus has been given to supporting the teachers, supposedly to handle the students experiencing domestic violence. Therefore, this study is significant because it helps inform policymakers about gaps in support systems for teachers suffering from domestic violence. Based on the research findings, the study suggests measures to address the gaps to the policymakers to improve school productivity through the work of those affected by domestic violence. This study may broaden the minds of employers to strengthen support systems for victims of domestic violence.

The more significant challenge that domestic violence has on victims justifies the need to establish possible ways to make such teachers cope and make administrators come up with measures that can address and support female teachers who suffer domestic violence

in the hope that they will enable them to perform well in school. The study suggests modules to enrich field-based debates on actions to support schools, administrators, and other stakeholders on how to support teachers struggling with domestic violence.

Research conducted in Rakai District in rural Uganda suggested that little progress in reducing levels of domestic violence is likely to be achieved without significant changes in prevailing individuals and community attitudes towards domestic violence (Koenig et al., 2003). The report further reveals that women with high autonomy may be at increased risk of violence in rural areas, contrary to earlier studies that reported that women with greater independence and control over resources are more protected from violence. Kitgum District is predominantly rural, and female teachers who earn salaries can be considered women with autonomy. The study provides text-based evidence on domestic violence and highlights facts showing that even educated women are vulnerable to domestic violence.

Conclusion

Domestic violence remains a problem in the communities, with its adverse impacts extending beyond the confines of homes to workplaces. Goodwill exists to address domestic violence as evidenced by good frameworks, policies, guidelines, and laws, but the vice remains. Attempts to look for remedies to address the gaps justify the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents a summary of related literature in research relevant to the study of domestic violence on female teachers in secondary schools and how domestic violence impacts the performance of their teaching and administrative roles. The literature looks, in general terms, at causes of domestic violence and types of domestic violence before delving into the literature review on the experiences of women who have undergone challenges of domestic violence and how the vice impacts their roles. Furthermore, it looks at how the women affected by domestic violence negotiate through this vice to perform their work in school and the kind of support they receive. The literature is presented under relevant subheadings.

2.1 Causes of domestic violence

Factors associated with the risk of both victimisation of women and perpetration of violence by men include conflict or dissatisfaction in the relationship, male dominance in the family, economic stress, men having multiple partners, disparity in educational attainment, particularly where a woman has a higher level of education than the male partner (WHO, 2012; Ajala, 2008; Lantrip et al., 2015; Tonsing, 2018). Men with multiple sexual partners are more likely to perpetrate violence against intimate partners. At the same time, educational disparity within a relationship can be linked to higher levels of intimate partner violence and abuse and disputes over traditional gender roles, especially where women possess a higher level of education than their partners (Sapkota et al.,

2016). The same view is confirmed by Obi and Ozumba (2007) when they say domestic violence is associated with financial disparity in favour of females, influential in-laws, educated women and couples within the same age group. All these factors cause domestic violence, most likely the same for female teachers in secondary schools as well.

In a study conducted on domestic violence against white-collar working women in Turkey, there were many perceived causes of domestic violence. 79% of the participants suggested economic difficulties to be the cause, while 69% said the reason was seeing violence as possessions of men; 67% attributed it to alcohol and drug use, while 65% said it was because violence was perceived as normal (Ararat, et al., 2014). Suppose violence against women is considered in the public domain as normal. In that case, it becomes a significant concern even in the education sector, where several women work closely to shape the lives of learners. Other factors considered in this study were problems with the couple's families and inadequacy in women's performance of their family roles. Whatever the causes of domestic violence, it badly impacts women's lives.

A report from the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) identified factors that increase women's risk of physical and sexual abuse, namely: poverty, being Christian, being in a polygamous marriage, partner's alcohol use, significant age difference between partners, husbands, or wife's low education level as well as women's lack of autonomy (Tameka et al., 2016). These may not only involve physical and sexual abuse, but they may also include other types of abuse.

There are several reasons why domestic violence traditionally occurs. These have a lot to do with gender norms within the society and culture and include but are not limited to

talking back to a husband, failure to have food for a husband on time, perceived or real disobedience to the husband, refusing sex or questioning the husband's infidelity, among others (Ajala,2008). In research to explore the Fijian women's experience of domestic violence and its impact, many reported that the abuse started in the early years of the marriage due to their husband's extramarital affairs (Tonsing, 2018). The women said when they questioned their husbands about extra-marital affairs, the husbands would often react with physical abuse as they would not tolerate their wives' questioning, which was perceived as challenging to their authority as heads of households.

Women become victims of violence when they fail to balance their domestic and workplace roles. Women shared that the abuse was worse when they chose to stay late at work, attend work events or otherwise disrupt family routine because of unexpected work opportunities or obligations (Lantrip et al., 2015). The study reported the female teachers saying that when they were required to stay late at work, abusers felt that women were disloyal and had to be punished. In school settings where teachers sometimes work overtime attending to emergencies, it is bound to be problematic for women experiencing domestic violence. This could be the same in schools in Uganda.

Analysing all the reasons given as risk factors for intimate partner violence, it all points mainly to power control by males over females. Therefore, the causes of domestic violence can be emphasised via the extensive power imbalance between males and females in the patriarchal society concerning physical, economic, and social mediums facilitating domestic violence as an available option and method of control (Montalto, 2016). In a qualitative study conducted among abused women in Norway, the examples of abuse reported by the participants are power and control strategies that keep the

women in subordinate positions to fit the conservative perception of manhood and womanhood (Alasakeret al., 2016). In this direction, the culture of patriarchy in our society becomes a major contributory factor to domestic violence. A patriarchal community contributes to gender inequality and violence against women (Montalto, 2016). Acceptance of traditional gender roles by men and women contributes to domestic violence (WHO, 2013). A woman questioning her husband may be seen as challenging his masculinity, leading the husband to use intimate partner violence as a tool through which he reinforces societal gender norms (Hatcher et al., 2013). WHO (2012), in a study conducted to understand and address violence against women, spells out examples of norms and beliefs that support violence against women. That a man has a right to assert power over a woman and is considered socially superior, that he has the right to discipline a woman for incorrect behaviours, and that physical violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict in a relationship and, as such a woman must tolerate violence to keep her family together. This may be a tall order in modern society where women's rights are advocated, and the elite females, like teachers, may resist this status quo, thus leading to domestic violence.

2.2 Types of violence inflicted on women

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive and assaultive behaviours, including physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological attacks and economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against intimate partners (Ganteng et al., 1996). It is a behaviour pattern with which a person, usually a man, tries to gain power and control over another person within the framework of an intimate relationship (Mendez et al., 2011). This behaviour pattern involves intimidation, threats, psychological confusion, emotional pain, verbal

abuse, physical and sexual aggression, and homicide (Mendez et al., 2011). Abusive behaviour is a tactic used to maintain power and control over another individual that results in causing that individual harm. The power and control can be in the form of coercion, physical abuse, intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and deprivation (Ajala, 2008). Individuals involved in violent behaviours, whether as victims or perpetrators, are at risk concerning their physical and psychological health (Heise, 1994; World Bank, 2002). These types of abuses can be categorised as physical, emotional/psychological, economic, and sexual abuse.

a) Physical violence

Physical abuse/violence is using force that injures or puts them at risk. The action may include beating, kicking, knocking, punching, choking, or confinement (Aihie, 2009). Physical violence occurs when any of the following is done: pushing, shaking, or throwing objects at a person, slapping, twisting one's arm, pulling hair, punching with one's fist or with something that can hurt a person (Ocheme, 2020). It is also manifested by kicking, dragging, beating, trying to choke, burning on purpose, threatening, or attacking a person with a knife, gun, or other weapons (UDHS, 2016). The physical assault may or may not cause injuries (Angeles, 2012). However, it should be noted that such an attack has the potential to cause death or disabling injury (National Institute of Justice, 2007). Such kind of abuse is common even in the country of study. The Uganda Demographic & Household Survey report of 2006 pointed out that 60% of women in Uganda and 59% of married women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, mostly perpetrated by their husbands or partners (Ocheme et al., 2020). This confirms the existence of physical violence in Uganda, which could also be evident among female teachers.

b) Emotional/psychological violence

Emotional/psychological abuse occurs when someone does something that has a negative emotional effect on another individual with the intent to control the impacted individual (Zhou et al., 2017). It includes threatening a person or their possessions or harming a person's sense of self-worth by putting them at risk of severe behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorder, which can arise from name-calling, criticism, social isolation, intimidating or exploitation to dominate, routinely making unrealistic demands, and terrorising a person verbally (Obi & Ozumba, 2007). Psychological violence traumatises the victim by acts, threats of acts or coercive tactics, e.g., humiliating the victim, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information, isolating the victim from friends and family, and denying access to money or other essential resources (National Institute of Justice, 2007). Such behaviours have a way in which they put the victim under stress that can easily have a negative outcome on her performance. In this case, this is when a male partner does something that negatively affects a female teacher as a victim. Emotional and psychological violence also includes abuse, humiliation, and non-sexual verbal abuse, that is, insulting, degrading, demeaning, and compelling the victim/survivor to engage in humiliating acts, whether in public or private. It also involves denying basic expenses for family survival, confinement and isolating a person from friends/family, deprivation of liberty or restriction of the right to free movement (Bandiera et al., 2013).

In most cases, emotional violence has been preceded by acts of threat of physical and sexual violence (National Institute of Justice, 2007). When constantly inflicted on female teachers, there is a possibility that it can have diverse effects on their performance.

Psychological abuse can reduce the victim's freedom and result in micro-management of everyday life (National Institute of Justice, 2007).

Controlling behaviours, as manifested in psychological violence, describe a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate or dependant by isolating them from sources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, as well as regulating their everyday behaviours (National Institute of Justice, 2007). Female teachers in gainful employment can have their performance compromised when confronted with such restraints. Unfortunately, emotional abuse does not involve inflicting direct pain on the victim and thus can be easily overlooked (Ramakrishnan, 2013). A victim may be influenced into thinking that she was not assaulted, and the people around may not know what is going on in the life of the survivor with no external injury to show, yet emotional abuse can be devastating to the survivor who suffers silently, feeling manipulated and controlled (Ramakrishnan, 2013). This can devastate performance since supporting such a staff member is difficult because of a lack of information.

c) Economic violence

Economic violence can occur when the abuser prevents the victim from getting to work, controls all the household income or denies her money for day-to-day needs (Ajala, 2008). It involves discrimination or denial of opportunities, services, exclusion, denial of access to remunerated employment, as well as denial of property rights (Ocheme, 2020). Economic abuse can be expanded to include stealing from or defrauding a loved one, withholding money for essential things like food and medical treatment, manipulating or

exploiting family members for financial gain, preventing a loved one from working or controlling their choice of occupation (Aihie, 2009).

Sapkota et al. (2016) take economic violence as a subcategory of psychological abuse. In the study, 5% of women reported having experienced this in their current relationship and 13% within the previous relationship. They give an example of preventing women from shopping independently or working outside the home.

Putting a bar between economic and psychological violence can be tricky since financial exploitation will likely cause emotional violence. Existing research suggests that different types of violence often co-exist. Physical intimate partner violence is often accompanied by sexual violence and is always accompanied by emotional abuse (WHO, 2020). A study conducted among armed forces in Canada found a moderate correlation between physical and emotional violence (Skomorovsky, 2015), suggesting that individuals who experience one type of violence may often be victims of another. This means specific types of violence may not necessarily occur in isolation. There is a possibility that women can suffer all kinds of violence any single time that violence occurs with destructive and disruptive consequences. Domestic violence is physical, psychological, economic, and sexual.

2.3 Domestic violence and teachers' performance

In the educational system of a country like Uganda, students' paths are determined mainly by a child's performance in school. A child's performance determines the placement in the next stage, career path, and job. According to Alka (2016), the teacher at this stage plays a vital role in the educational process. They perform dynamic

functions in school by teaching and participating in varied work activities. He says their social reaction, personality, characteristics, and challenges influence students' performance. For quality education to be realised in our school system, what takes place in the classrooms needs to be taken care of, and one primary input of education quality is the performance of teachers, which is critical (Gikunda, 2016). A teacher must have peace of mind to perform her work well.

2.3.1 Teachers' teaching roles

Domestic violence accompanies new employees and surfaces in senior employees and, most importantly, employers to recognise their employees' real-life problems and how they affect job performance (Burroughs et al., 2019). It involves the victims' personal and professional lives (Burroughs et al., 2019). This could affect teachers' productivity and lead to gross teaching and learning weaknesses. Teachers cannot give what they do not have. Their output is a determinant of their input. However, their output will be affected when domestic violence interferes with their work. Gentange (2016) gives variables of teachers' performance as effective teaching, lesson preparation, the effectiveness of schemes of work, monitoring of students' work and disciplinary ability. One of the critical components of effective teaching is making lesson notes, which falls under preparation to teach. Developing lesson notes is a roadmap to effective teaching (Anike et al., 2015). Furthermore, these authors report that lesson notes help the teacher to focus during teaching and that anyone who tries to teach without lesson notes will be ineffective in the teaching-learning environment. That means when a teacher does not prepare well to teach, it compromises their roles and effectiveness.

Domestic violence can disrupt teachers' efforts to prepare to teach their lessons. Due to

stress, domestic violence can interfere with a teacher's planning and preparation of lessons, affecting her mental health and relationships and eventually affecting a teacher's productivity.

Teaching is a highly complex work with many teacher-related and other variables that affect students' success (Stronge, 2010). Generally, effective teachers plan carefully, use appropriate materials, communicate goals to students, assess work regularly, use various teaching strategies, and use time well (Stronge, 2010). For this to happen, a teacher must be very stable. Domestic violence may interfere with teachers' effectiveness. Researchers agree that teachers are among the most essential school-based resources (Chetty et al., 2014; Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin et al., 2005). Consequently, there has been a strong emphasis on improving teachers' effectiveness to enhance students' learning (Gikunda, 2016). Where a female teacher is experiencing domestic violence, all these may not be possible.

2.3.2 Teachers' administrative roles

Productivity on the teacher's side is determined by their level of participation in the day-to-day running of the school. For this to happen, the teacher must have a peaceful mind, yet this cannot be possible for victims of domestic violence. Women with experience of domestic violence suffer the emotional consequences of partner violence, which can be devastating and affect women's work and career development (Lantrip et al., 2015). Many factors influence the teachers' job performance, such as attitudes, personal characteristics, general mental ability, relations with students and others, and preparations and planning (Gikunda, 2016).

Rita (2001) states that teachers can significantly impact students; they can influence the life philosophy of the students, the path chosen by them, the development of their character, and even the growth of intelligence and knowledge. These are majorly administrative roles of a teacher. We can then not underscore teachers' importance in performing their school functions. Yet, such roles may not be effectively accomplished when teachers are exposed to domestic violence by their spouses. Teachers take care of the spiritual and character education of the students and maintain good communication with parents (Rita, 2001). This is supported by Anike et al. (2015) that in schools, teachers undertake a range of roles because they not only teach but also manage behaviours, undertake administration, and play the role of being students' guardians for their classes. They help promote positive behaviours among students, taking care of students' everyday lives, counselling students when they have personal problems, nurturing them and training students in life skills (Rita, 2001). Teachers have a multifaceted role in providing education to the child, which includes pastoral care, moral and character education, and the crucial role of provision of academic training (Rita,2001). For teachers to achieve all these roles, they are expected to have a high level of commitment and to be morally and ethically sound (Rita, 2001). This means teachers have vital roles to play, and yet teachers' effectiveness can be affected by stressors like domestic violence. Knowing the impacts of domestic violence on female teachers can give ways to support them in performing their administrative roles, which are diverse and call for commitment to perform well.

A teacher has a role in creating and sustaining a developmental culture for their students and themselves by building a range of relationship with colleagues, parents, students,

administrators, and community leaders (Bowman,2004). Such relationships are vital because they nest the different stakeholders together and lead to effectiveness in a school setting (Bowman, 2004). This forms part of the administrative roles of a teacher. Since this is done besides the pedagogical function of teaching, it can be demanding and therefore calls for commitment and stability in mind. Unfortunately, domestic violence inflicted on female teachers may disrupt the performance of these roles.

2.4 Domestic violence and workplace productivity

Teachers' teaching and administrative roles both contribute to workplace productivity. The level of productivity depends on how focused the teacher is, and it requires a teacher to be emotionally, physically, and mentally prepared to perform her roles. Several factors, domestic violence inclusive, can determine this.

Intimate partner violence, also called domestic violence, is a serious social and health issue that results in short- and long-term physical and psychological harm (MacGregor, et al., 2014). MacGregor, et al., (2014) also mention that intimate partner violence and its consequences are not limited to homes and that intimate partner violence in a work-related context can take several forms. The impact of domestic violence goes beyond the confines of the home, spilling over into the workplace with significant consequences for victims and the workplaces where they are employed (Swanberg et al., 2005). Although it is challenging to draw persuasive and robust conclusions about the relationship between intimate partner violence and long-term employment because of limited studies conducted, studies that identify and document the extent to which the abusers' actions interfere with the victim's ability to work and perform on the job are conclusive

(Swanberg & Logan, 2005). The authors report that victims of partner violence are more likely to report lower productivity, higher absenteeism rates, more frequent tardiness and higher job turnover rates and job issues (Tolman & Rosen, 2001).

Domestic violence can take many forms, including intimidation, control, isolation and emotional, physical, sexual, or financial abuse (Mcferran, 2011). The impacts of such abuse will inevitably be felt across all aspects of an affected person's life (Mcferran, 2011). This means that it can affect the work life of the victim of domestic violence. Research from the United States has shown that women who have experienced intimate partner violence find it difficult to stay in gainful employment due to problems at home (Tolman & Wang, 2005). Domestic violence can have negative job-related consequences for workers who have experienced both lifetime and current victimisation (Kelly, 2012). Victims of partner violence are more likely to report lower productivity, higher absenteeism rates, tardiness, higher job turnover, and job losses (Swanberg et al., 2005). Domestic violence impacts the abused and the workplace by making the abused unable to perform well while on duty, quit a job, leave work early daily, come late to work and increase care costs (Ajala, 2008).

In a study conducted in 2007, it was established that victims of domestic violence are more likely than non-victims to experience higher levels of distraction at work, which can lead to making mistakes and becoming decreasingly productive (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2009).In cases where women have said they have poured themselves into their work as escapism, the level of stress, anxiety and fatigue must be an impairment to the quality of work produced, which can lead to the work needing to be re-done (Kahui et al., 2014). This can be a significant drawback to teachers trying to perform their professional roles.

Domestic violence's consequences on victims' work are evident, but little about female teachers as a workforce.

It is common for victims of domestic violence to cover up its effects, and so often, the symptoms go unnoticed, making it challenging to examine the consequences and provide protection (Kahui et al., 2014). This calls to explore the experiences of female teachers because if looking at the outcomes is difficult, it could impact their professional roles, which may be challenging to establish. Research indicates that violence against teachers harms teachers' emotional and physical well-being, connectedness to school, job performance and retention (Murray, 2008). There is evidence that abusers follow women victims to places of work or use phones to abuse them even at work. Victims can endure abuse and return to work more tired, stressed, and anxious. This implies that they are even less likely to be productive and are more likely to be distracted (Kahui et al., 2014)

There has been very little research about the effects of domestic violence on workers and the workplace in New Zealand (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). This is true in educational institutions or schools in Northern Uganda as well. Research exploring the frequency of domestic violence among workers, its impact on workers and the workplaces and assessing the policies on domestic violence as a workplace issue comes from international sources, mainly the United States of America and Australia ((Rayner-Thomas, 2013). Such research could have results that may differ from Northern Uganda because of culture, environment, and perception.

The link between domestic violence and employment has not been strongly demonstrated in previous research (Tolman & Wang, 2005). According to Tolman and Wang (2005),

several cross-sectional studies failed to provide evidence that domestic violence resulted in poorer work outcomes for women on welfare. However, two longitudinal studies provide some evidence that domestic violence is related to work outcomes for women. This view is supported by Showalter (2016), Eze-Anaba (2010) and Rayner-Thomas (2014). Given these mixed results, it is crucial to examine further the role of domestic violence in predicting work outcomes. In research conducted by Scott et al. (2017), 1/5 to ¼ of respondents reported that domestic violence affected their ability to get to or stay at work. Most commonly, this was in the form of being late for work, leaving work early or missing work entirely. They say that about 30% of respondents reported that their work performance was negatively affected due to distraction. Most of them found themselves distracted by domestic violence-related messages, tiredness due to sleep deprivation induced by their domestic violence situation and experiencing anxiety or depression from domestic violence issues. This supports the study of Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly (2009), whose results reflected those victimised employees experienced higher levels of depression, lower self-esteem, and financial insufficiency than non-victimised colleagues. This, therefore, means that domestic violence can negatively impact performance.

A study involving over 2400 employed men and women in three companies in the education, health service and transportation industries found significant effects of domestic violence on employees and employers (Kelly, 2012). The results suggested adverse effects of domestic violence on current victims' levels of depression, self-esteem, economic self-sufficiency, and family work conflict. The study further found that victims were more likely to be absent from work than non-victims. Several studies have found that there is often workplace conflict when domestic violence begins interfering

with a woman's ability to perform according to expectations in her employment role (Rayner-Thomas, 2013; Oni-Ojo et al., 2014). One wonders if this remains the same for secondary schools in Northern Uganda and if so, one needs to find out why.

Similarly, research conducted in 2011 on the workplace implications of family and domestic violence demonstrated how violence can impact the working lives of those affected by domestic violence. The survey found that 19% of Australian workers who had experienced domestic violence in the previous 12 months reported that the harassment continued at their workplace, while 48% of the respondents said the violence had affected their ability to attend work (AHRC, 2014). Therefore, because of domestic violence, employers will experience lower productivity across the board (Kahui et al., 2014). In a school situation, this can affect a teacher's teaching and administrative roles and become a genuine concern.

Extensive research on violence against women indicates that partner violence has deleterious effects on victims' physical and mental health; this includes bruises, broken bones and difficulty concentrating on work and that psychological consequences result in suicidal tendency, drug abuse, stress disorder, depression, and anxiety (Swanberg et al., 2005). The stress of her home life will affect a woman's work performance. She may be unable to meet deadlines and feel too emotional to deal with usual customer service. She may break down in the workplace and be too distressed to fulfil her duties. She may start being regularly late (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). If this is true of other workplaces, it may also be true in secondary schools in Uganda, and yet no research has been done to establish the effects of domestic violence in these schools. What is, however, evident is that the mental health of teachers is a fundamental component of the quality of

education and affects both teachers' work achievement and the student's mental health (Alka, 2016). A contradiction, however, comes in research conducted by Giesbrecht (2022), who asserts that there is no evidence that victims feel less capable of performing their jobs or feel less confident concerning their job security. Therefore, it is necessary to establish whether teachers suffer from domestic violence and how they negotiate through it to perform well amidst the challenges of domestic violence, which threatens their mental health.

Although there is literature on domestic violence and school performance, gaps exist in clearly establishing how teachers' performance in their teaching and administrative roles is affected. This study seeks to address the gap and explore how teachers affected by domestic violence carry out their roles as teachers. The study becomes fundamental because a nation's quality depends upon its citizens' quality. The citizens' quality depends not exclusively but in a critical measure upon the quality of their education. The quality of their education depends upon the quality of the teachers (American Commission on Teachers Education, 1974). This calls for teachers' effectiveness, yet domestic violence can hinder their productivity, making it difficult to realise quality education. Teachers' productivity can be affected by absenteeism, late reporting to work, lack of concentration, lack of preparation, conflict with peers and financial implications.

2.5 Domestic violence and absenteeism

Quantitative and qualitative studies have revealed that absenteeism at work is one of the most common outcomes of intimate partner violence (Neisha, 2017). Research also found that 23% to 54% of victims reported being absent from work because of abuse (Tolman &

Rosen 2001). Being away from work means a teacher's teaching and administrative roles affect performance. According to Lantrip et al. (2015), partners used different abuse tactics to interfere with women's job performance. The men physically prevented women from going to work, abused women until they could not go to work because of distress and injuries and because of harassment and threats on the women victims at work.

Domestic violence can impact places of work when reporting to work by victims is disrupted. Australian Domestic Violence Rights and Entitlement Project surveyed 3,611 people from six different employment organisations and unions. Of the people surveyed, they found out that nearly one-third of participants had personal experiences with domestic violence, of which ½ reported that their ability to get to work was affected; 67% of this was because of physical injury and restraint (McFerran, 2011). Domestic violence results in the inability of survivors to fully participate in the workforce. Intimate partner victimisation adversely affects employees' work outcomes and costs employers in terms of absenteeism and work destruction (Carol et al., 2009). It causes workers to miss work, lose their jobs and have difficulty on the job.

Further evidence is that women's intimate partners use coercion to sabotage participation in work or educational programmes. This interference may take many forms, such as keeping a partner from sleeping, threatening, or using force to impede her from leaving for work (Tolman & Wang, 2005). The research all points to domestic violence affecting workplaces stemming from absenteeism.

It is worth noting that while the women stay away from work physically, there is another type of "absenteeism" that the victims of domestic violence struggle with. It is evident

from studies that absenteeism goes a bit further, including employees taking breaks for extended periods, leaving work before the scheduled time, and talking on the phone for an extended period (Leblanc & Barlings, 2014). Effectiveness is not just about showing physical presence but doing the work as planned. Physical presence with disruptions is bound to affect performance negatively, yet school systems are structured and require time adherence. This view is shared by Tolman & Wang (2005) when they argued that intimate partner aggression led to increased withdrawal at work but not necessarily departure from work. If this is true, it becomes challenging for schools to evaluate the performance of female teachers affected by domestic violence. Therefore, we need to explore this further in our context. Domestic violence contributes, thus, to absenteeism at places of work because it forces workers to act against their own will in terms of missing work, reporting late for duty, or leaving early, as well as making them tired and distracted (Alsaker et al., 2016).

With the evidence of absenteeism arising from domestic violence, a worker's performance may suffer due to domestic violence's physical and emotional impact. Moreover, if victims take time off work to seek medical attention or attend legal proceedings, their commitment to the job may be questioned (Alsaker et al., 2016).

Alsaker et al. (2016) confirm that domestic violence negatively affects enterprises through reduced productivity, absenteeism and increased leave and sick days. One wonders whether this is true of secondary schools and the female victims and how they address the challenge so that they can still perform their duties.

Excuses given by victims for not turning up to work include sleep deprivation, feeling

ashamed to show up for work, psychological distress, and not wanting people to know what is happening in their lives (Swanberg et al., 2005). This is also consistent with the practices within the education sector in Uganda. A teacher in Ibanda town in Western Uganda said teachers sometimes miss lessons due to the psychological and physical injuries inflicted on them by their spouses during the night (Mucunguzi, 2019). Statistics on teachers' absenteeism in Government-run primary schools revealed that the Northern Region has the highest level of teachers' absenteeism at 27.75% (Mucunguzi, 2019). According to Papique (2010), the poor performance of U.P.E. schools in Iganga District has been blamed on teachers' absenteeism from duty, which cost the taxpayers over 1.1 billion shillings annually. 28% of 236 respondents (teachers) attributed the absence to domestic violence. This study needs to confirm if this is also true in secondary schools in Northern Uganda.

2.6 Domestic violence & lack of concentration

Women who suffer domestic violence are still expected to do their regular duties. Those in employment must present themselves at work to receive their salaries and keep their job, which they are bound to lose if they persist in keeping away from work. In such cases, behaviours such as late work, absenteeism and turnover are less likely to be observed (UNFPA, 2018). They appear at work even when they are not prepared to do the job mentally and probably out of lack of preparation. This means they fail to concentrate at their place of work. Despite being physically present at work, their presence does not equate to productivity (Le Blanc & Barlings, 2014). The abused women feel unwell and tired following the violent episodes. Scholars agree that psychological factors will directly influence job performance, such as being absent-minded, insecure, and

disoriented (UNFPA, 2018). This leads to a lack of concentration.

According to Alsaker et al. (2016), women who are victims of domestic violence always lack concentration in the work they do. To them, being interrupted by their partners or ex-partners, remembering the threats of hurting and killing them or making their future miserable by destroying their reputation make it difficult to concentrate. The authors observe in their study that the women described how fear caused concentration problems, a source of new fears, such as fear of giving patients the wrong medication. If this can happen to health workers, it may also happen to female teachers. This calls for exploring how fear among female teachers, if valid, could affect teaching and learning. Fear impacts women's ability to relax and concentrate, making their job performance does not reflect their abilities (Alsaker et al., 2016).

Women's ability to concentrate on their jobs is also disrupted by abusive partners, who demean and humiliate them. The abusive partners bombard women with messages about their incompetence, reinforcing women's self-doubts (Lantrip et al., 2015). From the study, partners' demoralisation interfered with their ability to complete work tasks quickly, competently, and confidently (Lantrip et al., 2015). If this is true, then structured school routines may be affected.

A study by Swanberg (2005) found that 71% of employed or recently employed women reported being unable to concentrate at work because of abuse by their spouses. The study says that 23% could not focus daily and 17.5% weekly. That 63% could not perform on the job to the best of their ability during the previous years. In another study, ½ of the participants interviewed could not concentrate in the past year because of partner

victimisation (Logans, 2005). This is clear evidence that domestic violence has spill-over at work and can affect the job outcome of employees affected by it. As an act, domestic violence saps women's energy, undermines their confidence, compromises their health, and deprives them of full participation in society (Ajala, 2008).

Women who have been victims of persistent and unremitting domestic violence tend to experience somatic and psychological distress like those experienced by soldiers in war zones and victims of torture or natural disaster (Tolman & Wang, 2005). This sometimes becomes chronic and distresses the victim, thus affecting her performance. The adverse physical and mental health outcomes that can result from violence may create disadvantages in the workplace for battered women (Tolman & Wang, 2005). Domestic violence has also been linked to increased rates of mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol and drug abuse (Tolman & Wang, 2005). Such a situation can affect people at work, and no wonder Tolman and Wang (2005) confirm that the effects of violence on women's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being, whatever the specific motivation, could impede employment success. Therefore, if domestic violence impacts negatively on employment success, it could also affect the female teachers who are victims and disrupt their work.

In a survey conducted for 3,611 people, participants reported that their work performance was impacted, with 16% describing feeling distracted, tired, or unwell (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). This necessitates taking time off from work for medical or legal reasons, being forced to take time off by the abuser, being late for work and being too upset to work (Rayner-Thomas, 2013). According to Alaniz & Los Santos (2014), when domestic violence is present in the home, studies have shown that intimate partner

violence profoundly impacts the victim's functioning as a productive and effective employee. The employees experienced a change in their job performance, and the quality of their work also deteriorated due to a lack of concentration (Alaniz & Los Santos, 2014). Therefore, being distracted and unfocused at work can contribute to poor performance. Looking at this evidence, it is necessary to find out if it is applicable in schools and how these victims negotiate through these challenges to perform their work. Doyle et al. (1999) assert that professional difficulties associated with domestic violence histories in physicians include less career satisfaction, high rates of severe daily stress, and more days of poor mental health. While this is true of physicians, it may also be true of professional teachers and is bound to affect productivity.

2.7 How victims of domestic violence cope at workplaces

Domestic violence is one unique stressor affecting individual functioning and requires coping. Women who experience domestic violence suffer consequences that may affect their productivity at work. However, in most cases, the schools/workplaces still demand them to perform all their duties effectively. How they cope with such challenges becomes an area of interest in this study. Many victims actively engage in multiple help-seeking strategies and access various resources to address their victimisation experiences (Barret & St Pierre, 2011).

In a study conducted on the coping efforts of intimate partner violence survivors, findings indicate that survivors/victims use multiple and varied strategies to cope with intimate partner violence and related stress and that they face several challenges and barriers (Cynthia, 2013; Mshana et al., 2021). These coping strategies include but are not limited

to religious coping, emotional-focused coping, distraction/avoidance coping, cognitive coping, safety planning, placating systems, resistance and defiance strategies, direct attempts to address the stressor and help-seeking (Cynthia, 2013).

These resources include informal (family, friends, and co-workers) and formal support (police, healthcare, professional). In a study by Kolnik et al. (2017), participants felt that informal support in the workplace nurtured their well-being and work. Swanberg et al. (2005) support this view by asserting that work support for coping can be seen as formal or informal. Cynthia (2013), in her review of coping strategies used by survivors to deal with intimate partner violence and close partner-related stress, states that survivors engage in various coping strategies and help-seeking behaviours to deal with the vices. She also supports that survivors seek help from multiple sources, including informal sources (e.g., family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, and formal sources such as hotlines, domestic violence shelters and counselling), as well as the criminal justice system (e.g., police, protection orders, courts, and lawyers). Knowing what formal and informal support is used for coping helps to understand how accessible it can be to women in domestic violence. Zhou et al. (2017) distinguish between formal and informal support that can be within the reach of women with experience of domestic violence. Formal help refers to professional help from psychiatric services, psychological therapy, counselling, legal systems and other formal structures like police and probation offices. By contrast, informal helping refers to help and support from ordinary people in everyday settings, such as support from friends, families, and colleagues. This means when hurting women turn to such individuals or institutions, they can get help that helps them overcome the challenges caused by domestic violence to keep performing their professional roles as

female teachers with experience of domestic violence.

Religious coping plays a significant role in the lives of women who experience domestic violence. Religious coping includes prayers, attending religious services, joining spiritual groups, and reading the Bible and devotion books (Cynthia, 2013). Being hopeful of a happy ending and a promising future keeps them optimistic and allows them to move on and do their work amidst the challenge of domestic violence (Mahapatra, 2019). To others, having leisure activities and self-care that allow them to relax forms a good way of coping (Bober & Regehr, 2006; Cynthia, 2013).

Concerning those who faced domestic violence during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in a study conducted by Sharma & Anita (2021), when asked how they were coping with intimate partner violence, up to 83.3% believed that they could handle it on their own and therefore felt that they did not need help (Sharma & Khokhar, 2021). This could be by becoming more independent and trying to solve their problems alone using their internal resources. Being a skilled worker gives a sense of acceptance and worth, helps build self-esteem, provides sanctuary from violence, and allows for a broader scope of action (Alansker et al., 2016). Walking away from a perpetrator/out of abuse, protecting one's body, and moving to an undisclosed location (Cynthia, 2013) are examples of trying to solve one's problem. Unfortunately, in trying to improve one's situation, sometimes victims use destructive coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, over-the-counter drugs, self-injurious behaviours, etc. (Cynthia, 2013).

To some women with experience of domestic violence, work is expressed as being of high importance to women living in abusive relationships since work represents a path to

freedom and an opportunity to use their resources in addition to providing a feeling of worth and a better life (Alsaker et al., 2016). All they require to cope better is a flexible working arrangement, which is a provision that effectively provides an exchange of usual working hours for the same number of hours at a different time (Kahui et al., 2014). Such independence and use of internal resources could come from the point that women feel they have economic sources that can make them survive and their exposure arising from the level of education.

The impact of domestic violence on an individual's physical health and mental well-being can be devastating, and many victims require support to cope with the effects of the abusive relationship (Olszowy, 2016). Yet limited information is available about how women manage the job with perpetrators' tactics and the consequences of their coping methods on employment status (Swanberg et al., 2005). Recognising the broader socio-cultural context in which domestic violence occurs, it is important to understand the processes of help-seeking among survivors (Olszowy, 2016).

It suffices to note that less understood is how women cope with partners' violence when it does not interfere with their job openly. Legal advocates and researchers suggest that some employed victims of domestic violence may remain silent about their experiences because they fear being humiliated more by the perpetrator if they learn that they told others at work (Swanberg et al., 2005). The victims also fail to disclose abuse because of the complexities that domestic violence comes with. Yet the longer the victim waits before she speaks out, the longer her problems will remain hidden and the greater they will become. On the other hand, the victim who can talk about the problems and who received help in organising her work will be able to protect herself (Mendez, 2011).

No one aspect of abuse can be seen as standing alone—all aspects of abuse feed on each other (O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). In addition, O'Leary-Kelly (2005) states that physical and emotional abuses create an atmosphere of fear, shame, uncertainty, and those around them, isolating them from sources of support. Victims find it difficult to come forward and tell people around them that they are being abused because they may fear discrimination in the workplace due to misconceptions about their experiences and the circumstances in which they find themselves (Kahui et al., 2014). This points to the fact that they may hide their pain, which can affect them in the different roles they play at school. Administrators need to establish how such victims cope if present among teachers.

Victims of domestic violence sometimes share their challenges with peers at work to release some of the burdens they carry. "The Safe at Home, Safe at Work" Survey found that 45% of victims of domestic violence do confide in their co-workers at work (Kahui et al., 2014). Contradiction is registered in another study that reported limited knowledge of domestic violence among co-workers. 18% acknowledged that they either witnessed or heard that a colleague was a victim of domestic violence (UNFPA, 2018). This could be an excellent coping measure, and there is a need to find out if this is also true for female teachers who are victims of domestic violence. Kelly (2012) conducted a study on the effects of intimate partner violence on the workplace and state. The study in which 2000 men and women were surveyed found that about ½ of victims had reported some information about their experiences of domestic violence to a colleague at work but that the degree of disclosure was relatively low. They tended to report victimisation when they needed emotional support or time off. The same study notes that co-workers' level of assistance to the victims was low. However, victims who disclosed victimisation

reported feeling more hopeful about their future, safer, supported, and better able to concentrate (Kelly, 2012). It further asserts that hopeful victims reported less depression, higher job satisfaction, greater organisational commitment, less work distraction, and lower intentions to leave employment. This appears to be a reasonable means to cope. However, the positive support did not extend to behavioural outcomes. That is, perceptions of organisational support were not associated with absenteeism and distraction (Kelly, 2012). There is a need to establish if that is what takes place in our secondary schools in Northern Uganda.

2.8 Support given to victims of domestic violence at the workplace

Family and domestic violence is not just a private issue. An employee suffering from or has suffered from family or domestic violence needs support in their workplace (Miles, 2019). Yet, there is a lack of literature on the organisations' support to help such victims (Swanberg & Macke, 2006). For employees experiencing such violence or abuse, it can be vital to their health and well-being to ensure that they continue in their employment during such times to help mitigate some of the factors they might be experiencing. A supportive workplace can provide staff members with a safe place to escape trouble. Studies show that employees are more productive in a functioning and supportive environment (McPhetson, 2007). That implies that victims of domestic violence may still perform their roles when they find themselves in a supportive environment where supervisors and co-workers support them.

Multiple studies demonstrate that victims, perpetrators, and workers in general favour employers playing a role in helping prevent and provide support for workplace victims of

domestic violence. Studies showing the effectiveness of social support and advocacy for intimate partner violence and “family-friendly” workplaces are generally consistent with employers taking on this role (MacGregor, et al., 2014; Wathen & MacGregor, 2014). This study seeks to establish if this is consistent with the views of female secondary school teachers who are victims and their employers.

According to MacGregor, et al. (2014), three general categories of workplace support to reduce the impact of intimate partner violence on victims have been identified. These are Informal (e.g., a listening ear) or a workplace culture that does not tolerate violence), formal protective support (e.g., schedule flexibility) and intervention (e.g., employee assistance program). The presence of such support in the school setting becomes a critical asset.

The success of students’ academic learning lies heavily on classroom teachers charged with the duty to impart quality instruction. Statistics from various groups advocating promoting domestic violence awareness reflect that domestic violence is rampant against women, with the statistics of intimate partner violence at the forefront. Instructional school leaders, school managers and professionals should be cognizant of domestic violence indicators in the workplace and be prepared to offer support as an employer's responsibility (Lopez, 2012). A leader should set a proper organisational culture that allows communication between the superior and employees to enhance performance. Shantz and Rideout (2003) note that the fast and rapid expansion of education has led to the appointment of head teachers without the experience to execute their duties efficiently. The head teachers in secondary schools in Northern Uganda may not be different. All managers need to be aware of the barrier to disclosure by battered women,

the dynamics of domestic violence, and what they can do to assist women who report a problem to them (Fitzgerald, Dienemann & Cadorette, 2008). Awareness of these can help support female teachers with experience of domestic violence.

The administrative roles of head teachers involve planning, organising, directing, controlling, and managing all matters about education enhancement in the school (Gikunda, 2016). This includes management of the human resources. The issue of domestic violence is all around us. Recognition and appropriate management around this issue is in the best interest of all organisation members (Kelly, 2012). Therefore, it should be in the employers' best interest to support the victim to end the cycle of abuse (Kahui et al., 2014). Scott et al. (2017), in their research on workplace productivity and performance, asserted that workplace climate is vital for employees suffering from domestic violence. Exploring the perception of the victims of the support they got at work, they stated that 40% to 50% of the respondents reported that the climate of their workplace was closed, unsupportive and unfair. Only 28% of the respondents perceived that their workplace was supportive in helping them deal with their domestic violence issues (Scott et al., 2017). Non-supportive workplaces were considered as those that quickly shut down discussion of these issues, upheld attitudes of dealing with problems alone and outside of work time and did not follow due process around allegations of domestic violence.

On the other hand, supportive workplaces were taken as those that were perceived as safe, caring, and helpful places to discuss issues, those that acted as partners and tried to help deal with these issues and followed due process (Scott et al., 2017). Swanberg et al. (2005) noted that formal support offered by workplaces and used by respondents,

including supervisors approving schedules to attend to personal matters (73%), workload flexibility when preoccupied with personal matters (49.5%), referral to counselling (15%) and information brochures describing domestic violence services in the community (9%). It is interesting to find out the perception of victims in secondary schools in Northern Uganda on such support.

Employers who support employees suffering from domestic violence can benefit as they can perform well at their places of work once supported. Such support includes providing an affected staff member with a safe environment away from the abuse, minimising the impact the violence has upon work performance, ensuring productivity remains at the required level, improving overall employee health and wellbeing, improving the morale of the employees at the school, and ensuring that the school is following its duty of care to its employees (Miles, 2019). The extent to which these measures apply in secondary schools in Kitgum needs to be established.

More employers are recognising that domestic violence is a workplace problem. However, few have programmes in place to deal with the impact of domestic violence (Kahui et al., 2014). If employees have reasons to believe their employer will support them, they are more likely to seek help to break the cycle of violence (Kahui et al., 2014). This can be possible if employers and organisations put policies that focus on protection, prevention and productivity that can positively impact the staff who are victims of domestic violence. According to Kahui et al. (2014), if an employer has systems to support victims of domestic violence and educate staff about procedures and effective ways to help victims, time is saved, and productivity can be maintained or even increased. With workplace protection, victims can rebuild their lives faster because of the confidence they develop and the

benefits such paid employment provides (Susai, 2007). This implies that support from school administrators could help female teachers to perform their professional roles.

Historically, models for ending domestic violence have focused predominantly on increasing awareness of the impact of domestic violence on victims developing resources to help potential victims when they might be at risk (Jekayinta, 2014). This calls for focusing attention on the role that peers of victims and their employers play in the workplace. Documenting workplace impact and creating responsibilities around dealing with domestic victimisation without paying similar attention to the implications and responsibilities of employers around domestic perpetrators may have unintended negative consequences (Campbell et al., 2016). This suggests that the employers must be aware of the struggles, and the institution must create ways of supporting the victims if they must perform their work. According to Campbell et al. (2016), employers are always aware of the violence occurring but unaware of how to intervene. Such missed opportunities for domestic violence intervention and prevention demonstrate that workplaces must respond appropriately to the domestic violence situations of workers. This view is, however, contradicted by Hamenoo et al. (2018), who assert that victims of domestic violence do not know what their rights are and are unlikely to divulge such sensitive information freely, especially when they do not know how they will be treated; many choose not to be honest with the information (Hamenoo et al., 2018). Swanberg et al. (2005) point out that gendered organisation assumption means that employers are unable and unwilling to accept that what happens in an employee's home life will invariably come to work and impact performance (Raynes-Thomas, 2013). This perspective contributes to a general lack of awareness of the impact of domestic violence

on workers and the workplace. It may limit how employers are willing to respond to the unique and complex demands of women experiencing domestic violence. The gap being portrayed by the literature is that many women are reluctant to tell managers or co-workers that they are abused. Many institutions are less supportive of private life issues interfering with work, which can affect performance.

In a study conducted by Swanberg et al. (2005), looking at responses, most participants reported receiving some informal support from managers or co-workers to help them deal with the domestic violence they were experiencing. Up to 83% said that they received some formal support, examined how employers helped victims of domestic violence, and identified six ways employers assist victims. These included improving their finances, promoting physical safety, increasing self-esteem, improving social connectedness, and providing mental respite and motivation or a "purpose in life." Supporting domestic violence, victims would keep them negotiating through the challenges they meet and help them perform their work productively.

Further supporting this view is Maggio (1996), when she outlines the importance of establishing workplace policies to address the impact of domestic violence on performance in workplaces. She explains that training and raising awareness help managers and employees gain the knowledge necessary to recognise the signs of issues that may lead to workplace violence or conflict. This would be of positive help if it happened in our secondary schools. Improving the workplace response to domestic violence will require a multi-pronged approach by legislators, employers, unions, and advocates to protect and support victims (Scott et al., 2017). Therefore, preventing domestic violence and its consequences is a collective social challenge, and schools can

be places where such challenges can happen.

Further findings from Kelly (2012) reveal that 20% of the respondents reported that workers were aware of co-workers affected by domestic violence and that 87% said they supported the victimised colleagues. This support included giving advice about relationships or assistance services available and sharing information with others at work. Although they offered support, co-workers appeared to limit their level of assistance and to provide help primarily when they felt compelled to because of a direct experience or perceived connections. From this, it is apparent that some form of support is usually provided by colleagues in places of work; however, the level and types of support need to be explored more, as well as the benefits, if any. The research concluded that domestic violence is potentially damaging to organisation outcomes, and that can influence the degree of harm that employees and employers experience because of domestic violence (Kelly, 2012). This study has yet to establish this in the context of schools in Northern Uganda

Many studies confirm that domestic violence affects work performance, and organisations should develop strategies and programs to manage these effects at work better (Kelly, 2012). However, Swanberg et al. (2005) argue that there is a lack of literature on the organisation's support to help these victims. Our schools need to document how victims cope. Even though previous studies suggest that women who experience domestic violence carry the effects with them to work, there is an indication that most employers have done little to address the issue (Oni-Oje et al., 2014). It is, therefore, crucial that domestic violence is seen as serious, recognisable, preventable and an important issue that cannot be ignored (Oni-Oje et al., 2014). Therefore, schools must develop clear

policies for addressing the challenges.

In the workplace, many women facing domestic violence spend at least eight hours a day; therefore, it becomes ideal for them to get help and support (Ajala, 2008). Workplace interventions provide not only the potential to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence but are also an opportunity to increase workplace productivity (Kahui et al., 2014). The body of research on domestic violence over the past thirty years finds conclusively that staying in employment is critical to reducing the effects of violence and abuse experienced by victims (Kahui et al., 2014). Employment security enables those affected by domestic violence to maintain personal, family, financial and economic stability (Kahui et al., 2014). This suggests that when female teachers suffer domestic violence, their support at the workplace may become a therapy for their hurt and, thus, a meaningful way to be given an environment to perform their roles.

Creating and implementing policies protecting domestic violence victims empowers them to meet and disclose their greatest fear (Alanz & De Los Santos, 2017). The authors observe that school leaders and managers should not assume that to become involved in the intervention prevention and support of employees facing domestic violence is meddling in personal lives. Instead, they should take it that such action serves as the conduit to those who can help the employees and could save a victimised employee's life (Alanz & De los Santos, 2017).

In conclusion, the literature looks at the presence of domestic violence among female workers, the causes of domestic violence, and how it manifests itself in different forms

and affects the workplace. Literature on teaching and administrative roles of teachers is presented, and literature on work productivity was also reviewed. Literature on various ways of coping by the victims is given. The literature further spells out the extent to which employers recognise the vice as impacting the workplace or not and how they handle domestic violence victims in the workplace.

2.9 Literature Gaps

From the literature review above, it is evident that literature is lacking, particularly exploring the experience of female teachers with experience of domestic violence in Uganda. There is no evidence on how their experience of domestic violence affects their teaching and administrative roles and how they cope. Lacking is also an assessment of how schools and administrators are well equipped to support female teachers with experience of domestic violence.

Although Uganda has excellent laws relating to domestic violence, little is known about how effectively the regulations are implemented at workplaces and secondary schools. No evidence exists on the impact of domestic violence in schools in Kitgum District, thus the need for the research to have it documented. Besides, I have a few of the qualitative studies I utilised to bring in the aspect of focus group discussion. This study considers the topic sensitive and delves into snowballing and using in-depth methods.

Considering that there is no empirical documentation on interventions to support secondary school teachers with experience of domestic violence, there is a need to develop support and intervention measures for female teachers with experience of domestic violence based on research.

The connection between the abuse of women and employment in Uganda is still a hidden issue. Few researchers have focused on this; partner issues are perceived as belonging to the private domain and work in the public area. The employment of qualitative interviews in this study enables the researcher to explore the experiences of these female teachers with experience of domestic violence from their perspectives and the support they receive. It is also meant to get from the head teachers who supervise these women survivors whether they are aware of the existence of such women in their schools and what support they give them.

Domestic violence is broad and complex; many areas are still un-researched. Much research has focused on prevalence, and in schools, the focus has been more on domestic violence involving learners, mainly leaving out the teachers. However, there is no specific research about the experiences of domestic violence and workplace productivity in the geographical site of this research, i.e., Kitgum District.

Many studies do not consider the context and consequences associated with victimisation and disclosure to people at work, whether co-workers or supervisors support women and whether workplace support positively influences domestic violence victims' job performance (Swanberg & Logan, 2005). This study seeks to fill gaps within the education setting in schools by gathering more details and exploring the experiences of these women about what kind of support they get and the impact of domestic violence on their work.

In conclusion, one can argue that there is limited information about female teachers' experience with domestic violence. Although similar studies have been conducted in many other countries and other areas of profession like health and banks, studies that relate to

domestic violence involving teachers are still lacking. Empirical evidence is necessary for understanding the real problem presented by domestic violence among working female teachers. This study provided useful information for supporting and addressing challenges of domestic violence among female teachers to improve their ability to perform their roles amidst such challenges.

Therefore, the study addresses the research gaps, adds literature to the body of knowledge on domestic violence, and points to valuable areas that can contribute to policy and practice addressing domestic violence issues and workplace productivity.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the research methods utilised in the study. It spells out the qualitative research design chosen to explore the experiences of female teachers with domestic violence. It describes the applied ethics Philosophical (socialist feminist theory) standing and the feminist theory which underpinned the study. The chapter also justifies using the narrative research design for the study. The research settings are presented, the participants are defined, and the scope is elaborated. The data collection procedures and methods are presented, as well as the measures and process of data analysis and techniques used. The credibility, generalisability and ethical issues are all presented in this chapter.

3.1 Socialist feminist philosophy and woman emancipation from domestic violence

This study was supported by the socialist feminist philosophy (SFP) of Simone de Beauvoir, most articulated in 1949, as a constituent of applied ethics philosophy. Feminism as a word and concept was coined first by a French Philosopher, Charles Fourier, in 1837, though earlier, it originally meant ‘feminine qualities or character’. According to Simone de Beauvoir (1949), feminism was conceived in the political struggle between the strong and the weak or between the oppressor and the oppressed – man and woman, respectively. Socialist feminism, therefore, sought to highlight and address the problems inherent within patriarchy and capitalism where the weak were endemically exploited (Simone de Beauvoir's Thesis ‘The Second Sex’, 1949). This treatise discussed the marginal

treatment of women in society then and throughout the entire history of the scholar's time(Debra & Burke, 2023).In Simone's discourse, 'man and woman' were expected to coexist - enjoying equal values of love, taste and living standards. The thesis connoted sex orientation to remain a natural heterogeneity.

Regrettably, all these aspired values are alleged to be scanty in society even in the current times where women continue to agitate for meaningful emancipation from forms of oppression (Jean-Paul Sartre, in Wikipedia). However, Sartre was essentially a Marxian existentialist (1905-1980), and the ontology of his school of thought somewhat inclined (overtly or covertly) to the advocacy of socialist feminism. He specifically painted man (woman or man) as 'a being-in-itself' and 'a being-for-itself'. Sartre portrayed the man as an outstanding conscious mind seeking constant gratification. According to this philosopher, significant differences between the 'human being' and other 'things' in the world were singled out. The 'things' that are not conscious, e.g., rocks, are seen as 'being-in-themselves' but not 'being-for-themselves'. In a way, Sartre's conception yielded to a political philosophy which became, to date, sensitive to the tension or pressure between personal/ individual freedoms and the forces of history (Debra & Burka 2023).

According to an Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2018), socialist feminism entails ethical issues that struggle to systematise behaviour. Furthermore, ethical, or moral issues as a field of intellectual inquiry presuppose concerns of psychological descriptive realities - distinguishable within three major branches: meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Meta-ethics is about the theoretical propositions and perceptions of moral issues and how their truth values can be determined. On the other hand, normative ethics

concerns the practical meaning of determining an ethical course of action. Secondly, applied ethics involves someone obligated to do something in a specific situation. This study aimed to explore and define the experiences of female teachers affected by domestic violence in Uganda. Considering that the study focused on the extent to which domestic violence affected the teaching and administrative roles, the teachers' coping capacity and how the administrators managed the situation, it was considered prudent to support the study with applied ethics, connoted in socialist feminist philosophy.

3.2 Domestic violence in the context of Radical Feminist Theory

This study was supported by the Radical Feminist Theory (RFT), stipulating that women and men are created equal (Bryson, 1992; Stefon, 2023). RTF was based on society's nature, which Mary Daly, conceived it as fundamentally patriarchal - depicting men as domineering oppressors of women (Stefon, 2023). The generic presumption of radical feminism, thus, is to reduce patriarchy to liberate girls and women from the perceived unjust society. Feminism is at war with the existing social institutions and norms (Arinder, 2020; Bryson, 1992). Furthermore, feminism involves arguments against the social and sexual objectification of women (Arinder, 2020). It focuses on public awareness about various issues such as rape, violence against women, challenges of gender roles, and challenges of social and economic disparities, according to Mary Daly (Stefon, 2023).

The feminist perspective looks at systems and structures in place that works against individuals based on equality and equity (Arinder, 2020). Domestic violence can best be understood from the perspective of Patriarchal nature of the society that shaped the power relationship between man and woman. The assumption of the feminist

underpinning is that patriarchal family structure maintains power relations with men as superior, creates an environment that normalises many forms of violence by men, reinforces and sustain women subordination. Therefore, Female teachers suffer domestic violence, as men dominate them, inflict violence on them and they take a subordinate position by condoning.

The primary objective of the current study was to explore the experiences of female teachers affected by domestic violence, focusing on how domestic violence affects their teaching and administrative roles, how the teachers cope and how the administrators manage the status quo. Therefore, a study into the lives of abused women must attend to the experiences of women's lives from their perspectives, with consideration for vast realities, must attempt to address oppression within women's lives and must do so with a high level of awareness of the issues of flexibility, objectivity, and participation by those whose experiences are being studied (Allen, 2010). All these issues that were investigated are engrained in the assumptions of the radical feminist theory, thus making it relevant to the study.

3.3 The qualitative methodology

Considering the philosophical connotations that ethical and moral issues as a field of intellectual inquiry require psychological descriptive answers, the research design considered appropriate for this study was qualitative, with the relevant methods to address the research questions. Qualitative research is the systemic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings like how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and groups behave, how organisations function and how interactions shape

relationships (Corbin &Strauss, 2008). The choice of the qualitative approach was guided by (SFP) of Simone de Beauvoir and RFT (alluded to, respectively) – both advocate for subjective inquiries to gain or procure knowledge. Because of the nature of the topic intended to seek participants' open views and explanations on the nature of feelings and values contained in the marriage partnership, the inquiry methods employed were hoped to enable the researcher to engage in honest conversations with the participants.

3.4 Interpretive and narrative methods of inquiry

The unique and sensitive topic of domestic violence and the support given to the victims also merited a qualitative research design, considering the contextual elements that make managing employees suffering from domestic violence unique. The researcher's interest was to open avenues for the teachers who were victims of domestic violence and the managers of these victims to define and explain what works to enable them to perform their work well despite the problems they go through. The researcher took the interpretive paradigm, where the women shared sensitive and personal stories that, in most cases, were painful. She also employed the narrative method to explore the experiences of female teachers. Narrative research encompasses a broad range of approaches, which are focused on gathering, analysing, and presenting storied texts or personal accounts to establish a detailed description of the meaning of an individual's experience - personal, interpersonal, positional, and ideological (Riessman, 2005; Murray, 2008). All these aspects are relevant to this study. The personal element is concerned with how individuals describe their own experiences. This suits the research question of how the female teachers described their experiences of domestic violence.

On the other hand, the interpersonal and positional elements helped the researcher explore the interaction between the victims' co-workers and the school administrators to understand how they negotiate through the challenges to perform their professional roles and the support they receive from peers and administrators. By exploring their perception, the narratives made it possible to obtain multiple perspectives that further the understanding of domestic violence. This made meaning of what they go through and why they still perform their duties amidst pain. Besides, stories can be a form of therapy to help release the pain and stress that domestic violence can bring to survivors.

3.5 Research setting

The researcher conducted this study in secondary schools in Kitgum District because of familiarity with the setting. Many scholars have posited that the experiences of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence are best understood against the backdrop of the social context that frames their lives (Kitara et al., 2012). The researcher served for over thirty years as a teacher, senior woman teacher, and head teacher in the area; gaining the opportunity to interact with teachers and administrators to get meaningful data was a good decision.

According to the media report of New Vision 25/11/2019, the UN Women Report on Gender-based Violence for the entire country is given with the Ankole sub-region of southwestern Uganda, having a prevalence rate of 73%, while the Acholi sub-region, in northern Uganda where the focus of this study is, is ranked in the fifth position with 60% prevalence rate. This agrees with the 2016 Uganda Demographic & Health Survey (UDHS) report (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018), where the lifetime prevalence of domestic

violence was 59.9%. This is above the national prevalence of 56%, pointing to the need for the study in the area. Moreover, the researcher knew some victims were willing to share their experiences. This advantage made it possible to unearth and document these concerns.

3.6 Population and sampling technique

There are currently 23 secondary schools in Kitgum district (District Education Office, 2023); these were purposively targeted. The respective head teachers of these schools participated in the study and were selected purposively. On the other hand, the sample for the teachers was selected via snowball sampling. In all, 20 teachers were chosen as a saturated sample willing to participate in the in-depth interviews. The snowball sampling technique was appropriate since domestic violence presents a difficult-to-reach population.

3.7 Scope

This study was limited to domestic violence between men and women in families. Violence is seen from the perspective of women as victims, recognising the profound consequences on the woman. While the researcher was also aware that male teachers also suffer from domestic violence and may have been included in the current study, these remained outside the scope of the study.

It was also limited to female teachers with experience of domestic violence (past or current) who are teaching in secondary schools in Kitgum and willing to participate in the research at the time of the study. The scope was also limited to all sitting and

serving headteachers of secondary schools in Kitgum at the time of the study.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

A narrative approach was used to provide structure for describing the perception and views of women on their experience of domestic violence, especially on how it affects their teaching and administrative roles, how they cope and the support they receive from the head teachers and the schools where they work during and after the predicament. This was preferred because narratives made it easy for the researcher to comprehend and describe the experiences of the female teachers who are survivors of domestic violence, understood from their perspective.

3.8.1 Interviews

All information was collected using face-to-face interviews. The research relied on interview information to make general statements and conclusions. Triangulation was provided by interviewing the head teachers. This was per Creswell (2014). The researcher used open-ended interviews to guide the conversation and allow participants to provide relevant and important information. This helped the researcher to appreciate and understand the depth of the victim's experiences. It also helped her to discover the interconnection among people who live and work in a shared context.

The choice of interview tools was also arrived at because an in-depth interview provides much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods (Boyce & Neale, 2006). It helped get detailed information about the thoughts and behaviours of female teachers suffering from domestic violence and how it affects their professional roles. The interview provided an excellent opportunity for the research

to take its direction, as the conversations with the female teachers allowed them to explore and make sense of their experiences. An in-depth interview has also been chosen because of the research topic, which is very sensitive, and participants may not be comfortable talking openly in a group. as may be offered in focus group discussion. Besides, it requires building trust and confidence with participants, which the researcher achieved through engagement one-on-one with the respondents. Open-ended interview questions are helpful because they helped me to capture in-depth information about the participants' experiences and offered the researcher control over the direction of the interview. When handled well, interviews may become a source of therapy for the participants who may be undergoing stress and pain and may not be willing to open. This view is supported by Gale (1992), who observes that the relationship between the informant and the researcher, the contextualisation of the research talks and clarifying procedures used by the interviewer and the interviews can become therapeutic. I made efforts to put all these in place. My experience is that conversations that started in a very tense atmosphere with a lack of trust soon turned into lively discussions.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis requires processing and transforming the raw data into more meaningful information. The primary data for this study was obtained through qualitative in-depth interviews. Thematic experience-centred narrative analysis was used to identify themes and sub-themes within the narratives (Bold, 2011; Riessman, 2005). A thematic approach was used to provide structure for describing the impact of domestic violence on the performance of survivors in their workplaces in terms of their experiences, how they negotiate through the challenges to perform their tasks in schools and the support they

receive from the workplace as they struggle with incidents of domestic violence. I chose to analyse my data using Microsoft words, which was possible because the number of participants was small, and, therefore, I felt comfortable picking up all the bits and pieces of the data in a manner that I was content with. The researcher is aware that automated analysis would make the process faster and capture phases the manual data may not capture. However, the researcher felt that the constant interaction through reading and re-reading would make her more familiar with the narratives. I read and re-read all written materials to get an overall impression of the data collected, noting the initial ideas. I repeatedly listened to the interview audio recordings to gain an initial impression and identify the central themes in the female teachers' stories. I used thematic analysis to identify and report patterns/themes. The analysis helped me to identify and write participants' experiences, thoughts and meanings as themes and subthemes and then represented them in clusters. I took the exact wordings used by the participants and restated the statements made to ensure that the meaning conveyed was correct. I summarised the points made by the participants to ensure accuracy and substance. Aware that I was using snowball, which could slow down the data collection process, I ensured that during and after the interviews, I used the opportunity to summarise the information from the participants to ensure accuracy. Data collection and analysis, therefore, went on simultaneously.

Selecting the short excerpts used by the participants helped me identify data that occurred frequently and then generated the initial codes by systematically coding interesting data features. I picked the data on everyone, devised a set of codes and categories capturing themes, and labelled them, but I also kept adding others as I read

through the samples. For example, as I looked at the coping measures. Initially, only positive measures came up, which I coded, but later, negative measures also came up, which I had to add.

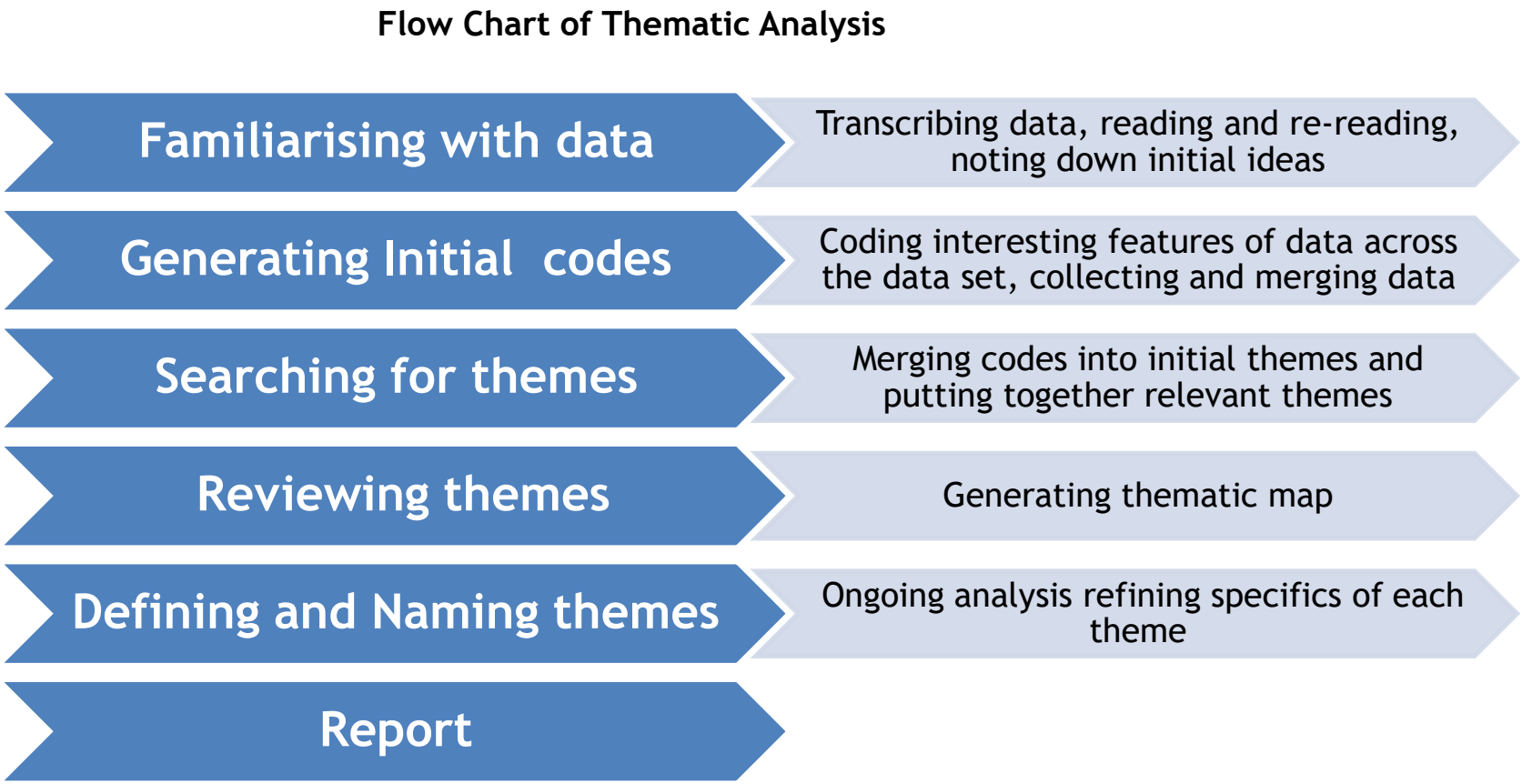
I used inductive coding, creating codes based on the data and giving them labels as I continued reading it. Inductive coding was used because it is open, unlike deductive coding, where I would have been limited to predefined codes without giving room for emerging data. While reading and re-reading or listening to the audio I took using my iPhone and then downloaded to my MacBook, I kept adding new codes and revising their description as they emerged. I was keen to notice all the data and avoid inconsistency as much as possible. From the codes, depending on how many times they appeared, I formed them into themes that emerged, and where the themes became very broad, they were later broken down into sub-themes.

The themes were named. The findings at any point in the process provided some direction for further data collection and the direction the analysis took. Focusing on the experiences of the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence through their detailed stories ensured rich data material and more depth to our understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of domestic violence in their teaching and administrative roles. The final step in the data analysis was to report the findings by relating the analysis to the Research Questions and literature. To visualise some of these, I presented them using graphs, tables, and word art, all drawn from the narratives.

From the themes and sub-themes that emerged, I drew some meanings from them. The common themes were grouped, and individual variations were stated separately.

Differences among the themes were noted and isolated from the common themes, which were batched together. This helped to reflect the realities from participants' narratives, e.g., some participants brought in differences that the domestic violence they experienced motivated them to work hard and, therefore, did not affect their work in any way. Such voices were also recorded, and possible explanations to make meanings were explored about the commonalities from most participants, stating that domestic violence demotivated them from performing their work. Such outliers helped me summarise the meaning of the information individually and collectively and brought out meanings of how participants responded to their respective situations. I matched correlations and looked for themes with enough data to support them. In attaching meaning to the different codes, the researcher tried to relate them to the demographics in terms of the age of the female teachers, their years in service, number of children, among others. From time to time, I went back to the field notes to seek clarity on what I felt needed to be clarified, reviewed cases that contradicted and made follow-up interviews. This ensured credibility for the final report.

Figure 1: Thematic analysis



Source: Braun and Clark (2006)

3.10 Procedures

In This study, the researcher formulated research questions based on her knowledge of the topic. The supervisors reviewed the question guides and gave their approval. The question guides were then submitted to the Ethics Committee of Uganda Christian University, who gave their approval and later to the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). Before data collection, the researcher informed the Office of the District Education Officer and the Municipal Council about the study. Contacts were made with the head teachers by phone or physically for appointments with the selected participants. The female teachers in these secondary schools known to the researcher as having experiences of domestic violence were also contacted and served as entry points. Appointments were made with individuals on the interview date, place, and time. The researcher made it a point to be at the venue on time.

The social context in which the data is gathered is critical in establishing data validity (Brink, 1993). The interviews were conducted in spaces/rooms that offered ample privacy while providing a suitable environment that put the participants at ease. The interview venue was chosen in consultation with the respondent. They were contacted beforehand to ensure that the time and site for the interview were agreed upon. For those within the vicinity, I preferred to meet them and then schedule the time and place of the meeting. I was uncomfortable doing this on the phone since I was unsure whether the husbands would get to know. All appointments were made on the phone for the headteachers since I did not see any significant risk involved.

All interviewees who are direct victims were assured of anonymity. The interview was coded with the letter F, meaning 'face-to-face', then V for victims and then

1,2,3… depending on the sequence of numbers indicating the interview number within a particular mode. I kept updating my research journal throughout the data collection and analysis process. The journal was made after each interview or set of interviews for the day, and it included notes on the researcher's perception of the participants and recollection of how the participants behaved and spoke during the interviews. The notes later helped me to recall the meaning of participants' responses during the analysis process and identify any distractions or comments the researcher felt were important to the study. I included/recorded all personal impressions that would impact the analytic procedures. These included emotional outbursts and unique behaviour triggered by the interviews. Initial transcribed interviews were shared with the supervisors for support and guidance on the analysis process.

Open-ended questions were asked, starting with general questions on the demographics that intended to capture the age range, qualification, number of years in service and the number of children that the participant had as well as the marital status, experience in marriage as a teacher, and the specific issues of discomfort experienced. Other respondent background information required was on what makes/made the survivors uncomfortable. Afterwards, thorough probing was done on the physical, psychological/emotional, and economic impact. The respondents were also asked to respond to how marital discomfort affected the victim's teaching and administrative roles. In research question three, the participants were asked to share how they cope with marital challenges while teaching. Research question four was addressed by asking about the support they received from the school to enhance the performance of their professional roles. They were asked to suggest how they wanted the schools to support them to enable them to perform their work amidst the challenges of domestic violence effectively.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with headteachers, starting with the demographics, whether they were aware of female teachers experiencing domestic challenges with their spouses, whether such teachers had ever shared their challenges with the headteacher, and how the headteacher has been responding if such has ever happened. The researcher also sought to find out how the family issues of the victims were affecting their teaching and administrative responsibilities. The head teachers were also asked to explain whether they had any procedures for supporting staff who were victims of domestic violence.

To conduct a successful interview, I started by introducing myself and the purpose of the study after exchanging greetings and general pleasantry. This was meant to develop rapport and put the respondent at ease. I gave them the consent paper, asked them to read and requested them to sign if they felt comfortable with it. They were reassured that the information collected would be held strictly confidential. Assurance was also given that the information would be stored away safely, except in the unlikely event that it was demanded for review by the dissertation chair.

During the interview, I applied active listening and, where necessary, rephrased the response to understand the respondent's answers. I exercised patience and flexibility and ensured that the discussion was on track. Sometimes, participants deviated from the questions and discussed her sensitive situations in detail, but I had to listen patiently. I kept telling those with complicated stories that not all was lost and that the situation would improve, but I was careful not to be judgemental.

Fear for the safety of the participants was taken care of. I believe any threat, doubt, or anxiety on the side of the participants could lead them to provide wrong or withhold information. The interviews were meant to take one month, but they

dragged on for almost three months because I had to get referrals through Snowball. Sometimes, the person referred to could only accept after a time to be interviewed. I had to give them time to make their decisions. On two occasions, the interviews started and stopped on the way because of the pain that the conversations provoked, and we had to schedule another time. Another unique incident was when one of the participants received an urgent and rude call from the husband demanding her to go home immediately. I witnessed the panic and change of mood, and we had to postpone the meeting. However, all the interviews were carried out to a conclusion. Five female teachers I was referred to never agreed to the interviews.

The COVID-19 period was also a difficult time, and there were times that I felt like I needed to avoid meeting with the individuals. Yet, realising the importance of the study, I had to adjust and conduct the interview. However, because there was theoretical saturation from the data collected from the participants, there was nothing different that I could get from the opportunities lost.

For clarity, I contacted some of the women more than once. I did this by making phone calls, but for those who were easily accessible, follow-up meetings were arranged. I had already accessed them and talked to them earlier, face-to-face. Thus, follow-ups on the phone were relatively easy since we talked about how to handle it. This strategy of checking bias is also shared by Maxwell (2012) when he refers to it as “member checks”, which systematically solicits feedback about your data from the people you are studying. Maxwell (2012) states that this is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what informants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases. Issues of sampling bias may become a credibility threat. For my study, I interviewed respondents up to the point

of theoretical saturation.

The researcher did not give any financial or material incentives to the female teachers who participated in the study in return for the information they provided. I am aware this could have lasting adverse effects on the truthfulness of the results. This enabled the researcher to get realistic data. I come from a background ravaged by war and the community where the research was conducted. I am aware of experiences where participants always tend to exaggerate or understate information in studies conducted mainly by humanitarian bodies. All I did was to provide a transport refund, and sometimes we discussed over a cup of tea/coffee or water, which I willingly offered.

3.11 Credibility

Credibility as a component of a research design consists of the strategies used to identify and try to rule out threats (Maxwell, 2012). From a qualitative perspective, credibility can be defined as the correctness of a description, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account (Fitzgerald, Dienemann & Cadorette, 2008). Therefore, researchers need to be attuned to the multiple factors that pose risks to the credibility of their findings and plan and implement tactics and strategies to avoid or counter them (Brink, 1993). Brink (1993) identifies factors that can affect validity as errors and categorises the errors as arising from the researcher, participants, situation, social context, and data collection and analysis methods. Aware of these factors, I was very keen and endeavoured to limit the impact on my study by paying particular attention to credibility issues that came from the participants, data collection techniques, analysis, and biases as a researcher. Therefore, to obtain the trustworthiness of my study, I established a data trail, acknowledged my subjectivity,

did members' checks and participants' reviews, and ensured that I had prolonged engagements with the participants.

Two critical threats to the credibility of qualitative conclusions are the selection of data that fits the researcher's existing theory or preconceptions and the selection of data that stands out to the researcher (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Maxwell, 2012). If not checked, these might influence the trustworthiness of data considerably. I was mindful of my own bias and, therefore, worked on it. I had to manage my own emotions and ability to remain impartial. I avoided the temptation of developing emotional attachments to participants based on the narration of their experiences. I must admit that at some points, the stories of the women weighed on me heavily and to address this, I kept focused, reminding myself that I had a purpose to achieve and, therefore, must get the correct information. Sometimes, the researcher paused and asked to verify the information given by the participants. With those who had strong faith in God, sometimes we had to take a break and pray. This gave me time to recollect myself and get composed and objective. By doing this, I managed the data collection process well because the possibility of including my thoughts or suggestions was minimised. Instead, I maintained discipline and presented the data/information received as accurately as possible.

The researcher's influence on the setting or individuals studied, generally known as reactivity, may present itself as a challenge to the study (Maxwell, 2012). My presence could influence the participants and the responses that they gave. I was mindful that this could arise out of fear of my position as a head teacher coming from the same vicinity where they work or of the opinion that they looked up to me as someone who could help them. This could lead to remarkably high chances of exaggerating or downplaying information. What I did to address this was to clearly

explain the purpose and benefit of this research to the participants, and by doing this, I was able to obtain trustworthy data because even when I cross-checked, the information remained the same. Credibility was also ensured by using the participants' words instead of paraphrasing what they said. This made me avoid bias, and the information written by the participants enabled me to make my interpretation of what the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence said. I remained conscious of my subjectivity and monitored this throughout the research process.

The credibility of this study was also done through an audit trail; I established a well-organized and thorough audit trail by ensuring that all observations, field notes, and interviews were typed and filed chronologically. This provided efficiency in the analysis phase. I also attached notes regarding my thoughts and insights gathered during the interviews, including verbal and body language. I then wrote my ideas in journals. I made the collected data, raw and analysed, available for review by two peers; one person who was also pursuing her PhD supported me.

The credibility of my study was also ensured through members' checks and participants' reviews. I gave the participants copies of relevant data collected from them but not yet interpreted, asking them to check for accuracy, correct errors and provide additional information that might improve the accuracy of the data. This was done after the data collection phase for clarity and accuracy of the data collected.

The trustworthiness of my research was achieved through prolonged engagements with the participants. My proximity to the research setting allowed me to keep in touch with the participants. It helped me to seek and compare notes to test for

misinformation introduced by distortions of the information either by participants or me. This also helped to build trust and rapport with participants.

Before the interview sessions, I drew the attention of the participants to the fact that honesty was desired in the entire process and therefore strived to build confidence and trust and minimise reactivity between the respondents and myself by getting close, explaining the purpose of the study and continuous interaction as well as talking with them about their fears and how we can address them. This is in line with the suggestion by Leininger (1991), as quoted by Brink (1993), that the researcher should continually assess and gauge their relationship with the participants to enter or get close to the people or situation under study or to move from a stranger or distrusted person to a trusted and friendly person during the research process. One of the issues I explained to them that helped in building trust was that I would conceal their identity. Pseudonyms were given to the respondents to protect them, creating a risk-free environment, which put them at ease. I believe this made them present accurate information regarding their personal experiences and feelings about their situation with domestic violence.

The choice of the interview venues was made in consultation with the respondents. This was to ensure confidentiality, ease, and accessibility to the participants, aware that I would get the required information when participants were seated in a relaxed and comfortable place.

3.12 Generalisability

Generalisability in qualitative studies has often been misunderstood and disregarded in favour of the more common purpose of providing an in-depth understanding of the specific topics under research (Wu et al., 2016). There is a general view that

generalisability can only apply to quantitative research, which handles large numbers of participants, thus making the study representative enough for generalizability. While this is true, my study dealt with a few participants. Only in secondary schools in Kitgum District but the findings are extrapolated to a wider population of female teachers in other secondary schools in Uganda who are also victims of domestic violence. My decision is justified and supported by some scholars, which can provide credibility to generalisation from qualitative studies, including my study. Lara (2018) cites Larson (2009), who gave reasons why qualitative research can be generalised. This includes generalisation through context similarity, such that the weight of evidence allows a generalised judgment to be made, as well as making generalisations through recognition of patterns. The context in which this study was conducted supports the inference for the following reasons: African culture generally remains patriarchal, with men having control over women and such powers are often exerted through force. This culture is shared throughout Uganda; therefore, domestic violence issues remain the same.

Looking further at the context, we see that Uganda's education system applies to all schools. The Acts, policies and regulations governing the management of schools are similar or the same. The teachers and administrators are all trained at the same institutions and are most likely to behave similarly. Uganda's legal system and other laws are the same and, therefore, are bound to apply likewise, whether in strength or weakness. These can provide for the generalisation.

Relatedly, Wu et al. (2016) put forward that if research wants to preserve the term generalisability in qualitative enquiries, the philosophical traditions underpinning the examination must be specified to ensure that the analytical/theoretical and the types of knowledge that can be pursued in qualitative research would be straightforward.

My study is underpinned by the feminist theory, a universally accepted theory used by researchers conducting studies on domestic violence. Because of this, the findings can be authoritatively applied to a broader population. My study focuses on female teachers whose motivation for performance is affected by domestic violence, which affects the critical areas of need; the study can be generalised to personnel in other regions with experience of domestic violence.

The study focused on a selected contemporary phenomenon of domestic violence, where in-depth description remains an essential component of the process. The limited number of participants made me gain a deeper insight into the issue of domestic violence. The qualitative data enabled me to understand the phenomenon better, and the results can contribute valuable knowledge to the community. This aligns with what Browne (2013) states: a small sample size may be more helpful in examining a situation in-depth from various perspectives, whereas a large sample would give details easily. Based on the small sample size, the report is presented in a manner that can speak to the reader through words and illustrations, resembling natural experiences attained in ordinary personal involvement.

3.13 Ethical issues and confidentiality

Conducting a study on a sensitive topic and a population exposed to threats and insecurity, like women with experiences of domestic violence, is complex and may become futile. This, therefore, called for ethical considerations. This was important because it concerned the respondents' personal lives. The topic's sensitivity posed a considerable risk to the researcher, who could also experience harm. The biggest concern in this study was the ability of the respondents to express their accurate reflections of incidents they go through since this could affect authenticity. I was

guided mainly by four key ethical requirements in conducting this research. These are consent of respondents, respect for peoples' privacy, and keeping personal information confidential. According to Armiger (1997), informed consent is the major ethical issue in conducting research and means that a person, knowingly, voluntarily, intelligently, clearly, and manifestly, gives consent. I designed consent letters to fulfil the informed consent requirement, spelling out the study's purpose and participation requirements. I explained to the respondents the content of the consent form, and once they agreed with it, they signed it.

I clarified that participation was voluntary and that the participant could choose to terminate their participation at any time without giving any reason. During the interview, I experienced deferring the discussion because of the trigger for emotions that the stories provoked, but later, all the interviews were concluded. The consent letter also indicated that all information given by the respondents remained confidential unless required by the ethical committee that their names would not be included in the research writing, that the information provided would not be used for any other purpose than for the study and that after completion of the study, the data collected would be destroyed.

I explained to the respondents the purpose of the research and the procedures that I followed so that they made informed decisions about participation in the study. The researcher ensured that no addition or subtraction was made to/from the information provided by respondents since this could lead to the corruption of the actual thoughts presented by each participant. Their statements remained as given to maintain the trend of the steps taken to summarise each of them into distinct meaning. This allowed the researcher to continue with a phenomenological study's good and sound ethical practices (Neisha, 2017).

Considering the nature of qualitative studies, the interaction between the researcher and participants can be ethically challenging (Sanjari et al., 2014). This is because the researcher is personally involved in different stages of the study and must be keen as the study is conducted. This becomes more critical when researching domestic violence. In conducting the research, I had the moral and ethical responsibility to protect all respondents in the study from potentially harmful consequences that might affect them because they participated in the study. I managed my data collection and contacts with respondents very discreetly. We discussed the interview venue and agreed with them, and I made sure I had minimal phone conversations with the survivors. This was meant to safeguard the female teachers. I found this very useful during the interviews because some respondents in narrating their stories mentioned that their husbands secretly set their phones on voice recordings.

For the head teachers, I knew that my research did not directly pose a challenge to them. Even then, I never made it known to the female teachers that I was referred to them by their head teachers. I also sought the opinion of the head teachers from the private schools because I was mindful that their directors might be unhappy with some of the outcomes that can expose their schools as not caring for female teachers with challenges. I assured them of confidentiality to protect them from such directors but also to avoid hostility from female teachers who are survivors of domestic violence in case they learnt that their head teachers exposed them.

Informed consent has been recognised as an integral part of ethics in research (Sanjari et al., 2014). This is something that was done before embarking on an interview. I explained procedures to the respondents and clearly explained the research expectation, their potential role, and the purpose of conducting the study.

I put forth my identity and how the results would be published and used, among which is how the findings can be utilised to have remedies for supporting women suffering from domestic violence. I informed them that some of the interview questions may be personal and difficult to discuss, and therefore, they were free not to respond. They were also told they could end the interview whenever they wanted or felt uncomfortable when it became very emotional. I had evidence of consent by respondents in writing and signed by them. I also used audio-recorded oral consent. This was done during the introduction before the actual interviews commenced. Some respondents were reluctant to sign the consent, saying it was unimportant because they already agreed to be interviewed. I felt I could not pressure them on this, but the audio remained as evidence for consent because I alerted each of them that I would audio-record our conversations, which they all accepted.

It is argued that qualitative research dealing with in-depth sensitive topics can pose emotional and other risks to participants and researchers (Sanjari et al., 2014). This is true. Some of the stories triggered painful memories and emotional responses during the interviews. To minimise this situation, I was very mindful of the possible effects of some questions on the respondents. For instance, I asked them: "What makes you happy in your marriage?" Then, I asked about what made them unhappy in their marriages. My target here was the causes of domestic violence, but I suspected that putting the question to them in a direct manner would not make them not open up. These questions set a pace, and gradually, the problematic questions came while probing. This helped to minimise emotions. The good thing is that I did the interviews without involving any assistant, which helped me handle such situations. When confronted with difficult situations, I paused and gave moments for the respondent to recollect herself. I was conscious to avoid intrusion into their

autonomy. I only encouraged them to share as much as they could with me, but where I felt there was a need for some reservation, I moved forward and made follow-ups on the gaps later. When it became apparent that a respondent was not willing to give her response, I noted that and moved forward. My initial plan was that where there was a need for referrals, I would refer them to the spiritual leaders agreed upon by the respondent for support. I am aware of the insufficiency of professional counselling in Kitgum District. Fortunately, the interviews were conducted without any referrals.

Researchers need help maintaining confidentiality, especially in qualitative research where the conduct is personal, the sample is smaller, and the report displays interview quotations (Ford & Reutter, 1990). This raises the issue of the right to know and privacy, which, if handled poorly, will expose the participants. To protect the victim. Ford and Reutter (1990) suggest using pseudonyms and distorting identifying details of interviews when transcribing the tapes/notes. To solve this concern, I used a secured data storage method where all my raw data was stored under lock and key and was only accessible to me. I also removed the identifier components and devised other means of identifying the participants, i.e., naming them FV… (face-to-face victims 1,2,3….). The reference numbers were assigned during the interviews to ensure complete privacy and anonymity. Real names and other identities were not used in any documentation to maintain confidentiality. Only the original data under lock and key had real names to enable me to make follow-ups with them without confusing identity. Privacy and confidentiality also included the interview venues chosen in consultation with the participants for safety and convenience.

3.14 Minimising harm to the researcher

The relationship established between the researcher and participants can raise a range of different ethical concerns. This includes respect for privacy, establishing honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentation (Sanjari et al., 2014). To safeguard against such situations, I clarified my role in the research process.

Aware that conducting interviews on domestic violence can pose emotional stress as well as physical risk to the researcher, I solicited peer support from a fellow researcher from time to time, checking with her and sharing my emotional challenge. This gave me the opportunity for self-care, self-reflection, and self-monitoring. The most common risk for fieldworkers is the emotional toll of listening to women's repeated stories of despair, physical pain, and degradation (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). I sometimes became emotionally drained as a woman interviewing fellow women entangled in domestic problems. To avoid the researcher getting personal with the stories and concerns, I developed a strategy for emotional distancing to avoid getting lost and burnout. I remained focused on the research and avoided sympathy. However, I remained empathetic and drew my strength from prayers, relaxation and keeping the interview schedules spaced to give me time to reflect and absorb some of the stories.

The interviews were conducted during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The risk of getting infections during physical interaction with the participants was very high. To address this risk, during interviews, I maintained Standing Operating Procedures for COVID-19 prevention including wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands or sanitising.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the study findings to get a feel of the experiences of female teachers in secondary schools in Northern Uganda who are affected by domestic violence. It describes how domestic violence affects their teaching roles as well as their administrative roles. It also sets out to establish how these female teachers cope with the challenges of domestic violence as they perform their work and how administrators manage the situation.

4.1 Background information on female teachers

This information is tabulated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of victims of domestic violence

Item	Frequency
Age	
24 to 30	2
31 to 40	12
40 and above	6
Total	20
Number of children	
None	1
1 to 3	16
More than 3	3
Total	20
Qualification	
Bachelor's degree	18
Diploma	2
Total	20
Marital status	
Single (temporarily living alone)	1
Married	11
Divorced/separated	1
Widowed	1
Cohabiting	6
Total	20
Subjects Taught	
Arts	17
Sciences	3
Total	20

Source: Field data (2023)

The respondents in this study were 20 female secondary school teachers who had or are experiencing domestic violence in their lives and were willing to discuss their experiences.

According to Table 1, most of the respondents were aged 31 - 40 years (n=12); those in the age range of over 40 years were (n=6), and only two were below 30 years of age – a number too small, maybe they were not willing to talk about challenges in their families and probably this is tender age where marriage is still a future aspiration. Based on Uganda's education system, most students' complete university

or tertiary education between the ages of 20 and 24. After that, they take a few years before getting married, making the percentage with issues of domestic violence relatively marginal. One cannot, however, rule out the chances and loopholes presented by Snowball as a reason for the low rate. The age number of teachers above 31 years was high in this study. The possible explanation could be that these women are more mature and willing to talk freely about the pain they go through in the family without caring about the impact should their spouses know about it. The percentage drops in the age range above 40, probably because this age range is where the spouses are very mature and independent. Besides, living together for many years may also breed tolerance. Middle-aged couples are either more prone to domestic violence or are willing to report violence inflicted upon them. From the demographics, domestic violence occurs among all age groups whether young, middle aged or older.

Most female teachers had one to three children, making up (n=16) of the female teachers interviewed. Those with more than three children were three, and only one had no child in the relationship. (n=11) of the respondents, who are the majority, reported being married, one separated, one divorced, one widowed, while six cohabited. Adding these together reflects that most women endure abuse without leaving their husbands. The main reasons are staying for children's sake, cultural stigma, and fear of the unknown.

On the other hand, all the women living in violent relationships say they remain living with their husbands because of the children. A 50-year-old woman no longer living in the association said she saw no reason for staying in a dysfunctional relationship without a child. This confirms that children make women persevere even in a dysfunctional relationship. Most female teachers reported attaining a bachelor’s degree (n=18), while two had a diploma. Domestic violence affects women irrespective

of academic level. Their level of education gives the impression that they understand the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, domestic violence, and the laws. Most of the female teachers interviewed were teachers of Arts subjects, but this also has no bearing on experiences of domestic violence.

Table 2: Results for the demographic characteristics of head teachers interviewed.

Item	Frequency
Age	
25 to 30	1
31 to 40	8
40 to 50	8
50 and above	6
Total	23
Gender	
Female	4
Male	19
Total	23
Qualification	
Bachelor's degree	20
Master's degree	3
Total	23
Marital status	
Others (priest)	1
Married (monogamous)	21
Married (polygamous)	1
Total	23
Years as head teacher	
<5	11
5-10	7
10 and above	5
Total	23

Source: Field data (2023)

Most of the head teachers were married, i.e., (n=21) and in a monogamous marriage, while one was in a polygamous marriage, and one was a Catholic priest and therefore not married. Most of the head teachers fell between the age of 30 and 50 years. Eight were in the age group between the range of 31 to 40 years and the same number of

eight also in the age bracket of 40 to 50. Six were head teachers above 50 years, while only one was below 30 years. Of these, only four are women, while 19 are male.

The demographic portrays disparity in headship by gender to the disadvantage of female headteachers.

Up to 11 had experience of being head teachers for less than 5 years. Most of the head teachers with less experience are the ones who did not show any reason for supporting the female teachers. Their interest in human resource management has gaps. Most of these head teachers agree that domestic violence exists among the staff though some of them have not got this directly from the female teachers suffering from it. Alongside domestic violence, they pointed out health-related issues, financial issues, interference from relatives, and accommodation problems as being some key issues that affect the performance of personnel in the school.

According to the head teachers, several female teachers were employed in their schools, the highest number being 13 in one school and the lowest being one. In all, there were 98 female teachers reported as working in the 23 schools in Kitgum at the time of the study. They reported that a big proportion of the female teachers were undergoing domestic violence.

4.2 Sources of domestic violence as reported by the female teachers

The female teachers were asked about those things which make them happy in their marriage: several themes came out. These include good communication with the partner, material support from the partner, being welcomed by in-laws, having a hardworking partner, having a God-fearing partner, caring partner, a partner who provides for the family, and having children. Even where domestic violence is evident,

some things still make the female teachers appreciate their abusive spouses, and probably these are the reasons that keep them in the marriage.

Several issues were pointed out when asked about sources of domestic violence in their relationship. These included extramarital affairs (15), lack of financial support/financial exploitation (20), not being trusted (18), physical fights/ power control (15), not being allowed to work, hot-tempered husbands, negative influence of the men's family members; differences in educational level; stalking and emotional abuse such as sexual deprivation; disrespectful verbal utterances, as well as disrespectful actions, were also mentioned. Some head teachers confirmed these reasons. Four headteachers confirmed that they were aware that the female teachers in their schools experienced physical abuse mainly from men wanting to be in control/power, while seven said that the female teachers talked about emotional and psychological abuse, and eight mentioned economic exploitation. Another factor that came up prominently was extramarital affairs.

Issues of culture, education level and Christianity come into play on extramarital affairs. In the study, most of the women explained that domestic violence in their relationship mostly had its root cause in extramarital affairs. None of the women said they were comfortable with their husbands getting involved in extramarital relationships during our interactions. The majority said they always felt unloved, inadequate, jealous, angry, and insecure when they found out their husbands were moving with other women. This affects their esteem, particularly in cases where the men seem to be falling in love with younger girls and sometimes below their standards as far as education level is concerned. While probing further into why extramarital affairs become a source of domestic violence, I learned from the women that this comes from a feeling of deep betrayal and disrespect by their husbands and their

failure to recognise their contributions to the marriage—being educated Christians, they feel that polygamy is backwards, a tradition that should not apply to women of their status and that bad culture should be eradicated. They say that when they oppose this, the men insist on their way, and as a result, tension emerges. The violence sometimes comes as a response to their being cold to their husbands, who expect them to remain happy and welcoming even when women know what is happening. Out of jealousy, the women say, sometimes, they also provoke the husbands because nothing remains the same when a spouse is in another relationship. Jealousy, hate, feelings of insecurity, mistrust and change of attitudes by the women all contribute to tension and misunderstanding, and these develop into all other forms of domestic violence.

Several respondents reported being made uncomfortable by extramarital affairs. FV4, in the age range between 30- 35-years, a female teacher, had this to say:

> *My husband is a womaniser, which makes me very unhappy; he is involved in extramarital affairs and always cheats on me with other women. This is the cause of misunderstanding in our home. He does not beat me, but I get a lot of emotional problems when he does not respect me.*

FV.20, a 38-year-old, said:

> *Assume that your husband spends a night out and, on return, expects you to talk with him normally. How will you feel? Can you do what you are supposed to do to him normally? What I cannot come to terms with is to sleep with him when I know he has been with another woman, and without shame, he becomes aggressive, wanting to have sex with me.*

FV.20 brings another dimension to domestic violence that shows that, sometimes, domestic violence does not stem from only one cause. She had this to say:

> *Madam, as I said, when my husband wants to sleep with me when I know he has been sleeping with another woman, I deny him sex. When I deny him sex, he gets back at me by beating me and abusing me, but he also stops giving money for the house and yet expects to eat food and wash his clothes.*

Related to extramarital affairs is life in a polygamous setting. The few women who talked about this felt that their level of education should deter these men from marrying many wives, as this badly hurt their sense of pride and ego. In tears, one of the female teachers, FV.6, who had left the marriage for about eight years and is now in her 50s, still became emotional and said:

> *A P.5 girl was got and that was the last straw on the back. My ego was crushed; I began to live in shame; I felt abused. How could I become a co-wife to a P.5 useless girl? This was the biggest blow that I could not handle. It was time for me to leave the marriage. Unfortunately, even after leaving, the ghost of the bad relationship still hangs on me.*

This statement implies that the impact of domestic violence can last for a long time. Another teacher, FV.19, had this to say[1]:

> *I hate the confusion and conflict in this polygamous life. All what [All that] is done in this home is quarrels, abuses, fights, and chaos. Any time I ask for anything, we quarrel. He often forgets about his responsibilities to provide for his family economically.*

Based on this, the issue seems to go beyond extramarital affairs. Probably, the status of these women and their Christian faith put them above the recognised culture of being comfortable with sharing a man for a husband.

Lack of financial support and neglect or exploitation featured very highly as being responsible for making marriages have challenges. All 20 women and six head teachers mentioned this as a source of disagreement. Several respondents reported being made uncomfortable by a lack of financial support. The economic issues revealed by these female teachers were very diverse. Many of the men were found to be unsupportive. All the responsibilities were left in the hands of the women, particularly when it came to buying food, digging, paying for utilities, meeting costs of educational materials for children, and hospital bills and in extreme cases, women also met the costs of school fees and housing, not forgetting demands from extended families from both the side of the man and the woman's side as well. To most women, such economic exploitations breed more tension and lead to physical and emotional abuse in most cases. This is evident by statements such as what was said by FV.3: "*My husband does not give me any money. I always provide for myself and the family. I am grateful to my brothers who always come in to fill the gap*". Another, FV.5, 44 years, shared the same view by saying,

> *This man does not support me in any way. I use my resources to run the family, which is stressful. He is not hardworking, and this often is the source of quarrels in the house and ends up making all of us unhappy.*

Another source of conflict experienced by the women on financial support issues is that sometimes, the spouses pick money from the women without seeking their consent. In many cases, this led to fights. The women felt that failing to support them

financially was already bad, but going further to take their money without permission is very painful and unacceptable. Besides, this still leads to a lack of respect for privacy. Such monies are always picked up from handbags, bottles or containers for local savings placed in the house and having access to the automated teller machine (ATM) cards for the women and withdrawing money from the banks. Quarrels and physical fights always follow such economic abuse.

One of the respondents, FV.15, lamented,

> *Even when he does not give me money, I have found him checking on [checking in] my handbag more than three times, and he picked [up] money. One time, when I asked him whether he picked [up] money from my handbag, he agreed and said: 'Yes, I picked [up] the money that your boyfriend sent'.*

Such statements indicate that economic violence sometimes comes with verbal utterances that may psychologically affect female teachers. They increase the pain more if the women are unhappy with what the money is used for. Most times, the men pick money for the wrong reasons such as drinking, hanging out with friends, eating pork, and sometimes even giving it to girlfriends, as the women allege. To many, it would be understandable if the money was picked up for use within the family. Speaking about what they considered as an example of wrong use of money picked up from them, one of the older female teachers (FV.6), whose husband is already dead, still spoke bitterly as follows:

> *He picked [up] 300,000=, which I had kept in the house, and I was informed that he added it and used it for marrying his second wife. At*

that time, this amount of money had a high value. When I complained, he said that women do not own anything and that even if I had children, all the children and all other things I owned belonged to him and that he also owned me. This was only one incident but that is what he always did to me.

Sometimes, the financial support took a different dimension, with the men failing to support the women and going beyond by taking advantage of the relationship and being exploitative. Some of the comments I picked up from the conversations regarding this pointed to the fact that they are between a hard place and a rock because they feel exploited and trapped in the relationship because of their many children. FV.9, a forty-one-year-old survivor with six children, thus states:

…….My husband assumes that I have a lot of money and keeps asking me for money or directing me on what to do with my money. We live in the schoolhouse; I pay all utilities. It is me to feed the family, support my children in school, and care for their health. All he does is spend his money on his siblings and relatives. He has a good job…… I am fed up.

Another teacher, FV.13, 40 years, had the same feelings and said:

I hate the idea that they use me as a ladder. I got the man doing his diploma in water engineering. He used me as a ladder. I paid for his degree course. After finishing his degree, he got another woman and now lives with her. He does not now care about me, yet I paid rent for my mother-in-law for three years while he was in school, and I supported him and his family. All I received for doing good is pain and

rejection. I know my pains cannot go away, and I can do nothing, but God will never bless them at all…. By the way, even the mother-in-law [my mother-in-law], who pretended to like me, told me to allow the son to be fully in charge of everything. When I said no, she also turned against me.

The issue of financial exploitation is known by the head teachers as well. Some consider this a big challenge to women, which is why there are spousal problems. One of the head teachers narrated how a female teacher felt exploited:

The second female staff issue was mainly over finances; the husband is not a working class but would like the wife to give him all the money after receiving his salary such that he should be the one to plan how the wife's salary can be spent. Yet, he ends up with a bigger percentage taking hard drinks.

Although many head teachers agree that financial exploitation can cause domestic violence and that men should support their wives financially, the researcher also registered negative voices from some male head teachers that can be interpreted as entrenching domestic violence. Such head teachers think that women fight for equality and that there is nothing wrong if the men do not support them. A male head teacher in his 40s said, "*These women want to be equal. Why don't they fully confirm this through their financial muscles sponsoring domestic activities*?" Another head teacher said, *"Let these women know and know very well that men are the heads of the family and culturally no woman owns anything, so when a man utilises what the woman has brought home, there must be no resistance, no quarrel…"* Such stances depict the patriarchal nature of our society, manifested in radical feminism, and it is doubtful

that female teachers can get support from such head teachers to enable them to cope with domestic violence as they perform their professional roles in schools.

Listening to the female teachers' stories, coupled with the confirmation from the head teachers, one can state that their experiences of domestic violence cannot be detached from issues of finances as one of the causes. The cultural feelings that men own everything and women nothing come into play, and on the other side, the feelings that men should be the providers also remain strong in the narrative.

Another cause for domestic violence from the perspective of female teachers is a lack of trust. For peaceful and harmonious coexistence between spouses, trust becomes very important. From the women's stories, domestic violence occurs when there is no trust between the spouses. Trust must be from both the wife and the husband. According to the women, suspicion always comes from the husbands. There are several reasons they gave that eroded the trust. All the women whose spouses have lower academic standards than them reported a lack of trust in their husbands. They say their spouses think they are not faithful to them when they delay school, attend school functions like parties, walk with the male teachers, or dress smartly. Their husbands usually feel insecure and become jealous. Such lack of trust degenerates into emotional violence when the men abuse them, restrict their movements, isolate them and often lead to physical fights.

The female teachers agree that once their husbands begin to lie or when there is evidence of unfaithfulness, they always dwell on that, which also causes violence. Several respondents reported to have been made uncomfortable by not being trusted by their husbands. A young woman, FV.4, had this to say:

My husband, in due course became a shepherd, following me everywhere. He could not allow me to attend any function, including school functions, without him yet whenever I went with him, he would always be on the lookout, and when I talked or smiled with any man, he would be offended. I hated being embarrassed by him in public, and I felt terrible that he never trusted me and that I was misunderstood. Yet, to him, I should not complain of his monitoring me if I am innocent.

FV.2, who is 33 years, added:

He accused me of being promiscuous. Every man was seen as my lover and all the female friends as connecting me to men. He became suspicious and did not want me to work over [the] weekend, saying I would be going to sleep with men. This made me feel bad. I know how honest I am, but this man wants me to always feel guilty.

FV.7 shared a similar view on lack of trust: *"My husband privately set auto-voice recording in my phone and while I slept, he would be listening to my dialed calls"*. Generally, the lack of trust stemming from the husbands, as reported by the respondents, was mainly on allegations of unfaithfulness by their wives. They said that their husbands were always suspicious and accused them of infidelity, which, to them, was not true. This mainly came from the younger women. Tapping calls and checking on spouses' call records and messages were reported primarily by women in their 30s and below. Such a lack of trust by the men always made the women feel agitated and sometimes led to violence.

FV.3 confirms this in the following statement:

He is a very jealous and local [not enlightened] man. He does not trust me at all…... One day when I came from work, I found him in very bad mood, and he told me that he saw me moving with men. He said, you 'collect men behind you like a dog on heat. To be honest, even a dog is better than you'.

She went on to say amidst sobs:

When I tried to respond that these were colleagues and we were from the school preparing our students for athletic[s], he responded by slapping me, kicking me, and insulting me very badly. I cried not because of the pain from the blows and kicks but from the verbal insults…….. I am innocent, I have never cheated on this man at all, but he went [on] saying that I sleep with the male teachers; I sleep with the students and all men who care to release themselves on me.

Such utterances coming from a spouse are bound to affect the performance of a female teacher in her roles. To them, even when the men are not around, thinking about such utterances triggers pain and affects their preparation and delivery of their lessons. Such allegations arising from a lack of trust are bound to affect the relationship and can affect the performance of the female teachers at school.

The lack of trust sometimes sparks emotional and physical abuse, eventually escalating financial exploitation and deprivation. FV.17 explained how the lack of trust in her husband caused her long-lasting emotional distress:

I must not talk about this, madam, but maybe you will understand me. If I explain to you in detail what my husband did to me. I was

pregnant with my firstborn. I wanted a maternity dress, and he offered to go with me to town to buy at least two dresses. We travelled to Town on his bicycle. Then, bodaboda [Bicycles for hire] were not common. We moved to a few Shops, but the prices were high so, we could not afford. We Agreed to return later. I had my lesson to teach in the afternoon that very day. Before getting on the bike, I decided to enter another shop. He chose not to enter the shop with me. I bought the dress and coming out of the shop, he had left. I immediately sensed danger.

I then walked home, and on reaching, I found him in very bad mood. He demanded food and did not wait for my response but started slapping and abusing me. He alleged that I remained behind to sleep with the shopkeepers in return for the dresses. That he regretted marrying a prostitute……

She paused and explained how the man ordered her to the bedroom and to lie down for him to inspect how many men had slept with her. She looked down to the floor. I felt like I had a lump in my throat, but I decided to control myself, remain silent, and wait for her to continue the story. She said:

He forced me to remain naked on the floor for more than 3 hours as he walked in and out of the room to abuse me and do unthinkable.

Things on me… He is demon-possessed. I lived with the shame and bitterness of his cruelty for long. He never trusted me in any way and this made me suffer physically and emotionally…

Such a nasty situation is bound to impact female teachers and their work in school negatively.

On the other hand, the women also have trust issues with the men, creating conflicts that sometimes escalate into violence. One female victim, FV14, 49 years of age, said:

> *The man is secretive. He feels that like there are things I should not know about. When I ask, we always end up in quarrels and sometimes even physical fights. If I am his wife who lies naked in his bed why must he keep secrets from me and how can I trust that I can be safe with him".*

FV.5 added:

> *I don't trust him, and he does not trust me. He is a womaniser, and he does not like telling me about his plans. He always blames me that I care for my child who is not his more and that he does not know what I spend my money on. This is a big source of conflict; he does not trust me, and I don't trust him, so we both do our own things……*

While trust issues are a common source of conflict for younger and older female teachers, the younger women struggle with a lack of trust, mainly from suspicion of unfaithfulness and bad friends. In contrast, women in their 40s and above have trust issues, mainly on resources and how they are managed.

Physical fights/Power and control issues are the manifestation of domestic violence. However, for this study, they are recorded here because of how the question was framed, asking the women, *"What are the sources of discomfort in your marriage?"*

Domestic violence can be manifested by physical fights. This study brought this up when 15 of the female teachers interviewed mentioned that they had been beaten, slapped, pinched, kicked, or boxed by their spouses at one time or another. From the conversations, the women feel unhappy that at their level of education, the men can still beat them to the extent that sometimes they are left with injuries, which leave them in pain and shame and keep them away from their work. To them, a single slap or any physical fight breeds domestic violence because even when they take it, it breeds anger because of the disrespect inflicted on them. Besides, sometimes they also respond violently in self-defence, breeds more violence. Several respondents reported being uncomfortable by physical fights with their husbands mainly because men want to control everything. For example, FV.2 said, *"I hated the beating and abuses and quarrels. When my parents asked (for) dowry, he started mistreating me. He insisted that it was me inciting my parents to rob him of his money"*. FV.5, another respondent, said, *"Yes, we have physical fights, and earlier, when I was still healthy, I would beat him up Now I am sick. His other wives have bewitched me. Sometimes I chase him away from this house"*. Another respondent, FV.3, confirms the physical fights, saying:

> *My husband is very hot emotionally. On any slightest provocation, he will get annoyed, shout at me, and beat me up. He wants to eat his meals at specific times. When I fail to follow the set time, he will refuse to eat food and become very agitated and moody almost fighting. She went on to say, He is abusive and very disrespectful. I felt very bad when he said, 'I don't know what happened to your late father. I am not your father, and don't bother me before knocking my head on the wall.*

Some of these fights have always left marks on the female teachers and even made them end up in hospitals for treatment. The women explain that the physical scars are embarrassing, and, in most cases, they must look for reasons to cover them up, like falling, getting hurt, etc. Fresh injuries mean they must stay away from school, affecting their work, while the men feel in control and powerful. One of the women painfully and tearfully told the researcher how she got caught up and could not get medical attention because the facility wanted a police report. Yet, the husband's family told her never to go to the police to report a minor family dispute. Being a young girl of 24 years, FV.3 narrated her ordeal without emotion, but in the middle, she became very emotional. She said:

> *I remember two bad incidents that put me in hospital… The second incident was when he knocked my head on the wall, boxed me, and knelt on my stomach. I started bleeding because my delivery of the baby had been by caesarean, so I think he hurt the scars. The clinical officer in the health facility referred me to the government hospital. They did not want to treat me because they wanted [a] police report. I felt devastated that the hospital, instead of helping me as an emergency, still wanted me to suffer. After all the medical personnel was also a man. However, after some intervention by a spiritual leader, they admitted me to the facility. Madam, look at what I am going through. My husband is a priest, and I am expected not to expose what goes on in our family……How painful...*

She broke into tears, and I gave her space to collect herself. I then prayed with her and asked her whether we could continue the conversation, and she agreed, telling me that the prayer had strengthened her. She quickly apologised for becoming

emotional, but I reassured her it was okay. I felt terrible but controlled myself, smiled, paused, and continued the conversation.

Four of the 23 head teachers confirmed that these female teachers suffer from physical violence. This number is far less than the number of female teachers who agree they experience physical violence. This could be because the female teachers who suffer from domestic violence hide this from their supervisors because of the embarrassment and shame that the revelation of the vices can bring.

Negative Influence from family members was also noted as a factor leading to domestic violence. In the study area, African culture still features prominently in family affairs. Women married in a home must pay allegiance to a wider family, and family members greatly influence how the spouses live their lives. The family members referred to included mothers-in-laws, fathers-in-laws, aunties of the spouses, their uncles, and siblings, among others. These extended families are complex and depend on the nature of the families where the women are married. Others are narrow, while others extend very broadly. Several respondents reported being made uncomfortable by the negative influence of their husbands' family members, and this caused domestic violence. The results are also complex.

Some family members do not want the female teachers to work, while others feel she must not complain. She must be obedient to all that the husband does without complaint. The woman's ideas are secondary and do not matter in the family setting, while other relatives feel that the woman must not be involved in family meetings because she is a foreigner; she must not support her family because she has already left them. Others go to the extreme, directing the female teachers to be good wives by cooking and serving all the meals to their husbands, including close relatives. It

does not matter whether they must be in school to perform their work or not. To the women, such demands become overwhelming to them both physically and mentally. When they see that their husbands are not protecting them, they complain, and, in many cases, this leads to violence, affecting not only their relationship but even their work at school. For example, in the name of being good wives, they try to balance the work at school and home, but where there is no understanding, they end up pleasing neither side. Some relatives become jealous and feel that their son is not supporting them but instead supports the wife, her children, and her relatives only, even if there is no evidence to support their claim. The women's experience with the relatives of the men and sometimes with their relatives remains one of the causes of domestic violence, as narrated by the women.

FV.6 complained that the husband's relatives mainly engineered the cause of her suffering in her marriage. She explained as follows:

> *In 1999 I had a miscarriage and that was the beginning of the problem. A deliberate move was made by the sister of his mother to get for him a wife. Reason being I could not give a child to their son and yet their son is so much in love with me. That if they don't move fast their son would turn against them and support my mother and my relatives only. None of them cared about the pain I was going through, suffering a miscarriage after many years without any child. A P.5 girl was got and that did not go well with me. This was a pupil and me being a teacher, it really affected my ego. How can I compete with a child for a co-wife?*

Confirming the negative influence by relatives of the spouse, a female teacher, FV.5, went on to say:

… I am not informed of when the women meetings for the clan take place. His family does not like me, and they make this very open. One day, I forced myself and went and sat among them. They wanted me to go to the kitchen and cook, but I refused. They abused me and said I was proud for nothing and that I undermined them because I was educated.

FV.8, 33 years old, also complained about the husband's relatives saying,

His family members don't like me. They say I am older than their son and that I am too bold and not respectful and that I treat their son like a child. My husband now wants to please them and show that he is a man by coming home late… and sometimes this hurts me and raises conflict. Since they say I am eating their son's money [using their son's money], I want him to prove this by providing everything, which is impossible, of course…

More evidence was given by another respondent, FV.9, who complained that her relationship had hit the rocks because of the interference from the family members of the husband. The man's relatives have influenced the husband, and he does not give any money for food. She said, *"My man listens only to his mother and uses the money as directed by his mother…"* She narrates that she has seven children and yet, from the influence of her mother-in-law, her husband spends most of his money paying for his siblings instead of looking after her children. Where such negativity exists from the man's relatives, it can be challenging for the female teachers to turn to them in times of misunderstanding with their spouses.

Although the negative family influence was common in the narratives, it is worth noting that the husbands' parents loved and valued their daughters-in-law in some families. Unfortunately, in some cases, the good relationship with the men's families brought more conflict and suffering to the female teachers, as stated by some of them. FV.2 thus said:

> *His father and brothers supported me morally and were always there to protect me, but my husband became annoyed. He told them off that I was not their business. After all he was the one who brought me to their home and therefore his family cannot be closer. He became [so] bitter that everyone including his father and relatives have turned against him and supported me…*

The above suggests that not all the relatives of the spouses are hostile on the female teachers who are married in their families.

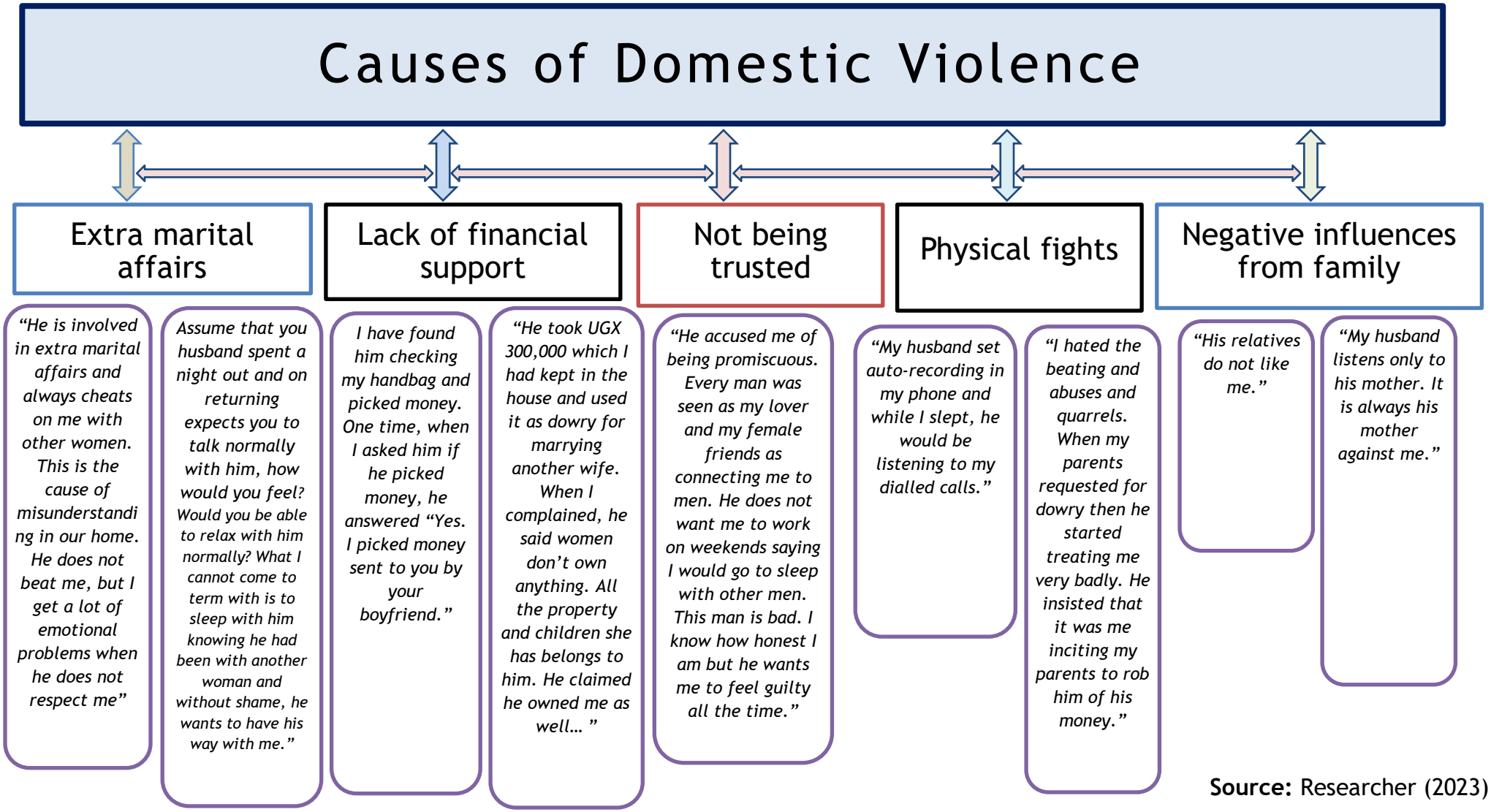
The issues of extended families and domestic violence for women are not limited to men's families. The female teachers cited interference from their families as one factor for misunderstandings with their spouses. Some of the parents and families of the female teachers support the husbands of these teachers to the disadvantage of the female teachers. To the women, their families feel that if they break up, then that will reflect that they did not bring up the female teachers well. The parents then want them to stick to their marriages at all costs because it is a shame when they break up. This points to the feminist paradigm perspective. The women also say that their families want them to stick to the dysfunctional marriage because their husbands always give them a wrong impression, supporting them financially and being close to

their relatives. In such situations, the men become bold, arrogant, and emotionally abuse the women. One lady, FV.10, 29 years, said:

> *….My husband did not care mistreating me because my stepfather openly told him that I am a bad woman and that they do not blame my husband… I am a slave with nowhere to turn to. How can this man behave well towards me when I have no backing from my parents?*

Through the women's stories, it is evident that several issues shaped their relationship with their husbands, leading to violence. These, among others, included extramarital affairs, dominance, and power relations, being ignored, extravagancy, poor financial planning, emotional stress, silence, being beaten up, spending nights out, being always in conflicts, influence from relatives, not being introduced to the men’s families, and using the woman’s money to do other things.

Figure 2: Major sources of domestic violence from the perspective of teacher



Source: Researcher (2023)

4.3 Female teachers' perspectives on the impact of domestic violence on the teaching roles of teachers

Objective one of the study sought to assess, from the female teachers' perspective, how domestic violence affects teachers' teaching functions/roles. The experiences of the female teachers on how domestic violence affects their teaching roles were explored. The interview interactions with the female teachers and the head teachers produced two themes and several sub-themes which explain how domestic violence affects teachers' teaching roles. From these emerging themes and sub-themes, it was established that the spill-over of the experiences of domestic violence on female teachers gets to the workplace, affecting teaching and learning. This leads to poor service delivery in teaching by the female teachers affected by domestic violence, manifested by absenteeism, missing lessons, inadequate preparations before classes, lack of concentration, low self-esteem, and challenges with mental stability. Besides poor service delivery in teaching , the women said their teaching roles are also affected by domestic violence they experience in terms of poor interpersonal relationships with both the students and the people they work with, like the head teachers and other workers. The women say this also manifests in different ways, like showing bad attitudes to students and staff, lacking cooperation, and being rude and harsh. They gave examples of bad attitudes, including failing to greet, isolating themselves, not paying attention to what goes around them and being uncooperative. The above issues are discussed in detail below.

4.3.1 Poor service delivery in teaching

Poor service delivery in teaching for a teacher means failure to perform in the teaching and learning processes. Teachers are expected to be at school to teach all their class lessons. This comes with a timetable, which is a routine. The women's responses in

the study indicate domestic violence keeps them away from school, and absenteeism disrupts their teaching roles. Besides the actual classroom teaching, a teacher needs time to be present to interact with the students, prepare lessons , mark their books, tests and be on call to handle any other issues related to teaching like identifying and putting together learning aids. Yet, absenteeism was presented to be among the major effects domestic violence has on the teaching role of teachers. Out of the 20 women interviewed, 14 said that sometimes they would be absent from school after incidents of domestic violence like fighting, injuries, emotional state, being locked up by their husbands or settling domestic issues and even out of shame, as well as wanting to be left alone, among others. The head teachers also confirmed that absenteeism was rampant among the women struggling with domestic challenges (n=10. FV.7, for example, said, "*Many times, I failed to report to school…After fighting or quarrelling in the night, I would feel so drained of energy and fail to go to school*". Another respondent, FV.2, narrated the dilemma she finds herself in on whether to go to school to teach or stay away and lamented as follows:

> *One night we quarrelled, and I packed my things ready to leave in the morning. He threatened to commit suicide telling me after his death I would never be at peace. It became difficult for me to leave but I could not go to school either. I was not sure if he would not commit suicide and their family [his family would] blame me. I had to call the head teacher telling him that I was sick. I missed my lessons that day and stayed home for a week. I was just not myself. I feared this man could die and I get the curse and become a disgrace to my family.*

This is not different from what FV.11 also said:

I find it very difficult to go to school when I am not in my mood, when I have physical injury and pain. The head teacher complains of my rate of absenteeism. This is true but I would rather stay away from school after a bad day at home than come to school and add more problems. Sometimes I am sick; sometimes when I am financially down, I don't go to school.

Further evidence of absenteeism was given by FV.15, thus; *"There are times when I stay away from school. I make excuses that I am sick, and I stay away from school. Absenteeism means I cannot complete the syllabus on time"*.

Summarising the women's narratives, we can state that absenteeism from school always comes after quarrels and misunderstanding with their husbands and sometimes depriving them of sleep and preparation, thereby making them disorganised and drained of energy. The only way out is to stay away from school. Others stay away out of fear that their spouses will follow them to school and cause a scene, while others do not go to school because their husbands have threatened to harm themselves or the women if they dare leave their sight. Besides, physical injuries and other forms of pain make the women just have excuses to stay away from school. Staying away from school reduces on contact hours with the learners and disrupts performing their teaching roles.

The interaction with the head teachers stressed this; one stated that *"there is a high record of absenteeism where teachers have domestic problems"*. Another head teacher said, *"For the female teachers that I suspect to be having domestic violence and even those who shared with me, the absenteeism is very high. The teachers always give different excuses and tell stories to justify their absenteeism"*. Another

head teacher also noted this by stating that *"cases of absenteeism have also been rampant coupled with regular requests for absence from the station, hence reducing the number of contact hours with the school and the learners on the performance of tasks and responsibilities"*. This issue continued coming up with another head teacher stating:

> *Absenteeism from school, for example, a teacher may stay away from school for even one week. This greatly affects her class's normal flow of lessons and syllabus coverage. Inadequate time is availed [provided] to students to have personal interactions with the female teacher at the right time since one completes her lessons late and, in a rush, to get back home.*

While it is true that women experiencing domestic violence frequently absent themselves from school, they do not come up openly to give reasons why they are away from work. Instead, they always give excuses. This means these women don't feel good about domestic violence and are ashamed of the situation. They complain that they stay away because the anxiety created has a psychological impact on them, which further affects their teaching roles even when they come to school.

Missing lessons were presented to be among the major effects domestic violence has on the teaching role of female teachers in secondary schools. The female teachers may not be absent from school, but they gave several reasons why they would still miss lessons. Six female teachers and five head teachers say classes are missed because of late arrival to school. According to the respondents, after a struggle at home, they are constantly forced to come to school late even when they know their timetable and the time to enter the classrooms. They advanced several reasons for

arriving late at school, namely having arguments or fights just before setting off to come to school, being in an emotional situation that bars them from leaving home early enough, or sometimes being held back either deliberately by the husbands or they are resolving conflicts. The women always try to come to school but arrive late and fail to enter the classrooms to teach. They explained that sometimes when they are lucky, they get time to compensate for these lessons, but where they do not, the students miss the classes even when they are physically present, affecting lesson coverage. Other reasons for missing assignments were given as lack of preparation, fatigue, not being in the mood, being drained of energy, and disruptive behaviours of the spouses and their family members, among others.

FV.3 narrated thus.

> *One day, we had a fight, and my husband's father came up to school and asked the head teacher to release me from school so that we would go and handle the problem. I tried to plead with him to allow me first to teach and address the situation in the evening. He insisted, and the head teacher released me. I had three lessons that day and I missed them all. It became tough for me to return to school because I felt everyone had known my problem. However, I forced myself and went to work, but I had missed the lessons already and being [a] candidate class, I failed to get free time to compensate.*

To FV.5, even when absent, her work is still affected by her mental and emotional state. She said:

My current physical health gives me little time to attend classes. I have already told you how my co-wives have worked on me. I am a Geography teacher, and I must draw maps. My hands cannot hold chalk anymore. I always ask my departmental members to draw maps for me on a flip chat and in class I sit while teaching.

FV.4, a 33-year-old, said:

"Many times, I fail to manage my time well. I get so confused when I am annoyed. Staying in school becomes difficult, and I always leave school earlier than expected. In this way, I fail to give time for the students to consult me as I also miss some lessons.

The head teachers emphasised this and complained that missing lessons means the work scheme must be adhered to. Eventually, the class needs to catch up in subjects, making students perform poorly in their subjects. One of the head teachers said, *"Syllabus coverage has not been to the school's expectation. The teachers always lag [behind] in coverage, and this affects [the] performance of the students in the subject."* Another head teacher reported that *"late reporting to school is very common, and such teachers also leave school very early. At times, they miss the lessons; this means the work cannot be done well"*.

Similarly, another headteacher said:

Being a single parent, she typically reports one week late. When a call is made, she says she is still organising her child to report to school as well and she will have to wait for some days to catch up with an open roof vehicle that only travels once a week from her home to the school;

that is cheaper to a teacher. She has compounded problems. Maybe if she was in good terms with the husband, she would be doing better.

Such are the difficulties that female teachers face, affecting their work at school. Being present in school, failing to perform, arriving late, and not getting to class on time impede teaching and learning.

Poor preparations before classes were presented to be among the significant effects domestic violence has on the teaching role of teachers. Teachers must have adequate time to prepare for teaching and learning to be effective. Although all the respondents confirmed that they know what it takes for a teacher to prepare to teach, listing items such as making lesson plans from the scheme of work extracted from the teaching syllabus, making lesson notes, having learning aids and records of work all available, they report that this cannot be done effectively because of domestic violence that impedes their level of preparation. They assert that preparation requires time, peace of mind, and a calm environment. All these, however, cannot be done effectively when the teacher is experiencing domestic violence.

In the interviews with the respondents, 15 female teachers and two head teachers admitted that domestic violence does not give ample time for preparation and, therefore, can negatively impact the teaching role of the teacher. The female teachers with experience of domestic violence gave many reasons why they always fail to prepare their lessons well. These include stress due to many unresolved issues, pain inflicted on them by their spouses, restraint by their spouses and sometimes they feel helpless and drained of energy. They say they fail to prepare to teach when they are not emotionally and psychologically prepared. Others get overwhelmed with family responsibilities because their husbands are irresponsible or deliberately leave all the

responsibilities to them. Other respondents said that they fail to prepare because the home environment is hostile, and their husbands disrupt them when preparing lessons. The respondents said because of all these challenges, they end up giving notes or get into the classroom to occupy space and avoid reprimand from head teachers and other supervisors. Some agree they also go to the level of forging lesson plans to protect their jobs. All these can have an impact on the teaching and learning process. The following was some of the information I got from the women. FV.2 observed:

> *My husband took me to the Magistrate Court when I left him. He wanted to have the children. This stressed me further and really affected my job. I reached a level where I wanted to leave the children with him but my parents and colleagues at work asked me to fight for my children. I lost weight; I became lonelier and could not even prepare my lessons. I missed my lessons and I distanced myself even from students. I was battling with my problem.*

Such explains why female teachers fail to prepare to teach when they are not emotionally and psychologically settled. Others fail to prepare because the spouses completely neglect their roles, and the full burden must lie with the women. In such a situation, their work as teachers can be affected as evidenced by these conversations. FV.20 narrated that.

> *…I must do both homework [I must do both homework tasks]: look after my child and at the same time prepare and teach all my lessons. I love teaching but because of the different challenges I go through in my marital life, I have failed to deliver to the standards required of me. I give notes to occupy the students because I know that when I go to teach*

when not prepared students may ask me questions and when I fail to answer, I can be become hostile and that will affect learning.

Another respondent, FV.10, said "I fail to get time to do research to get the content for teaching. What I do is that I don't make lesson plan[s]. I just walk into the class to teach". For a young woman of 29 years with very little experience in the teaching profession, going to class without preparing well can seriously affect her teaching. Even where the female teachers come up with lesson plans, they report that sometimes they are not genuine because they just forge these to avoid further mental torture from school administrators and in the worst scenario losing their job particularly those from private schools where job security is based on performance. FV.20 says it out with ease without any remorse:

I always fail to make my lesson plans regularly and in time. To avoid reprimand from the school administrators, I always forge Lesson plan by writing it when I am a bit settled even after the lesson is already done.

Probing more from her on how she feels when she forges lesson plans just to please the administrators and whether she feels that she can deliver effectively without adequate preparation, to teach, she only laughed and responded in a very careless way that:

Madam you are a teacher, and you know what that means. Teaching is not like the work of a soldier who holds a gun and does his work of shooting whether he is happy or not but can still kill the enemy, maybe he does it even better when he is emotional and in pain….

For us teachers, we must prepare and be emotionally stable before going to teach……. Anyway, what do I do with this man who can never give me peace of mind, on the one hand and fear of loosing my job on the other…….

This is worrying when female teachers who are supposed to be role models and custodians of values cheat while performing their teaching roles. Most of the women reported that home is not conducive enough for them to prepare their lessons. Their husbands use this as a provocation to fight. Thus, to try and keep peace, the women always avoid working from home. One irritated respondent, FV.11, aged 33, and married to a man of lower education level than her, blurted it out in disgust:

This man is local [not enlightened]. Can you imagine that sometimes when I am preparing my lessons or marking from home, he puts off the light. One day he poured water on my notebook. I always walk with my head down very embarrassed. Some friends blame me for accepting a local [not enlightened] man. By the way, one of my friends said that even if he remained as the only man on earth, she would not marry him. Now I agree. Back then I thought she was very irrational.

Such utterances and attitudes can easily affect mental functioning of a teacher, thus having a negative outcome on their teaching. FV.3, narrating her experience during the interview, said:

One day in the evening after supper I was making my scheme of work, to meet the deadline in school. He called me and I went and knelt near him. He just looked at me and kept quiet. I immediately sensed danger.

> *He asked me to get out of his sight and leave him alone. I left and went to pick [up] my books and left for the bedroom. He followed me and started twisting my arm and he beat me up. In such [a] situation can any woman be fully prepared to teach?*

Further probing into this led to two women in their 40s to give similar reasons saying the men think when they are preparing lessons in the evening, they do it to get back at them, deny them attention and punish them. That is why they disrupt the preparation. That the men say they should finish schoolwork at school.

The researcher had interest in these two respondents and asked whether the allegations from the men were true. One of them, FV.19, answered with ease without hesitation, saying, "*I will do anything to keep away from getting intimate with this man. I am tired and God knows! Staying up late to make lessons is a good excuse*". However, this breeds more conflict. The above point was re-emphasized by head teachers. One stated:

> *Teaching lessons without making scheme of work and planning for the classes and sometimes going as far as teaching without lesson notes, but instead reading information directly from pamphlets to learners affects content delivery as can always be reflected in poor performance in subjects of such teacher at UNEB ordinary level examinations.*

Although up to 75% of the women interviewed recognised that domestic violence has a bearing on teaching preparation, not many head teachers take this seriously. This probably emerges from a lack of supervision, where the head teachers may not closely follow what occurs in the classroom.

Low self-esteem was presented to be among the major effects domestic violence has on the teaching role of teachers. A teacher requires confidence to enable him/her to perform well, yet constant abuse and fights sometimes make these women develop low self-esteem, which is bound to lower productivity in their work as teachers. Several of the women interviewed mentioned that spousal conflicts have made them have low self-esteem. They question their worthiness and doubt their ability to perform anything good. According to the respondents, they develop poor self-image because of constant abuse, negative comments, ridicule, and belittling from their spouses. The low self-esteem also comes from a lack of a peaceful mind, emerging from regrets and shame all which they admit affect their interaction with learners. Some of the older women, however, say that with time, they reclaimed their self-image and confidence after spiritual support, reassurance from friends and counselling, though sometimes it became counterproductive because they became sensitive to any comment or when they sensed someone wanted to interfere with their freedom. This again makes them develop poor interpersonal relations with other people, thus affecting their teaching role. The head teachers also observed this as accurate; three agreed with it. The difference between the head teachers and teachers in percentage may be because the head teachers are not pinning down low self-esteem on female teachers who remain strong despite challenges.

In contrast, the percentage of female teachers directly depicts their perception through their stories. Some of them reported confirming this. FV.19, a woman in her 40s, had this to say:

> *I have developed a poor self-image. I would ask him if I were [if I was] so ugly. But sometimes, his response would annoy me even more. One day, in my rage, I asked him: "Is there any value at all that you see in*

me?" He responded: "What do you think? Would I be running away from you if you still had anything for me to admire?" I felt so bad. I wanted to die. I repeatedly asked myself if I was that useless and had any value as a teacher.

It is worth noting that in their challenges, some of the older women reported that they found solutions and claimed back their self-esteem, and, in their own words, they said that they were performing their school roles very well. FV.13, who has a harrowing experience, having lived with two men, and separated, had this to say:

I had low self-esteem because of what I went through. I thank God that I became a trained counsellor, and since then, I have become helpful to myself and others. I don't know where it would have ended. Maybe he would have killed me by now. Before joining the course, I became abusive and never trusted him. I would begin to fight anytime, and most times when he was away, I would plan only how to hurt him so that he felt pain, which affected me as a teacher—however, this increased violence and hostility in the house. I only stopped this when I became saved; that came when I got support from the lecturer and my course-mates during the course, and then I became saved.

It is, however, difficult to establish how many of such women took things positively. Further narratives were obtained from FV.14:

Teaching requires a very calm and peaceful brain. When I started teaching, I was very hardworking. I would reach school on time, prepare all my lessons, and teach all my classes. However, what I have gone

through has changed my work pattern, and sometimes I nurse regrets and shame.

More revealed the challenge that affects them, and FV.17, in her late 50s, stated that she still struggles with the challenge she had with her spouse many years ago, and she said:

I felt so bad remembering how this man belittled me before my parents and LC leaders. He asked me to choose between him and going back to school, and when I boldly said I would go back to school but still love him too, he denounced me and said he would have nothing to do with me. I remember rushing to the house, picking [up] a knife, and I wanted to kill my child and later myself too…... Life became meaningless. The people around picked away the knife from me. He never pitied me. Instead, he said I was disrespectful, stood up and left the meeting. I feel terrible when I recall that he wanted to kill my child.

Do you know what? My child is now ready to join university, and recently, he wanted me to take the boy to him. This is another pain to me. I am not sure of my son's safety; I am worried that he may want to return to this harsh man in the future. For now, he is on my side. He does not want to hear about the father. Such reminders disrupt my peace and affect my work. I feel embarrassed to be associated with this man, who has degenerated to [degenerated into] a drunkard, yet he now tells everyone that he has a child with me.

This means domestic violence can last for a long time. To prepare lessons, deliver content, interact with students, and interact with learners' work, a teacher must be mentally sound and motivated, yet domestic violence affects the mental functioning of a teacher. In this study, several manifestations from the participants point to having some problems that bar them from performing their teaching roles effectively. Some of these are low motivation (n=4), loss of concentration (n=9), sleep problem (n=5), fatigue (n=7), isolation (n=11), among others. The mental states were due to the hostile/toxic environment at home. Being at home never gave the women peace of mind at all. Another reason that always affected their stability was knowing that the innocent children were suffering, neglected, and hurt, yet failing to see how they could escape the situation. These were stated by the female teachers interviewed. FV.15, in our conversation, described the challenges that affected her productivity at her workplace as follows:

> *At the peak of our conflict, I would travel from school and go home, even if I planned to spend the whole weekend at home. The toxic environment would always make me return to my workplace. Of course, much as I was present in the school, I would remain hurt and mentally not settled. This affected my work badly. One day, I came home and found him in a very aggressive mood. The moment I greeted him, he started fighting me. It became too much for me; I immediately left to return to school. My children cried and pleaded for me not to go back and leave them. I could not bear this anymore. When I reached the school, I stayed awake and wept throughout the night. In days and weeks to follow, each time I was making lesson plans or sometimes in the classroom teaching, I would see my children vividly in my mind*

crying and asking me not to leave them. I love my children and my work, too, but I knew living with this man would make me lose my job and affect me physically and emotionally.

4.3.2 Poor interpersonal relationships

Poor interpersonal relationships emerged as another theme that affects the teaching role of female teachers with experience of domestic violence. The nature of a teacher's work involves interaction with many groups of people, remarkably with colleagues who are also staff and students. For a teacher to perform her work effectively, she must have very good interpersonal relationships with those she interacts with. Unfortunately, this study reveals that the experiences of female teachers who are victims of domestic violence have been impacted very negatively. This leads to issues of performance in the teaching roles of the teachers. Concerning poor interpersonal relationships, the female teachers stated that because of their experience, they not only develop bad attitudes towards their husbands but also deflect them onto others. In schools, the students and other staff become victims of such attitudes. The female teachers reported that when unhappy or stressed, they displace their hostility on the students they teach by becoming very harsh and rude. Sometimes, they get provoked by simple things, beat the students, and chase them out of the class. To the female teachers, this mostly happens without them intending to do it, but it is usually beyond their control. However, one respondent, in her late 30s, said she has developed a hatred for men, and sometimes the boys in her class become victims of this attitude. This affects the relationship between such teachers and the students they teach, who begin to fear them, avoid them, hate the subjects they teach and avoid their classes altogether. On the other hand, the female teachers admitted that sometimes they realised how aggressive they had been and began to

regret punishing students innocently, which further affected their peace of mind and productivity.

The women also reported that domestic violence affected personal relationships with their workmates. When asked to explain this, they said that lack of cooperation with other teachers comes in because of their behaviours, where, in most cases, they were easily irritable and fellow workers would usually avoid them and stay away from them. They agreed that they usually failed to work as a team on tasks assigned because, sometimes, they were not available or were not in the mood for work. In this case, the other teachers would feel overloaded because of the gaps created by them.

The head teachers interviewed confirmed that the female teachers with experience of domestic violence have abysmal interpersonal relations with the rest of the teachers because they are uncooperative and like displacing their hostilities to innocent teachers. Besides, they also fail to guide learners, and, as such, this affects their teaching roles.

These were some of the responses by the female teachers , as survivors of domestic violence, on showing bad attitudes presented to be among the reasons impacting negatively on teaching roles. FV.11 reported that *"…many times, when I go to school after a disagreement with my husband, I always find myself very harsh and rude to the students. There are times I find myself becoming arrogant, especially where the students also become difficult"*. FV.19 told the researcher, *"I must confess that I always become so wild on the students for no good reason. When I reflect, I realise that my reaction to them was extreme. I only feel too ashamed to go back to them for apologies"*. This is not different from what FV.5 said:

I beat my students a lot. "Aneno calo ginywara anywara". (I feel that they do what they do deliberately to provoke me)[1]*. On a bad day, I chase them out of [the] classroom or sometimes I get annoyed with the class and walk out. The good thing is that my students have confidence in me, and they know that I am a good teacher and trust my content. They only know that they must not annoy me.*

FV.9, who is greatly burdened by economic abuse by the husband and burden from the husband's relatives, agrees by giving the following reason:

Stress always affects me. I fail in having the zeal to impart knowledge to students [to students]. I keep on flashing back what I left home. Family negligence has had [a] great toll on me. The man has left all the work for me, affecting my performance at school. I fail to do prep supervision because I have work at home. It is difficult to balance work when we fight at home. I always transfer aggression to students.

The poor interpersonal relationships between the students and the female teachers sometimes come from the attitudes of the students who are not respectful to the teachers. When students are not handled well or when they witness behaviours that does not reflect teachers as role model, they can have an attitude that spoils

[1] Statements from respondents are quoted verbatim. However, where there is an unidiomatic use of the English language, the idiomatic version, or an additional element that makes a word be used idiomatically, is placed in square brackets and is not italicized. On the other hand, the items put in round brackets are ideally supposed to be deleted in order to render the strings idiomatic.

relationship with the teacher.FV.15 gave her experience after separating from her first husband and started relating with her current husband and felt that the utterances of the girls were disappointing. She said:

> *This man would visit me from time to time in the school and, one time, when he came, I heard the girls shout referring to me as a house breaker. One of the daughters of this man was a student and she hated me. I believed she mobilised the students to ridicule me…What I regret now is that I went to their class the following morning in rage and quarrelled at [quarrelled with] them and abused them, saying they are also women and shall face the world in the future. The class was dead quiet; none of the girls responded, but the impact was grave. I felt belittled and angry. I was reported to the head teacher, who had a lengthy session with me…The teachers made fun of me in their wild jokes behind my back. The students hated me, saying that I cursed them…. Life became unbearable to me, and I practically feared coming to school.*

Although this had nothing to do with domestic violence, one can say it is the lasting effects of domestic violence that female teachers carry on even after separation. Besides, the fact that female teachers are expected to be role models makes society sometimes misjudge them.

These revelations reflect the relationship between the teachers and their students. Teachers who must be close to their students to guide and support them need to be more supportive. Such students will begin to avoid the teacher, avoid her lessons, and

later respond by hating the teacher, and soon the rest of the students join in and, in such circumstances, teaching and learning can never go on well.

Poor interpersonal relation is also manifested when teachers affected by domestic violence fail to cooperate with other teachers. FV.5, speaking about interpersonal relations with other co-workers, had this to say:

> *As a teacher, we always must work as a team in our department. Geography is one such department that requires teamwork. Many times, I want to sit alone and do my things alone. I don't know why. I used to be a team player and loved to socialise. Unfortunately, this is no more.*

Getting isolated and failing to work as a team means such a teacher cannot be a resource to the colleagues in the department and cannot even get support from the others. The narrative in the interview reveals that with time, tension develops with the other teachers, gossip sets in, and this makes the environment unbearable for teachers who are already suffering from domestic violence. The child in the class becomes the loser. FV.7 expressed her feelings by saying:

> *I hate to be put on duty, and I often clash with co-duty teachers. Being on duty means getting up very early and going to school. In the morning, I try to sleep. It becomes tough for me to drag myself out of bed and when I go to school very early sometimes, I move with the disappointment and emotional distress from the previous night's quarrel with my husband. The people I interact with in the early morning become innocent victims of displacement of hostility.*

FV.11 also expressed how domestic violence keeps her isolated from other co-workers at the school. This is what she said:

> *I have problems relating even with my colleagues. I don't greet them, I don't stay in the staff room, and all these give me stress. I always feel that everyone is laughing at me. Now they have also developed [an] attitude on me. Many times, when I feel like being with them or want support from them, they are not very willing to relate with me easily. I don't blame them. It is my fault.*

About the above, head teachers stated that due to domestic violence, teachers fail to guide learners. One said, "*As teachers, we are supposed to guide learners. Such teachers are not free with the learners, and very few learners come to them outside the class hours*". This means that women undergoing domestic problems cannot sustain a good relationship with learners.

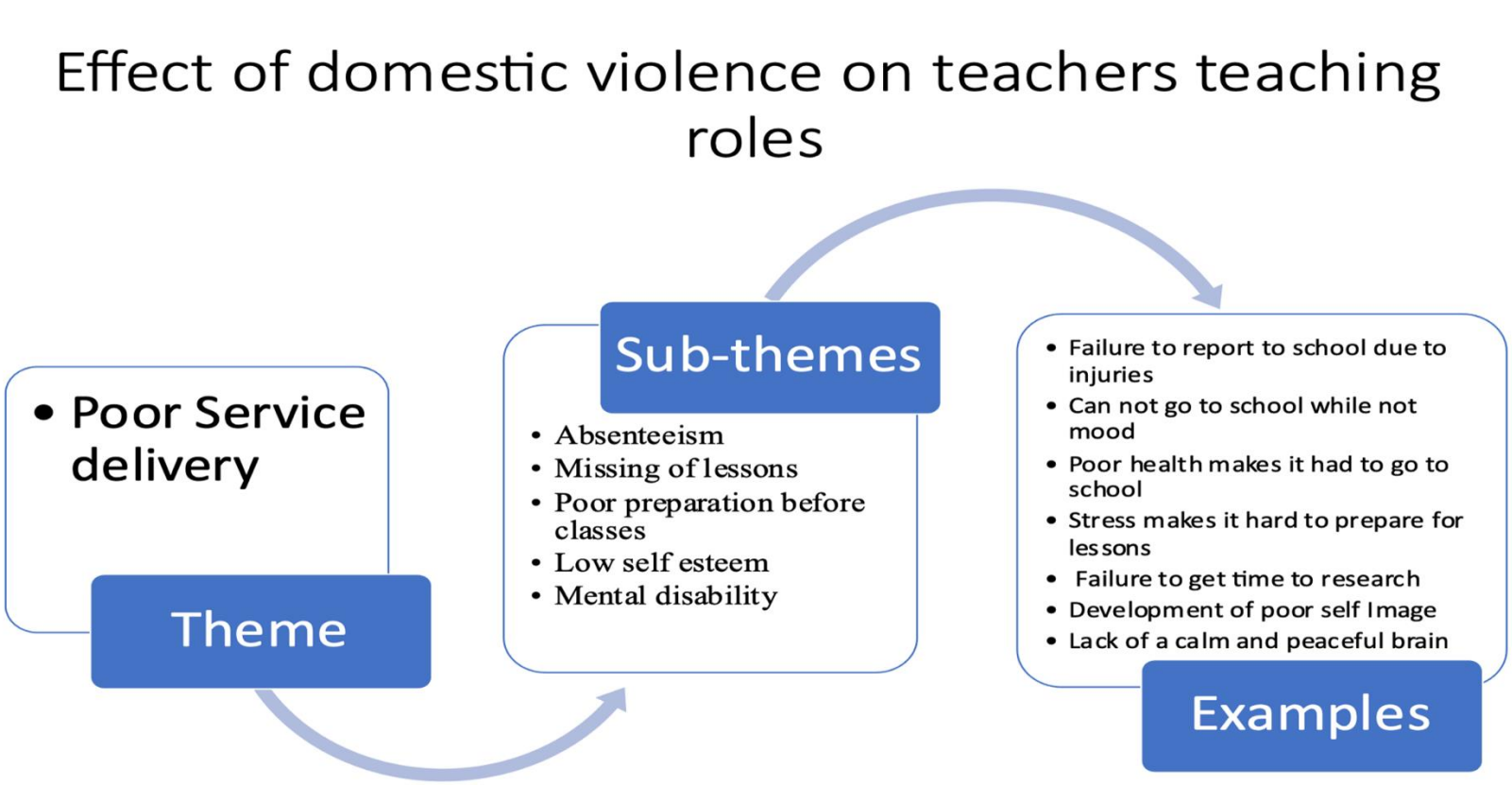
Conclusion

In conclusion, from the female teachers' perspective, domestic violence affects teachers' teaching functions in several ways. in this respect two broader themes came out, which are poor service delivery in teaching and poor interpersonal relationship. Under poor service delivery, several subthemes emerged, which include absenteeism, missing of lessons, late arrivals, poor preparation before classes, low self-esteem, and mental disability. Others included low concentration, sleep problems, fatigue, and isolation, among others.

Under poor interpersonal relationship, several subthemes came up and these are showing a bad attitude to students and poor cooperation with other teachers. The

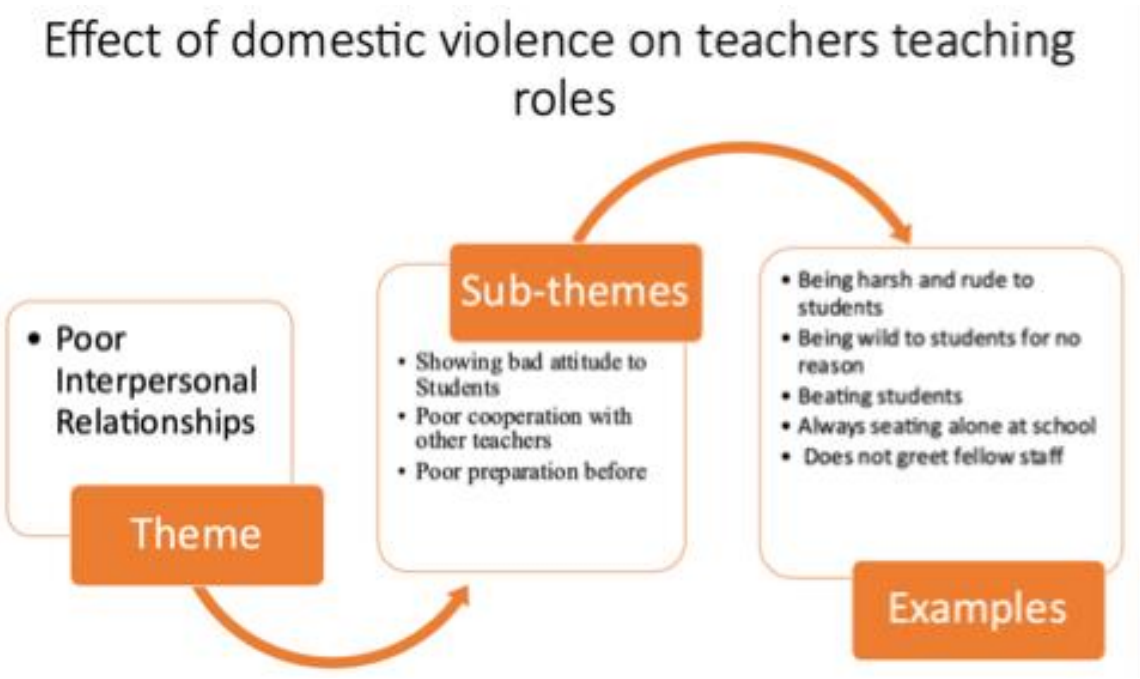
interaction with the head teachers confirmed most of the above as they identified absenteeism, missing lessons, poor preparation before classes and poor interpersonal relationships to be ways domestic violence affects teachers in their teaching roles. They also identified low concentration and isolation as well. The head teachers did not identify low motivation, sleep problems, fatigue as factors that can affect teaching roles of female teachers who are victims of domestic violence. The explanation here may be that these are feelings that were expressed by the female teachers who are survivors of domestic violence but since the head teachers are not victims themselves, it would be difficult to talk about these issues unless the victims told them. Lack of preparation was also reported as being very nominal by the head teachers, and this may be explained by the fact that such head teachers do not perform their supervisory roles effectively and therefore fail to depict what the struggling female teachers fail to do.

Figure 3: Effects of domestic violence on female teachers teaching roles



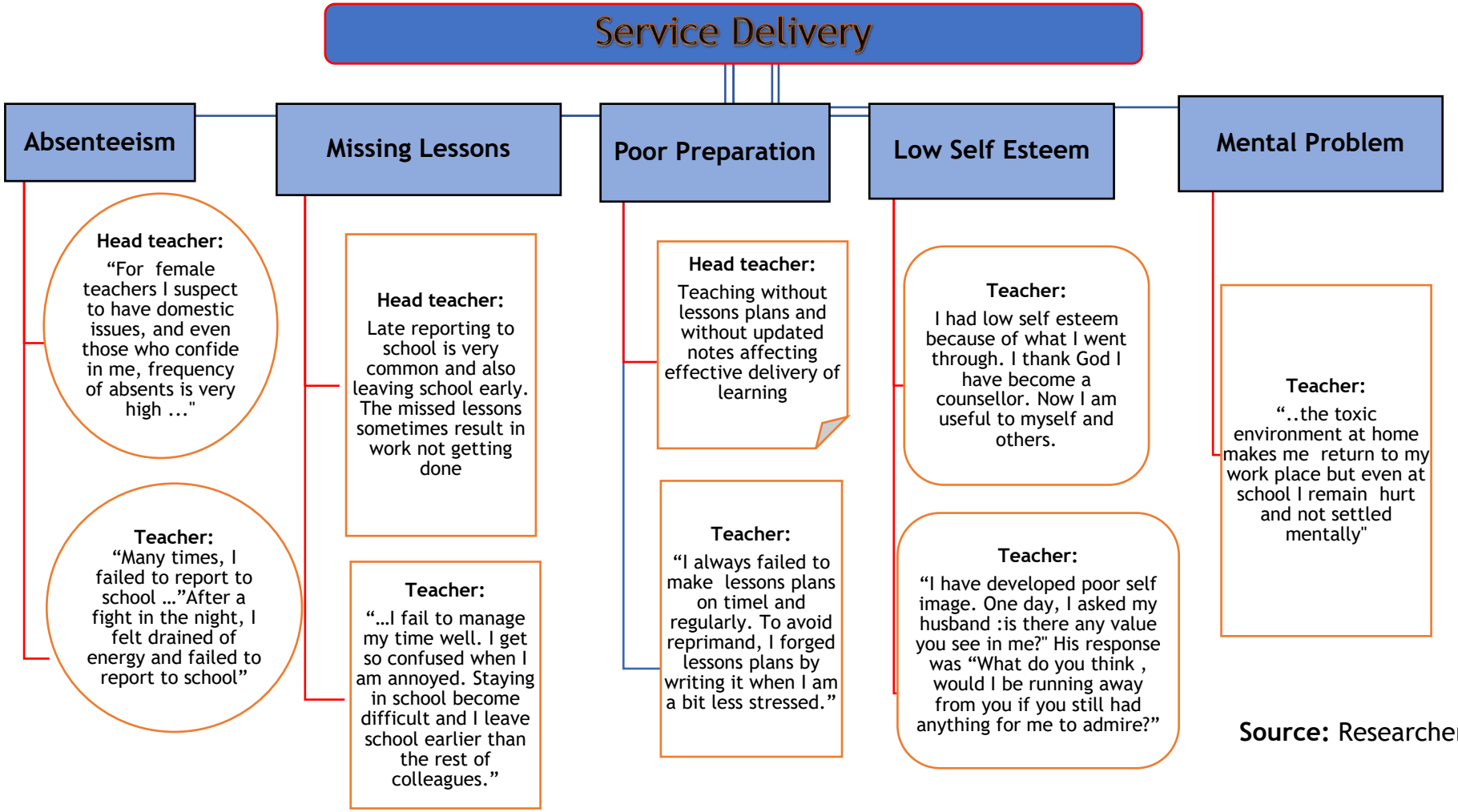
Source: Researcher (2023)

Figure 4: Effects of domestic violence on female teachers teaching roles



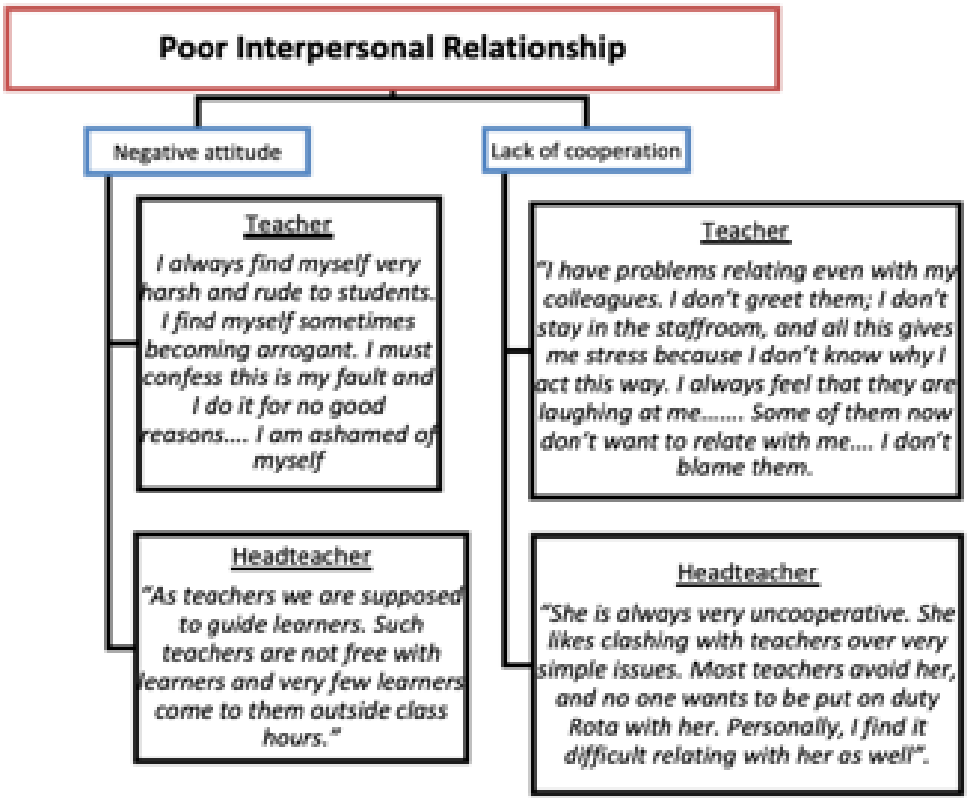
Source: Researcher (2023)

Figure 5: Effects of domestic violence on teaching roles of female teachers



Source: Researcher (2023)

Figure 6: Effects of domestic violence on teaching roles of female teachers



Source: Researcher (2023)

4.4 Female teachers' perspectives on the impact of domestic violence on the administrative roles of teachers

Objective two of the study sought to assess the impact of domestic violence on the administrative roles of teachers. The interaction with the female teachers and other key stakeholders showed that all the female teachers knew very well what their administrative roles were. They stated that their administrative roles included serving as senior women teachers, giving career talks, overseeing dormitories, classes, clubs and societies and other co-curricular activities. They also mentioned that attending staff meetings, taking charge of duties, attending assemblies, participating in parents' meetings or visitation days, among others were their roles. Based on the responses from interviews with both the female teachers and head teachers, the major theme that emerged was the negative impact on administrative roles. From this, several

subthemes emerged like low interpersonal issues (n=8), reduced administrative work (n=13), reduced learning output (n=9) and reduced mentoring/ care for students (n=18). The head teachers confirmed these as being true, where they agreed with the idea that domestic violence affects interpersonal relations between the victims and people in school (n=3), reduced administrative work (n=3), reduced learning output (n=14) and reduced mentoring /care for students (n=8).

4.4.1 Negative impact on administrative roles

Positive interpersonal relationship is important for healthy human functioning. This can help avoid stress, offer support, companionship, and confidence as well as motivation to achieve goals. In this context, the interpersonal relationship can play a key role for the female victims who may be seeking help and support in carrying out their administrative roles. This is evidenced by what the respondents shared with me during the interviews. They gave reasons like the ones affecting their teaching roles. Because of the overwhelming conflict at home, when they get carried away and fail to come to school, the other teachers feel unhappy because they are left to do work which should have been done by the participants. For example, the female teachers agree that other roles like being on duty, attending meetings, doing other tasks are usually neglected by them to give them time to teach. This usually affects their relationship with co-workers and many times tension develops even with head teachers who instead of understanding their problems blame them as being lazy. One female teacher who teaches in the same school with the husband said that they ended up importing their conflict to school because the husband disrespected her even in the school and remained bossy. Many teachers then started avoiding her leading to lack of harmony among the staff. They also narrated that their roles were affected negatively because they failed to effectively mentor their students and where students are not

guided well it affects effectiveness in the school. As for the head teachers, they say that the female teachers who are survivors of domestic violence sometimes become confusing agents in the school. Rumours become common among the female teachers leading to conflict and getting into loggerheads which affect performance. Some of the female teachers gave their views in response to the negative impact on administrative role. FV.7 had this to say:

> *Many teachers don't want to be put on duty with me. They say I am lazy. I know I am not lazy. It is my family circumstances that overwhelm me and make me not do my duty well. I always show [a] very cold attitude to teachers who blame me and in [the] staff room they make fun of people put on duty with me. I hate those who want to make life hard for me and I don't hide it from them. One day I walked into the staff room and was welcomed by sarcastic comment from one of the teachers. He said "boss supervisor, you can earn the salary for today free because your slave has already worked for you. Get serious in your work…" I immediately became defensive and quarrelled with him. He did not know what I was going through and instead of asking me why I was late, he started blaming me and yet he had no business doing it. I was not on duty with him anyway.*

Such situations breed misunderstanding in the staffroom and lead to formation of cliques in the schools thus making the environment toxic. When there is poor interpersonal relationship, it affects performance in schools.

There are times when the spouses teach in the same school and carry their differences to school, and this has a bearing on interpersonal relationships among teachers as

peers. A 40-year-old female teacher, FV.16, who worked in the same school and same department with her husband, narrated how conflict with her husband was transferred to school:

> *I am head of Geography department in the school. My husband disrespects me even in school. Whenever I am chairing [a] meeting, he wants to override…One day, we were taking students on [a] school Geography field trip. He was not part of the team but forced himself on the bus and acted as if he was the team leader. He brought a lot of rifts in the department and members became very*
>
> *relaxed in working as a team, making work difficult for me.*

The head teachers also agreed with this. One head teacher remarked:

> *As I observe, this woman is demoralized, confused, and stressed. There is too much burden on her that makes her work in the school difficult. She is in loggerhead [at loggerheads] with most of the teachers and when given any joint responsibilities, she is always letting the others down.*

Female teachers experiencing domestic violence also find it hard to relate well with the students. One head teacher said:

> *We have experienced issues of misunderstanding and poor working relationship among the staff. The women are rude, uncooperative, and isolated. The aggression is transferred majorly to the male students*

who are not attended to adequately. This creates fear among the male students and as such interaction becomes limited…

Such misunderstanding is not limited to students and teachers only, but the administrators also get their share as stated by one head teacher:

She has become very suspicious. She has on many occasions attacked me and some teachers for spreading rumours about her relationship…She came to my office accusing me of reporting her to the Foundation body and Board of Governors. She shouted on top of her voice, and this attracted the attention of students and staff around the office. We were all embarrassed.

From the examples given above, low interpersonal relationship appears to be one key drawback in performing administrative roles of a female teacher experiencing domestic violence. The teacher is not at peace with herself, with students, staff and with the school administrators. This clearly points to domestic violence affecting the smooth running of the school.

4.4.2 Reduced administrative work

From the perspective of the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence, domestic violence leads to reduced administrative work in the school. Teachers spend most of their time with their learners on a day-to-day basis and this goes more beyond the classroom interaction but into bringing a holistic child in a caring and supportive environment. This study has shown that domestic violence impacts on the female teacher negatively and this also affects her administrative roles adversely as expressed by the women interviewed. In fact, FV.1 said, "*We are supposed to supervise evening*

and morning preps. I am not always effective in this because my husband stops me from coming to do my duty at dawn and in the evenings". Female teachers must balance work at school and work at home. This is bound to affect work at school when the female teachers required to perform their work neglect other responsibilities at school and concentrate only on teaching lessons.

There is more to just classroom interaction if you must bring up a child, yet this may not be the case with women who suffer domestic violence as narrated by some of the participants in the study. FV.9, who is a senior teacher in her forties and is also privileged to be housed by the school within the compound, complained about the challenges she meets in balancing schoolwork and the work at home:

> *I fail to do prep supervision because I have work at home waiting for me after classes, which, if I don't do, brings me problem[s] from my husband who is always waiting to attack me. It is difficult to balance work when we fight a lot at home and when your mind is not settled. It is better to miss other work in school so long as I teach all my lessons. I don't feel that bad if I don't do duty rota or participate in clubs and societies. By the way it is not important for me to attend meetings. The one thing I feel guilty about is when I fail to enter a class to teach my lessons.*

Being a teacher is not all about teaching in the classroom. A teacher who fails to perform her administrative roles because of domestic violence and other factors fails to perform her administrative functions effectively.

Headteachers also noted failure to carry out administrative duties as a major challenge resulting from domestic violence. One stated that:

> *…The struggling teachers fail to appear on duty; where they appear, they are body but ineffective…… Our school requires formal reports, and these women do not have time for that. And where they write, the report is substandard and does not cover all the key areas…*

Another head teacher said in general terms that *"they always fail to supervise work in school because they get bogged down with domestic struggles"*.

4.4.3 Reduced learning output

The research found that domestic violence has a negative impact by reducing learning output. Learning output in this context is behaviour, knowledge and skills that produce the overall learning inside and outside of a classroom, for example, giving the learner effective communication, confidence, innovativeness, self-esteem, and desired values, among others. Asked why they fail to produce positive outcomes, the women said that they find themselves drained of energy and so fail to become active in monitoring the discipline of the learners, guiding them and motivating them to work hard. The women also said that they need to focus because they always have a divided mind, thinking about what is left behind at home and what is in school and, in most cases, they fail to perform effectively. Some of them had this to say. FV 10 kept shaking her open hands while explaining in a very low voice, full of pain. She said:

> *… I felt like abandoning work. I would wake up with [a] heavy head, heavy heart, and heavy feet. My productivity level went down. I could not finalise any task assigned to me. I went short of energy. I hated*

myself, and I blamed myself. I hated being in school and yet staying at home was worst. I got [a] warning for poor performance in the school, but I could not change…Eventually, my contract was not renewed, and this was the beginning of another chapter of pain and agony…I had to change school.

The head teachers (n=14) strongly agree that domestic violence inflicted on the female teachers affects their productivity and learning outputin schools where they teach. One of the head teachers said:

No one can function well with problems and misunderstandings coming from the spouse. Families are key in [key to] making or breaking people. No woman can come to teach and perform her work effectively while in [a] domestic row. She will have [a] divided mind that makes her fail to concentrate on her duties…

Another one said, *"I agree that her relationship with this man is making her perform poorly. She has failed to meet the targets……Before the conflict, she was very committed to her work and performed very well"*. This suggests that even very hardworking and committed teachers can decrease their productivity level while performing their roles after experiencing domestic violence.

4.4.4 Reduced mentoring and care

The women said their ability to mentor and care for students is reduced because of what they go through. They said teachers are role models, and students should model themselves on them in the way they present themselves, the way they talk, the way they work and the way they communicate. Part of this can be done by talking to the

students, guiding them and being close to them to nurture them, and yet this cannot be possible where homes are marred with violence and leaving no time to perform this role. FV. 15 said:

> *"During a stormy marriage [In a turbulent marriage], you cannot focus. I am the senior woman teacher, and I know I must be very close to the girls, particularly in this post-Covid era, but I must admit this cannot be done; it is difficult to support these girls while I am going through [a] storm in my life.*

Another female teacher, FV.1, also shares this view. She said:

> *I am a dormitory mistress and a class teacher… I find myself not giving time to my students and dormitory. As a class teacher, I must hold meetings with them, follow individual students, see how they progress, and solve their class issues, including challenges they may be getting from other teachers.*

Another one, FV.5, said, *"All these become difficult because of my unavailability. I always try to teach in the classrooms without missing, but I pay little attention to the rest of the responsibilities."* Headteachers are in full agreement. One spoke, saying, *"Inadequate time is availed [provided] to students to have personal interaction with the female teachers at the right time since one completes her lessons and rushes back home and therefore limits her contact with the child".* In contrast, another one said, *"Female students are affected in terms of addressing their needs, organising for girls' meetings more especially now that we have just come back from [the] lockdown where many girls require guidance, motivation and support."*

In conclusion, from the female teachers' perspectives on the impact of domestic violence on the administrative roles of teachers, issues of poor interpersonal relationships emerged. These were also found with the students, peers, and administration. These involve reduced administrative work because of being unavailable, other priority engagements, neglecting the work, and paying little attention. Reduced learning outcomes also came up stemming from issues caused by domestic violence against female teachers, leading to general loss of productivity, mental health issues and failure to meet targets. Furthermore, there is reduced mentoring and care for students coming from lack of focus, inability to guide students, failure to support students, failure to give time and failure to interact with students.

During the interviews with the head teachers, it was established that up to five out of the 23 teachers interviewed were not aware that the problem of domestic violence could affect the school. In contrast, others said it only affected the school management to a small extent. Again, these responses came mainly from the younger and inexperienced head teachers from private schools, which may point to gaps in human resource management in secondary schools in the district of Kitgum.

Also, it is interesting to note in these interviews that some female teachers said their situation never affected their administrative roles negatively. I was impressed with one of the participants, FV.18, who kept on breaking down in tears during the process of our interviews; however, on mentioning co-curricular activities, she immediately smiled and explained how she enjoyed games and sports:

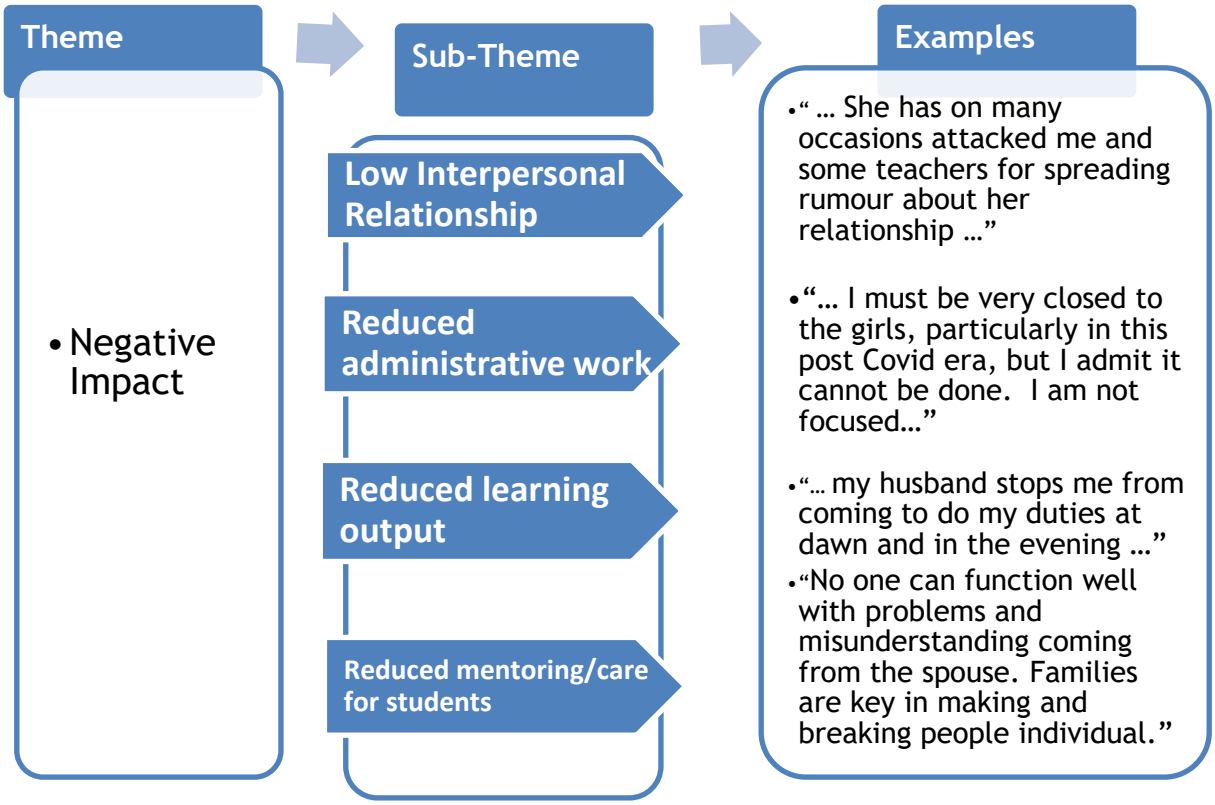
> *Madam, I love sports. I performed very well in athletics, mainly in short races and field events. I was also a star in netball. I am always satisfied with my school. Today, when I get hurt and recall past success, it gives*

me self-worth. I hide my sorrows in training the students in the field. After the area, I walk away happy and put aside the sorrows…

This could be one of the unique situations where female victims become more productive as they try to cope by putting their challenges at bay as they re-direct their energy and motivation to work.

FV.13 said, *"I can still do my best to save the young women from rushing to marriage when they are not ready. I give my time and my whole to them to guide and support them"* (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Impact of Domestic Violence on Administration Roles



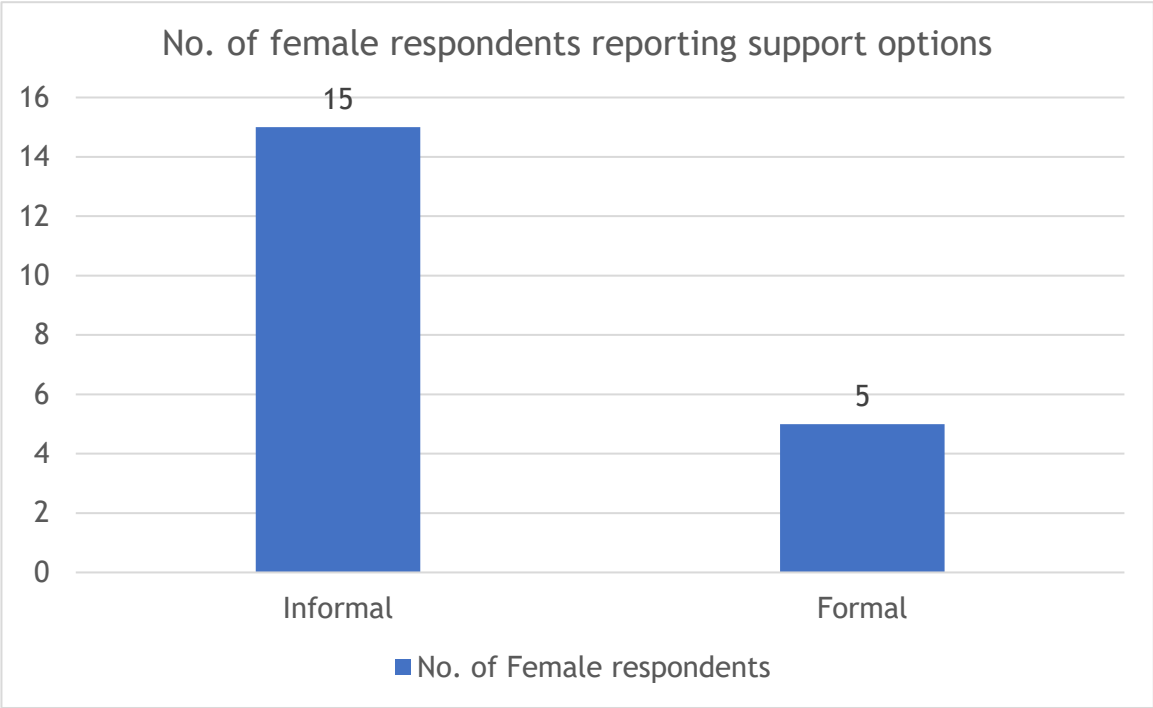
Source: Researcher (2023)

4.5 How female teachers with experience of domestic violence cope

Domestic violence is known to cause several negative impacts on the spouses. The female teachers who suffer from domestic violence in their homes have teaching and administrative roles to perform in the schools where they teach. Besides, they interact with students, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders in their workplace in fulfilling these roles. Unfortunately, the impact of domestic violence at home can easily be transferred to school directly or indirectly. One wonders how a female teacher with experience of domestic violence negotiates through the challenges of domestic violence to perform her role as a teacher effectively.

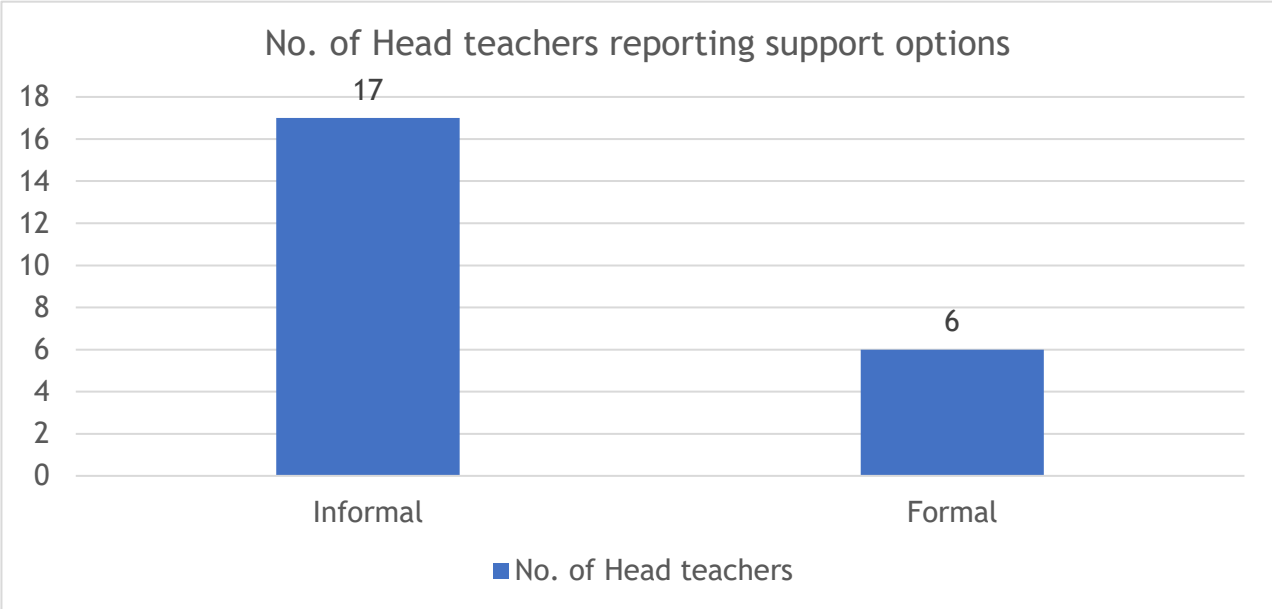
Objective three of the study sought to describe female teachers' reports on how staff affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence in performing their duties. From the findings, most of the female teachers usually seek informal ways of coping, as reported by the female teachers. From their perspective, while others say that the formal methods are not available in their schools, other female teachers feel that formal ways are not helpful or spoil their social esteem and actualisation. Graphs I and 2 summarise the information collected from the female and head teachers.

Figure 8: Number of females reporting support options



Source: Field data (2023)

Figure 9: Number of Head teachers reporting support options



Source: Field data (2023)

The interview with the female teachers produced several themes.

4.5.1 Sharing the situation with others

When participants were asked how they cope with domestic violence and continue to do their work in the school, they mentioned that they had always found relief and got the courage to move on as they shared with other people. The female teachers said that conflict in a home can create a lot of pain, and once you share it with someone who cares, you cry out all the pain and get relieved. They also said sharing with someone helped because they advised them to persevere. When asked how they initiate the sharing, some said it is intentional where they plan and discuss it. However, there are situations when they intend to refrain from talking about their problems. Still, they fail to control their emotions and just burst out during conversations that start on other issues. However, sometimes, after a painful event, one shares her challenges. In other different situations, they said that judging from their moods and behaviour, people reached out to them asking if there was any problem.

The female teachers who were interviewed said that they always shared with family members as a means of coping. In the study, the family members included parents, relatives, and siblings of both the female teachers and their spouses. Out of the 20 women interviewed, 15 admitted that they shared their problems with relatives to seek help, get solutions to their problems, release their pain, and give them ways to move on. The family members included female teachers and husband's relatives. Many of the younger women always shared with their mothers. FV.2 had this to say:

I always shared what I was going through with my mother, and she encouraged me to persevere because of my children. One day, she told me, 'I know this man is treating you bad[ly] but know that I paid [for] you in school. Let education and your work be your first husband'. My mother's words have kept me strong.

FV.3 said, *"I always share with my mother the challenges that I go through"*. While some female teachers shared with their relatives, others preferred to share with their peers. 13 of the 20 women interviewed shared with their peers who are friends or people they interact with. For example, FV.20 remarked:

I opened [up] to my friends. Some encouraged me [to go on]. One advised me to be tolerant and remain calm and that things would normalise later. I got inspired and kept on with my work [kept on doing my work], knowing very well that things would change.

Another respondent, FV.4, said:

My colleagues in the school always encouraged me to keep on and that I could get my consolation by working hard and succeeding because that would make the man realise my value. She also told me that, as a teacher, it would not be good for me to separate from my husband because I am a role model. All these made me push [made me move] on as if everything was normal and I performed [well].

Although the friends and peers were there as shoulders to lean on, some of them also became a source of pain to the female teachers. FV.11 shared with me that "there were some three teachers who started blaming me as being responsible for the

problems I was going through. They blamed me for loving a man who was less educated. I regret what I shared with them.

Furthermore, female teachers who sought support from friends to cope with the challenges reported that sometimes they lost those friends instead, adding to their desperation and pain. The women felt terrible that when they sought support from their close friends, their spouses threatened their supporting friends, who then got scared and left them, and in such situations, the women felt the pain more. FV.2, whose friends deserted her, fearing her husband, had this to say, “Going through my conversations with the women, I realised that having a friend and sharing with peers revealed that it is not an automatic remedy to coping, even when many of them pointed out that it was helpful.

From the interviews with the women in domestic violence, the researcher found that these women also shared with those with similar problems. It is usually expected that people with similar concerns stick together. Out of the 20 participants, six said they always felt free to share their sufferings with women who had similar experiences. The researcher wanted to find out the benefit of sharing with those in similar situations, and, according to the women's stories, they felt it was much easier because they did not think they were being judged so that they could talk in detail. They also advised them from experience and knew how and where it hurts most. Besides, when they share, they sometimes realise that they are not in the worst situations and that the experiences of some of their friends are more painful, and this gives them the energy to move on. However, the younger women in their earlier 30s felt that this sometimes was not very useful because when they shared the same problems with their peers, they cried and failed to focus on solutions. One said she realised that her

friend was not helpful because she was in a worse situation and therefore gave her advice that was not very helpful. FV.7 said.

> *Among the staff, I have a friend that I share with. She has similar problems with her husband, so we normally talk about our problems together, cry, pray, and encourage each other. It is always good to know that you are not alone.*

Sometimes, they shared as a group where they were more than two. FV.5 indicated, "*I also have five close friends I confine in. They have similar marital problems like me, and we always pray together.*" This was true because, in my discussion with them, I realised they knew one another as they readily referred their friends to me in the snowball sampling. Other sharing was done with older women. Sharing with head teachers and spiritual leaders also emerged, though I decided to treat this under objective four into details.

4.5.2 Depending on internal resources/self

Many female teachers I interacted with felt that they found themselves in the struggle of domestic violence. It was up to them to devise means of getting out of it so that they could keep afloat and continue living and serving as teachers. They believed that they did this on their own. From this, crying, positive thinking, endurance, becoming quiet and isolated, working very hard, and being forgiving emerged as ways of coping, of which I treated some key ones as subthemes.

a) Positive thinking

The women interviewed gave positive thinking to cope with the bad relationships between them and their husbands. The women said they detached themselves from negative energy like those who wanted them to get into self-pity. They did this by accepting the difficult situation they found themselves in and focusing on their children and careers, which always gave them the energy to move forward. They said they got challenged and wanted to prove they were successful women in their rights, so they struggled to prove their worth by working hard and keeping busy, which helped to remove their focus from pain.

My conversation with most women turned from being painful and tense to expressing hope and relaxed conversations as they narrated their positive thoughts. Many of these came from the need to remain strong for their children. FV.13 said, *"I counselled myself to move away from self-pity, looked at my son and realised that I must move on…I wanted the salary to keep me and my son, so I must work and teach all my lessons…."* Similarly, FV.20 said, *"Thinking about my son gave me the energy to push on."*

To others, the positive thinking was to prove their worth and that they can manage without a man. FV.18 finds herself coping through remaining active and positive. She states:

> *I want to show this man that I can manage without his support, and the only way is by working hard…so I always keep this in mind and push on to perform all my duties in school or outside the school, and I must say it is hard, but I am managing.*

This means that there are female teachers who direct their frustrations positively by keeping busy, and this can benefit the institutions they work for.

b) Being hard working

Many female teachers with experience of domestic violence interviewed gave hard work as part of coping. They say hard work keeps them busy and takes their mind off the troubles caused by their husbands. FV.1 said, *"To avoid loneliness, I always make sure that I am swamped to forget about my dysfunctional family"*. At the same time, FV.20 said, "*The best is to do several activities with the students, and this can help to keep your mind away from the danger and problems at home"*. From this, I gathered that women can still perform well even in a challenging situation. This testimony and description by a older woman, FV.6, is yet another evidence of hope and working normally. She said:

> *I oversaw the compound and drowned my pain in nature, planting flowers. I developed this as a girl guide, for "a guide sings and smiles under all difficulties". Madam, I received yearly awards for working hard for an organised compound. This made me forget about this trouble causer while at school, and I focused on my work.*

There are those who do not create work to keep themselves busy, but the heavy work in the schools also indirectly helps them. FV.8 had this to say:

> *The heavy work in the school has also helped me to move on. We have too much work, and when I am in school, I forget my problems and move on with the task.*

Hard work and keeping busy can help people cope with difficult situations. However, the researcher is unsure how many can be positive and focused on their work without the disruption caused by domestic violence and how sustainable this positive attitude can be when domestic violence persists. Exploring more, I realised that the women who told me they work hard are those not embroiled constantly in domestic violence. This gives them space to focus during times when relative calm exists.

c) Becoming isolated

Becoming isolated and quiet is another way of coping for female teachers who are survivors of domestic violence. Of the 20 women interviewed, six said when they wanted to focus on their work, they tried to avoid more problems from their husbands by keeping themselves isolated and quiet. They justify such behaviour by saying they can concentrate when they are away from their husbands, but they sometimes become emotional once they get near their husbands. They can also freeze and get unsettled, not knowing what to expect, but they expect trouble. One of them, FV.1, told the researcher, "*I became reticent because I knew asking for anything from him or complaining would cause a quarrel or a fight. I need my peace*".

Although the women take isolation and keeping quiet as coping, engaging more with them revealed that this could be more of denial and may not have sustainable benefits. In this state of isolation, some of them agree that they start self-blame, nurse frustration and bitterness and two of them, using this as a coping measure, harboured suicidal tendencies.

d) Crying

The participants cited crying as a means of coping. Several women always get relieved from crying. Nine women admitted that they always cry and that the pain and emotions disappear after crying, leaving them to focus on their work. The women say that once they are grieved and have pain and sometimes rage, they resort to crying because it helps them to feel relieved. They admit that crying is helpful because it relieves them and makes them focus and go to work, prepare their lessons, or mark students' work. To some, crying does not only occur at the time of violence. Most times, it comes when they recall their situations when their children want something or ask questions, and they do not have answers to give them. FV.16 said:

> *My husband is lucky; I could have killed him. I got so tired of the verbal abuse that I once picked [up] an iron bar and wanted to hit him. Emotions overtook me. However, as I approached him, I broke down and started crying, and then I threw away the object. I would have smashed his head.*

Yet another, FV.7, said, *"Crying helps me a lot, but again, I feel sick and unwell after I cry for long"*. This means it can become counterproductive.

4.5.3 Having fun with peers

Having fun with peers gives women ways to cope with their struggles with their spouses. In home environments that are not very friendly, seeking happiness elsewhere becomes common. Some female teachers with experience of domestic violence try to get the strength to move on from their peers, who may not necessarily be their co-workers but friends from outside the school that they associate with as well. They get

time with such peers to talk about things other than their current situations, like talking about past lives when they were in school and reminding themselves of funny stuff in the past. Others get involved in going and chatting over a cup of tea and other events. All these lift their spirits and give them a reason to move on. One of the female teachers in her 40s, FV.16, told me, *"I make efforts to have fun with peers. This helps me to forget my challenges. I have conversations with them but avoid talking about the challenge"*. When asked about why they do not share with their friends the home problems which they are running away from, FV.18 said, *"I don't share a lot with friends. I rarely share with them because I fear that they can spill out my secrets and this will be embarrassing to me and can cause more torture"*. This implies that fun times may be part of living in denial and serve only as temporary coping, but it is helpful to the women.

4.5.4 Flexibility in performing work

Another theme that emerged from the women's coping is flexibility in performing work at school. Schools are structured institutions with routines, timetable and for effectiveness and efficiency, employees are expected to adhere to the set programmes to execute. Domestic violence sometimes causes female teachers not to comply with the set programmes. However, the participants narrated how they became flexible and adjusted to perform their teaching and administrative roles. Some sub-themes emerged from this, as presented below.

a) Keeping the class busy

In trying to find out how they cope when they are not ready to perform their duties, six female teachers said they always try to keep the students busy even if they have failed to plan for lessons. They do this by giving abrupt and unplanned work to the

students. Others said they also provide assessments like tests and assignments, which are reflected neither in the scheme of work nor the lesson plan. To them, at that point, this is meant to try and hide the fact that they are not ready so that they are not penalised by the head teachers or directors of studies. They also do this to avoid student complaints that they have missed lessons. Asked how often and when this is done, they explained that it is common after having a stand-off the previous day, making them fail to plan, or it is possible that sometimes this can happen even when you have already scheduled for the lessons well but get disrupted by either the husband or even triggers of bad memory taking away their moods and energy at that specific time. One of the participants, FV.15, said, *"When I get to class without planning, I group the students and give them questions to discuss, and I keep moving around the class without giving them meaningful guidance"*. Another teacher, FV.4, agreed by saying, *"I give assessments to students so that they do the test, and I only go to pick [up] the scripts…In that way, I keep them busy and also nurse my pain without anybody noticing"*. Such responses prompted me to ask the participants whether they knew that planning for lessons and assessments is critical to ensuring effective teaching and learning processes. They admitted to this, and yet they did the contrary. This points to the fact that some coping measures may only help keep the victims in school and on salaries but not address productivity issues at school, thus affecting their roles as teachers.

b) Finalising all schoolwork from school

On the other hand, others try very much to do their work amidst the struggles caused by domestic violence by finishing all their work of planning like doing research, making lesson notes, making lesson plans, getting teaching, and learning aids, setting assessments, marking, among others. They make sure that they finish this at school.

The participants find ways to plan, mark and do their school activities all at the school to avoid interference from their spouses. When their husbands see them doing schoolwork at home, it becomes the basis for picking a fight with them. Four female teachers agree with this. One young female teacher, FV.3, who confessed that she loved her work and would always try to do her best but who had to leave her husband eventually, had this to say:

> *I went to school and made sure I prepared all my lessons for the next day from school, and if there was any marking to do, I did it from the school. This was not without problem[s]. Whenever I would return home late, he would refuse to talk to me.*

c) Being relieved of other responsibilities

Other flexibilities mentioned by the female teachers included asking to be relieved of some of the school responsibilities. The participants said that the burden at home was already heavy and, therefore, for them to cope, they wanted to be given fewer responsibilities that they could handle well at school. FV.5 explained how she tried to cope by saying, "*I have also asked the school to relieve me of other responsibilities. This is good because I can now concentrate on teaching my students only*". This applied to the few who confided in the school administrators and where such administrators showed concerns and were supportive. Some female teachers said they just asked their friends to step in for them and teach. This did not come without challenges because for teachers in the same department, sometimes, the timetable collided, while for those who asked friends not in the same department, the subject suffered because the students missed the lessons in those subjects and attended another subject altogether. Furthermore, others said they always taught extra lessons

when their husbands were away from home. How often their husbands were away from home to make them teach extra lessons is an issue that can bring gaps.

4.5.5 Seeking refuge from God

Most respondents who are survivors of domestic violence reported seeking God's guidance, strength, and hope by women undergoing marital challenges as a perfect coping measure. This cut across the age differences, and even the female teachers who believed they were being bewitched still trusted that God was the only strength to keep them moving. Out of the 20 women interviewed, 18 said God was their refuge. Seeking support from God was done is many ways.

a*)* Through prayers

The women reported that they coped by praying alone or with their friends or religious leaders but also asked others to always pray for them even when they were not together. When asked how prayers have been helpful, the respondents shared that prayers give them hope, comfort and strength to move on. Through prayers, they have opened their hearts to forgive their husbands by letting go of the hurts they inflict on them and continue living under the same roof.

Conversations with them pointed out the power of prayers as a coping measure by these women. FV.9 stated, *"I also trust God. I used not to be a strong believer, but now I know God can help us in times of pain. I have learnt to pray and cast all my care in Jesus."* FV.17 also shared how she always found solace in God: *"When I am emotionally stressed, I always turn to my God. Prayers have moved mountains for me. When I am overburdened, I call some of my friends to pray for me."* This one narrated how she decided to pray and fast when her husband did not want anything to do with

her. Later, the man returned, and at least they experienced peace for some months before he started his violence again. FV.5 said, *"…After prayers, I usually come back relieved, encouraging me to move on with my work. Sometimes, we pray over [the] phone."* This confirms that they have a lot of faith in prayers, and the power of prayers keeps them going. During our conversation, I asked them how they felt after prayers, and some of the responses I got were that they felt secure, happy, and relaxed. Some of them confessed that prayers helped them to avert the suicidal tendency and bitterness that they harboured in their lives. FV.18 expressing what makes her relax after prayers explained how, in the beginning, she did not want to see her husband; she was always bitter, but after turning to the Bible, she learnt about forgiveness. With a smile on her face, yet in a very low tone, she told me, *"The Bible teaches us to forgive, and forgiveness always sets us free and gives us a reason to move on."* Moreover, with a sigh of relief and beaming with smiles, she added, *"How else would I behave? I would be mad by now, or I would have left him. After all, I am not also worthy…This gives me the energy to do my work at school, and I don't lie, I do it well".*

b) Sharing with spiritual leaders

Sharing with religious/spiritual leaders is one way that the female teachers with experience of domestic violence helped them to cope. While others pray as individuals or with friends, the female teachers also admit that they have involved religious leaders to pray for them, pray with them and meet them as couples for counselling. The religious leaders included priests, nuns, pastors, wives of clergy members, school chaplains, catechists, and a bishop's wife. The majority felt that that was the right thing to do, while others went for that as a last resort, but others were encouraged through circumstances or by friends. They had different answers when

asked why they turned to the spiritual leaders. Some said they had tried many avenues and failed, so the only option left was to seek God's intervention, while others said they were encouraged by friends or relatives. Others turned to God by listening to sermons that enabled them to draw closer to God. They all admitted that they found solace in God. FV.5, who complained that co-wives and the man's relatives were bewitching her, said her situation improved only when she embraced Jesus Christ and that her sickness needed more prayers as she battled domestic violence and family difficulties. She said, *"I find refuge in my God. I always discuss with my spiritual leader. I have a Reverend Sister who help[s] me a lot to pray for my husband and my health condition"*.

Sharing with religious leaders has enabled the women to cope in their work and has also been lifesaving to some. One of the ladies, FV.10, narrated how she wanted to commit suicide but was helped by a religious leader. She had this to say:

> *… One day, I felt so lonely, used, helpless, and the only way out was suicide. I bought Azithromycin. In all ten tablets, I was ready to commit suicide. I knew that was the only solution to my problem. I wanted to be free from my husband, girlfriends, and stepfather. I picked [up] a phone to tell Patrick to look after my daughter. Instead, I dialled the wrong number, but it was for a pastor by God's grace. I turned off the phone when I realised he was not Patrick. He called me back several times, and I struggled to pick [up] the phone. He said my voice made him (to) detect that I was in danger. He asked whether he could pray with me, and I accepted. After that, I opened up to him, and he followed me, and I got saved. That brought a change in my life. I am now a strong, educated woman and can't die because of a man.*

c) Singing and listening to gospel music

Spiritual support was also attained through singing or listening to gospel songs. Another way that the women overcame their challenges was by singing or listening to the gospel and songs. The participants said there was a way that they felt joy as they sang the gospel songs. They explained that the wording was very relevant and consoling while the singing took their minds away from domestic violence. However, this was common with women who naturally liked singing. FV.17 said, *"I love singing. In the beginning, I could sing traditional songs depicting sorrows, which helped increase my pains and sorrow. However, when I began to sing the gospel songs, I felt lifted"*. She smiled and started singing, "*…It is well; it is well with my soul…*" I joined her, and later, I asked her whether we could pray together, and she accepted. We prayed together, and then we continued with the interviews. Such are the testimonies from women who cope through spirituality.

4.5.6 Seeking counselling

Counselling is taken as one of the coping strategies for women with experience of domestic violence. All the 20 female teachers with experience of domestic violence interviewed agreed that they suffered emotional problems that required counselling. However, much as they would have loved to get professional counselling, they say accessing such services is not easy because the benefits are lacking in Kitgum District. In most cases, they depend on anyone who can counsel them, even when they are not professionals. To them, this limits the benefits that they could get from professional counsellors. Of the 20 women interviewed, only one, FV.13, admitted that she had access to and benefitted from professional counselling. She praised the service and

said it helped her and made her help others. She explained at length how she was supported when she joined a course at Uganda Christian University, saying:

> *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy was used on me when I went to study counselling at Uganda Christian University. I had to talk about my pain to the entire class. This became a valuable tool for changing my attitude and addressing my trauma.*

I realised that she had no regrets no more pain, and she shared with me freely. What made me feel so bad was when she narrated what used to be a horror to her but without tears. She said:

> *Before the counselling, I would cry a lot out of shame. My husband forced me to abort because there was no money, and he wanted to attend school. This affected me very badly… I would see this baby crying in my dreams but sometimes, even during the day, she would sit on my lap….I know I killed, I know I destroyed my womb….To tell the truth, I am not worthy to look after the children of other women as a teacher…. I thank God, who, by his grace, has forgiven me. I thank God I had one child already, which remains my only source of joy….*

4.5.7 Seeking the law

The women said they sometimes used the law to support them in their domestic struggles with their spouses. Of the 20 women interviewed, eight brought out legal attempts as measures for trying to solve their marital problems. Three main ways emerged: reporting to the police (n=2), reporting to probation officers (n=1) and separating from the husband (n=5).

a) Reporting to police

I noted that women are not keen on reporting cases to the police and the probation officer. Of the 20 respondents, only two sought for support from the police. As for the reasons, they revealed that they were always discouraged from doing this by their family members and even people close to them. This is more for cultural reasons that domestic problems are settled at home. Many also wanted the marriage to work, so exposing their husbands would make things worse for them. Reporting to the police was mentioned by the female teachers as a means of helping them cope with domestic violence. Two participants had to seek support from the police. In this study, they reported that they always went to the police when they had very serious problems that they could not solve, for example, seeking a police report after a severe assault because a health facility cannot give treatment without a police report. Others report to seek redress over property wrangles, yet others go to the police, where the husbands had been the first to report. For example, one said the man was the first to report to the police after fighting his newfound love. FV.16 narrated, "*One day, I went with a male friend to a drinking joint. He followed us and started fighting. The fighting was so bad that he tore the clothes of the male friend. He wanted me and the man to be arrested, but instead, we arrested him.*" She went on to say:

> *People pleaded with me to have him released, and eventually, we settled the case out of court. Nothing was binding us; he already had another woman and was not justified to come and interfere with my life. I had also moved on and was in a new relationship. This case again went viral. The students, teachers, and parents all knew about it. Our life continued being scandalous. I felt very uneasy going to school to do*

my work. I kept on wondering whether I was to blame or my husband. I did not know how to take the shame away.

FV.14, a respondent who reported to police, said she did that when she was seeking redress after the husband took away from her a motorcycle that she used the money given to her for compensation after losing a limb in a motor accident and the husband took advantage and registered the bike in his name without the lady knowing. She narrated her sad story as follows:

I went to the police and explained my problem to them. I wanted the motorcycle to be under my care. However, it became very difficult since he tricked me and put the logbook in his name. The female police were [The female police officer was] very helpful. She advised me well. The police said negotiation with his family members, who knew the source of money for buying the motorcycle, was the best way.

She went on to say,

To date, that story remains very painful to me. This man knows how I Struggle. He got me when I was healthy and I had both legs. Since I got the accident that maimed me, he has turned against me. How could he register the motorcycle in his name, and yet he does not give me any support? Why must he laugh at me in this way? I am sure he wishes for me to die so that he can take over my property. I am bitter; I am frustrated. I don't know what to do. Life has lost meaning.

She struggled to hold back tears, but by the time she finished the narration, she was already sobbing and poured all her bitterness on how the world had been unjust to

her. I had to disengage her from the conversation and ask her to rest. After a few days, I contacted her, and she said she was ready to continue the conversation.

From the narratives, I realised that women are aware of the police but do not bother to report for various reasons, i.e., fear of further conflict from their husbands and relatives, shame, and inaction by the police. However, some do not report it because of their love for their husband. FV.7 stated:

> *Thinking through now, I wish I agreed to my parents' request to have him reported to the police. I love him, and he is a father to my son. So, I wanted him not exposed. Now I realise he could have killed me. Women should report cases of assault to the police.*

The above narratives show that the police remain one of the formal systems women could use on domestic violence issues. Yet, it remains not utilised for several reasons, such as attitudes, lack of trust, and fear of repercussions on the female teachers with experience of domestic violence when they report. However, much as many consider the system ineffective, few people still appreciate that it could help, as reported by the respondents.

b) Separating from their husbands

From the interaction with the women, five had separated from their husbands at the time of the interviews. Separating from the husbands from the perspective of the women was legal because it involved the local councils and elders, and only one involved a lawyer to give evidence for the separation, which should be seen as divorce since it involved a court of law. The local council leaders were alerted so the men would not follow them after the separation. Together with the families, the local

councils also witnessed the breakup and mainly settled contentions over property and paying back dowry by the women's parents. From the women's report, even after separating from their husbands, the law may still get them because society traditionally accepts separation when the dowry is returned or when a man writes a letter telling the entire clan that the wife is no longer his wife.

The female teachers with experience of domestic violence said that coping can be done by separation. In the worst scenarios, the women had to separate from their husbands. Five women interviewed had separated from their husbands, though this did not stop them from getting into another relationship. All of them mentioned physical abuse was the factor that made them leave. The women said physical injuries and fear of death forced them out of the marriage. In such situations, the women explained that leaving the man helped to reduce the physical violence, though they said the emotional problems continued to exist in another form. Staying away allowed them to recollect themselves and continue in their professional roles. FV.17 narrated her ordeal as follows:

> *One night, he pulled me from my sleep… I could not hear any footprints [footsteps], and later, he said he heard someone whispering at the window. There was no noise or sign of anybody at the window. We started to argue, and this ended up in a fight. From that day, he started sleeping with panga [a machete] under our bed because he would use it to cut the men coming to snatch me from him. This created fear in me. I wanted to leave, but he said he would kill me if I did. I lived in fear and could not prepare my lessons. I feared even going to school when he was still at home, and I feared for him to return [that he would return] from work and not find me at home… Later, I read the story of*

someone who killed his children out of jealousy and later killed his wife. I knew this was [a] message from God and that I would be the next. I decided to leave…

Such stories depict what female teachers in domestic wrangles go through; the only way out is to leave such a marriage. Some head teachers agree with separation and legal methods of coping. One of them said:

I propose divorce in some cases, in the worse scenario [the worst-case scenario], when it is not working out, let the woman leave. Once they accept that nothing can change, let them walk out. They can have time to rebuild their lives and be settled to perform their duties effectively. At the end of the day, the women can use legal means to make the men own to their responsibilities of keeping the children. It is not proper that the women are enduring these men. Some of them come home when they are drunk and vomiting, and the women who are educated still go on cleaning their mess. The men must be understanding. Men cannot say thank you to women who produce for them children. These women take good care of the men and their relatives. Such women are good and can be very productive with recognition and appreciation. Even in violence, confusion, and stress, they still work hard.

Such comments from men indicate that they realise women's problems, and their suggestions for women to leave such marriages seem to come from true concerns as they witness these women go through domestic violence.

Some women said that they do not want to pull away from their men because of fear of the future, being dependent and worried about public opinion, and love for their children. On the need to separate as a way of coping, FV.13 said, "Women always think that men are everything in their lives. Women must become self-sufficient and independent. With or without men, women can survive." Therefore, some women separate from their husbands when domestic violence becomes more unbearable as a way of coping.

c) Reporting to probation

Reporting to the probation officer is one way this research took as a measure for legally coping with domestic violence. From the findings only one female teacher reported that case of their spousal violence reached the probation. Some female teachers in our conversations said they always contemplated taking their husbands to the probation officer for child neglect. However, they said, on second thought, they changed their minds. The one who reported to the probation officer said she did it because her husband was the first to take him to court when she left him demanding custody of the children. FV2 said:

> *…This stressed me further and affected my job. I reached a level where I wanted to leave the children with him, but my parents and colleagues at work asked me to fight for my children. I lost weight; I became lonelier and could not prepare my lessons. I missed my classes, and I distanced myself even from students. I was battling with my problem. Then, I decided to go to probation [the probation officer].*

She said, *"They asked me to come with my children to their office and were convinced that I could take care of them. This was after asking me about the work I do and the salary I earn"*. She added, *"I got support from the probation officer. They refused to write a letter for my husband to take away my children. They encouraged me not to leave work to support my children and myself even without a man."* FV.2 continued to narrate how the support she got from the probation officer helped her to move on with her work:

> *…Later, the custody of the children was given to me on condition that they were still young and that I was financially better than him and, therefore, would keep them better. I promised them I would work very hard and look after my children. My husband was asked to give monthly support to us and that when he failed, we should report him. I agreed but never asked him for any money. He stopped supporting the children, and I never bothered to write to him.*

4.5.8 Negative coping

While exploring the experiences of female teachers about how they negotiate through their challenges to perform their duties, a few coping measures pointed to harmful activities. These include:

a) Alcohol abuse

Few of the female teachers said that when the conflict became too much, they drowned their frustrations in drinking. They started drinking because they wanted to forget about the worries of domestic violence, or they wanted to hurt their husbands or to get the courage to confront their violent husbands.

Of the 20 women interviewed, two said that the frustration they found themselves in led them to drink alcohol excessively. They said in the beginning that this was done to make them forget the pains and humiliation caused by their husbands and to annoy and hurt the husbands. Unfortunately, when I engaged them further, none of them found drinking as a solution; instead, they said that it caused them more pain and eventually affected their performance as teachers more. FV.6 said:

> *My husband was the sole friend I had. When reality dawned on me that I was losing him to another woman, it was too much to bear. I resorted to heavy drinking, and this affected my life even when we separated. I got addicted. After being transferred to another school, the head teacher called me to [the] office and told me how I was spoiling the names of the female teachers.*

Asked to explain why she was told that she was spoiling the names of the female teachers, she said:

> *I would drink with male teachers, even with support staff and come back drunk. I would go to the dormitories drunk under the guise of doing night surveillance and abusing the girls. The worst was when the head teacher found me drunk and fallen by the roadside. That was when she called me, and on realising my problems, she moved close to me, and as I talk now, I don't drink at all. Drinking alcohol can never be a good strategy for coping with violence from a heartless man… You end up the loser…My headteacher talked to me and remained close to me, and drinking is now in the past for me as I talk now.*

b) Fighting

Another counterproductive coping measure given by the female teachers is fighting their husbands' relatives. The women always believed that the husbands' relatives contributed a lot to making them suffer at the hands of their husbands. So, fighting them was a way of showing their grievances to them, hurting them as well and trying to stop them from meddling in their family issues, which makes them suffer at the hands of the men.

Three women reported that they always looked at the relatives of their husbands as being the cause of their problems, and therefore, displacing hostility on them was good coping since it gave them relief. However, all this was in the short term, but in the long run, it was negative, as FV.6 narrated:

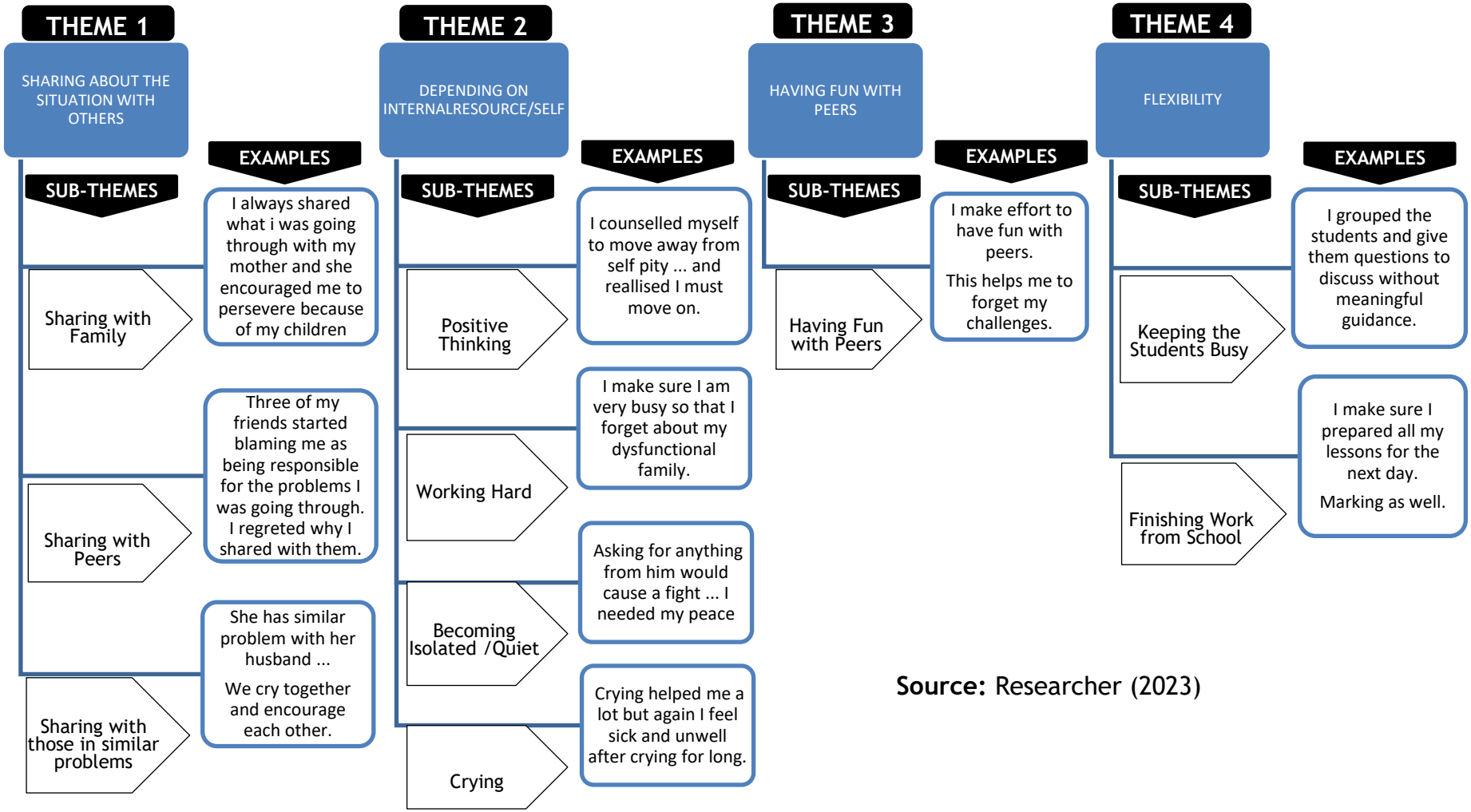
> *Considering that my husband's sisters would always gang [up] against me when I was fighting with my husband, I decided to develop [a] strategy to defend myself. At home, I would have stones at strategic places, and when they came to interfere, I would pick [up] the stones and throw them at them. Unfortunately, it became a habit, and later, I did something regrettable when [I was] transferred to my current school.*

She went on to give her story that:

> *I had [a] permanent feeling of being worthless and always became defensive. In the new school, I felt isolated and bitter. One day, when students came in a group to discuss an issue with me, they thought I was unfair to them; I felt insecure and picked [up] stones and started*

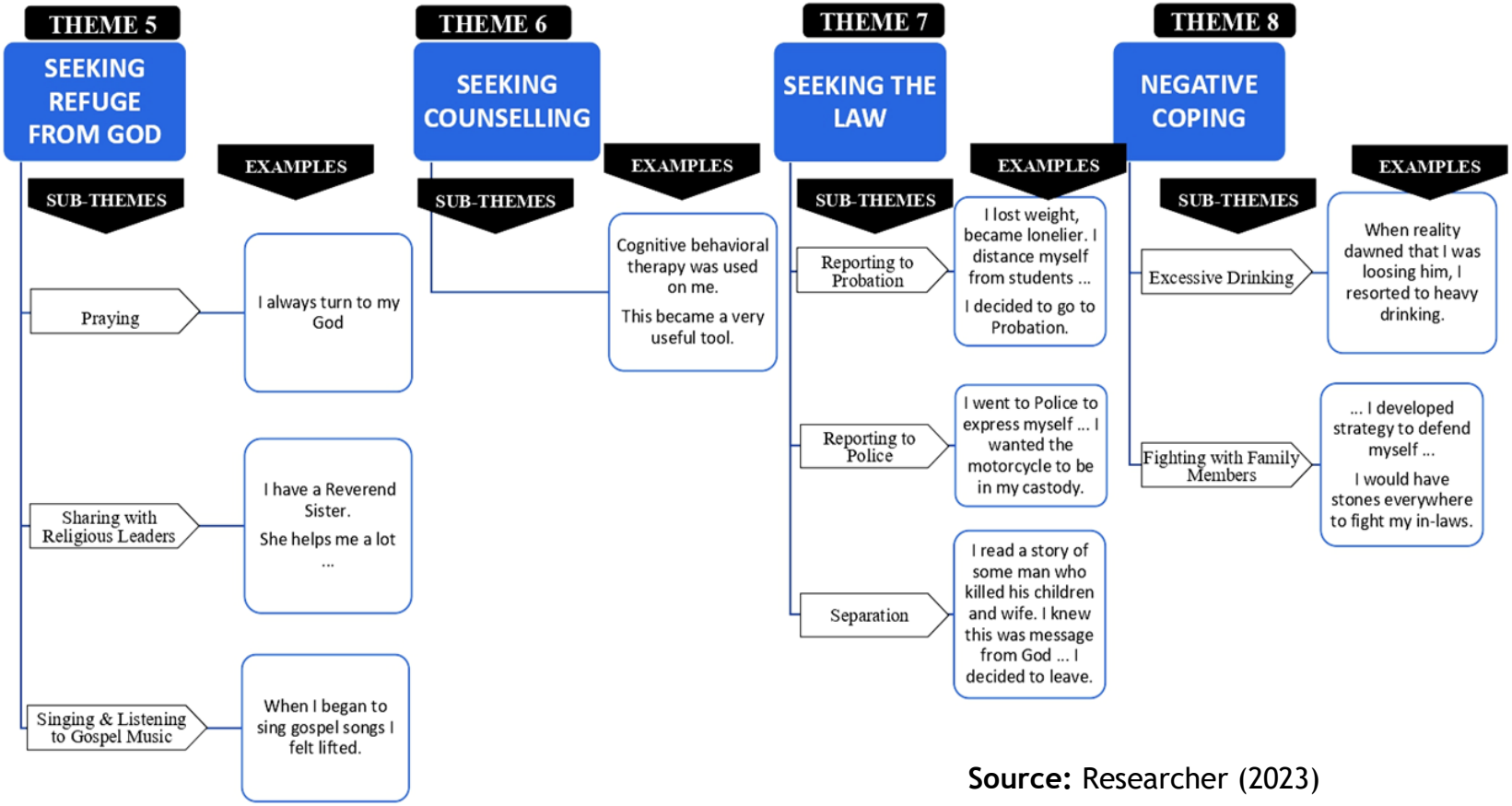
stoning them. This became a big issue in the school, but the head teacher understood after I poured all my pain into her. She said I was traumatised from the war and family life and needed support. To her, what I did was well out of the normal".

Figure 10: Strategies used by female teachers to cope with the experience of domestic violence.



Source: Researcher (2023)

Figure 11: Strategies used by female teachers to cope with experience of domestic violence continued



Source: Researcher (2023)

4.6 Plans

A question was put to the female teachers interviewed about their plans. This was to consolidate how they were coping. The researcher assumed that women coping well would have constructive plans because they still have hope for the future.

Table 3: Responses on plans

Planned activities	Responses
Prioritizing my children	18
Build a house/buy land	7
Focus on my career	16
Support other women	1
Strengthen financial base/stability	6
Work on relationship	6
Seek medical attention	1
Change career path	1
Look ahead	9

Source: Field data (2023)

The women interviewed gave several plans, putting the perspective of their future in view. Many women struggling with domestic violence see themselves overcoming their struggles in the future in different ways, or they have plans. The researcher interprets this that they are coping positively.

a) Prioritising children

Female teachers experiencing domestic violence attach much importance to their children (n=18). They want their children to be protected to have a better future. My conversation with the women revealed that even those who remain in an abusive

relationship do so for the good of their children and perform their roles for the interest of their children as well. To such participants, what keeps them in their marriage is not love for their husbands but love for their children and determination for them to give a future to their children. This is evident by what FV.9 said, *"The only reason I keep close to my husband is because of my children's future. I don't see anything tangible for them, so I cannot go away…I must plan the best for my children."* The female teachers interviewed prioritised the children's education, providing food, shelter and clothing, meeting their medical needs and making them safe by being around to protect them so they feel loved. FV.7 said, *"My children are my priority for now. They are why I have accepted to suffer so they can get the best education I can give them."* FV.9 made a similar comment:

> *I plan to continue working and see my children grow up successful. I long for the time when my children grow up and put a smile on my face. When I am not in a good mood, they often ask me (that) 'Mummy, what is wrong?' I shall be there for them.*

The narrative from the women points to the fact that as much as they go through domestic violence, they can endure and perform in school for their children's future. Those whose children are suffering from the conflict between the spouses, particularly where the family fails to provide for the basic needs of their children or where there are signs of such, their performance is more affected.

To some women, it concerns their protection, emotional well-being, and love. The women also stick with the men because of cultural reasons that children belong to the men and therefore fear that moving out with the children can cause more problems. The women's family always insists that the children are left with the father because

that is where they belong. I recall one of the participants, FV.10, became emotional and started crying and, between the sobs, said:

> *My children have no future without me. As I told you, my husband is a womaniser; my stepfather asked me to return my son to their roots… That means I am the only one who can be there for him. He is my priority for now and for the future to come.*

It was very painful witnessing a young woman of 29 years entirely at a loss. The pain in her voice made me emotional. I could feel her pain and wondered how she could perform her professional roles in this state of mind without support from even part of her family.

The women value their children and prioritise them in what they do. Therefore, they need help to work hard performing their professional roles to give them the means to support them. However, whether they can effectively perform their functions in schools remains to be seen.

b) Building own house/buying land

The women said they were unsure of their future with their husbands and, therefore, wanted a house where they could live. This also applies to those who are already out of the relationship. These were some of the conversations they had with me: FV.1 said, "*I also plan to build a house for myself*". Similarly, FV.13 confirmed this view when she said, *"I need to get a plot of land and in future build for my son and I [myself]."* For some of the women who had moved out of the relationship, the reason they were planning to build was to address their level of self-worth. They wanted the men to see they were progressing even when separated. I discovered this was taken

as a means of coping because it would give them a sense of independence and self-sufficiency. This drives them to work very hard in their places of work.

c) Focusing on career

Focusing on a career was mentioned by 17 female participants as their plan. However, seven took it as going back for further studies, while nine meant paying more attention to teaching and being more committed to their jobs. One, however, talked of changing the career path altogether. There were also various reasons for wanting to return to school or develop their career. With evident enthusiasm, FV.11 said, *"I also want to return to school and get my master's degree. This will make me (more) superior to the bad man who ruined me. He will rot with his certificate and realise that I have gone far ahead of him"*. Probably still for the same reason, FV.3 said, *"…Develop my career and become a very popular professional teacher. I desire to have a settled life"*. Similarly, FV.7, whose husband is a businessman and reportedly with very controlling behaviour, also expressed the same view to go back for further studies. She said:

> *My husband wants me to be without anything, so I depend on him, and he controls me. I got admission to go for further studies. He stopped me. He is against my plan to go and make myself better. Madam, I will go back to school.*

With such zeal expressed by these women, developing careers may add to their level of knowledge and skills in performing their duties at school. However, they also agree that even when they build their career, lack of preparation, absenteeism, and

emotional state while performing their work can still affect the execution of their school roles.

What emerged is that some women would have loved to go for further studies and advance their careers, but this remains only wishful thinking because they find themselves in situations that cannot allow them. Several reasons were given by the female teachers who want to advance their careers but cannot. These included lacking money and shouldering family responsibilities, controlling husbands' behaviours, and trying to save their marriage. These can have a bearing on their performance as teachers. FV.9, who was very confident of her competence but was bogged down by family responsibilities and, specifically, having an interest in feeding and educating her many children, lamented:

> *I am a master's material. I know I can make it, but I cannot return to school because I carry [a] considerable burden of running the family. If my husband supported the family, I could return to school. I know I can pay my fees, but what about the burden that remains at home?*

FV.18 said she did not want to create more violence in the home because of the husband's controlling nature. She stated:

> *The last time I went for the degree course, it became a big issue in our family. My husband considers me selfish because I was spending money to return to school. He never gave me a pencil or coin for my degree course.*

This points to the fact that female teachers who cannot build their careers can affect their performance at school. Staff development and capacity building remain part and

parcel of good performance, yet female teachers with experience of domestic violence find themselves denied staff development.

Conversing with the women and probing why they cannot prioritise their careers, I gathered that children were also given as a reason. FV.5 said, *"I have given up pursuing my master's degree. Now, I must struggle for my children. It will be sad to find that I go to teach other people's children while mine stay at home."* On the other hand, for others, bitterness and the state of emotion appear to be bogging them down from focusing on the future. Even performance at school can be a problem for such women. With a lot of bitterness and speaking in a very low tone, as well as while stretching her hands, FV. 14 blurted this out:

> *I don't have any plans to go for further studies. Even if I wanted to, I am now disabled, frustrated, and confused. I find difficulties in doing my work, and adding this to going for further studies shall not be fair to my rambling and sick mind. If my husband was supportive and caring, I could.*

d) Looking ahead/ moving on

Some female teachers said that they planned to look ahead. Probing into what they meant, I found out that the general feeling of these respondents was that they did not want to get stuck in the bad experience of a dysfunctional relationship with their spouses. They recognise how bad it is but must focus on the future. Others said they had left their husbands, so their planning excluded them. In addition, others had moved on emotionally, even when they were still living together, and their relationship did not matter. The majority in this category appears to be doing well

and, therefore, making efforts to perform their roles well in schools, but some remained bitter. FV.15 said:

> *I have already separated from this man. He remains a bad memory. My work is still affected because of the trauma I went through. I never expected him to take me this way after all what [all that] I did for him and his children. I plan to move on. God will pay him.*

To FV.7, moving on is what she planned: "I have quarrelled enough; we have fought, and now I plan to ignore this man completely". Similar comments came up from FV.3:

> *I know my son must belong […] - raising him with my husband would be the best thing to do. That explains why I returned the other time, but what if he killed me? Will it serve any purpose? My plans are now different.*

These are just words of the mouth but with much bitterness that can still affect a teacher's productivity.

e) Working on relationship

Some female teachers still value their relationships and love their spouses (n=6). They said they would do their best to work on their relationship with their husbands to return to an adorable and healthy relationship. Reasons for their choices included wanting their children to grow up with their fathers. Others said it brings dignity to women when married, and two noted as teachers, they would not be good role models if they separated from their husbands. FV.20 said,

How can I leave this man who has given me a son? As a teacher, would I be respected? What will the future hold for me if I let go…I am confused, but I must struggle to improve the relationship…

Others, mainly the younger women, had hope and said that they were encouraged by their friends, peers, and older women that relationships can normalise, and it is up to the women to work for that normalisation. Another reason for working on the relationship is pressure from the church and families. When asked how they would work out the relationship, they mentioned remaining quiet, stopping to oppose his interests, being close to the man's family, praying to God, accepting exploitation, and being tolerant. These were some ways they thought could be used to solve their issues. Others were not sure. FV.1, looking to be at a loss, said: "I want to strengthen my relationship with my husband, though I don't know how". The view of having a good relationship with the families and relatives of the female teachers was also shared by some head teachers, who provided the following advice:

The female teachers should try to have [a] good relationship with the relatives and families of their husbands. When this is done, it can create a perfect avenue for resolving conflicts. When a female teacher gets into conflict with the husband and has [a] good relationship with the man's family, she can report on her challenge and resolve the issues.

Analysing the good intention to work on the relationship is good. However, some of the suggested measures may be counterproductive to women's school performance.

Some women are at a crossroads on whether to work on the relationship or move on. This, to them makes them more confused and even affects their work. To one woman, FV.15, this was her statement:

I have another man with two children and three from a broken relationship. This new man does not want to look after my three children, who are not his, yet their father also needs to take care of them. This is tearing me apart. Madam, I am between the hard place and the rock. I made a rush decision. Now reality [light] has dawned.

Women in such a situation may fail to perform their work at school well.

f) Strengthening financial base/stability

According to the study, some of the major factors for domestic violence were economic exploitation, lack of financial support and dishonesty in utilisation of resources. Many of the women interviewed said that life in a home becomes more stressful when there is no money. The women wanted a solid financial base to help them cope FV.7 had this to say, *"I plan to have a decent retirement. This means I should have [a] business as I continue working. I don't want to depend on this man at all. When you don't have money, men can stress you."* The women need money to feed their children and provide for them, support their relatives, and help themselves return to school, buy land and build. In this way, they can focus on their job well. FV.13 said, *"I love my son, and I want to care for him. To do this, I must be financially stable …"* Some female teachers said that men are sometimes not very aggressive when they have money and support the family. Some women viewed money as security, while others wanted it to give them self-worth and satisfaction and for the men to know they could be independent.

In conclusion, the female teachers with experience of domestic violence adopted several measures to remedy their problem. Some coping measures worked well, while others were temporary and counterproductive. To them, they used all these to handle their challenges.

4.7 Support mechanisms available in schools for female teachers affected by domestic violence

Objective four of the study sought to explore the support mechanism available to female teachers affected by domestic violence within the school. For this study, this was limited to the support that these female teachers receive from the schools. The interview interaction with the female teachers and the head teachers sought to find out if they were aware of any support systems available in the schools and, based on that, how helpful they are. Considering that women who have experienced domestic violence may have some struggles in their lives, questions included what help they would wish to receive to enable them to perform. Another critical question asked was about the plan for their future. This question aimed at getting from the women whether spousal violence has made them be withdrawn from these problems, failing to focus on the future or not.

4.7.1 Support given by the school

Schools are formal institutions that should have well-laid-down policies to govern them. Human resources form a key aspect of the school. How their individual needs are managed vis-à-vis organisational needs determines how they perform and how the organisation also performs. This requires well-laid-down policies. When the female teachers were asked whether they were aware of any policies on managing female teachers affected by domestic violence, all the 20 women interviewed said they were

unaware. They were sure schools did not have such policies. In the conversation, FV.20 said, *"There is no formal support mechanism in our school. Many schools don't care about the challenges of women. But it would be good if senior women teachers and head teachers supported victimised women."* Another one, FV.2, shared similar views by saying:

> *Our school has no formal support system to help women undergoing domestic violence. We have female teachers meeting[s], but we don't get to discuss our domestic issues. Mainly, it is how we can support students and other issues concerning our work at school. No clear policies exist.*

The head teachers are also in agreement. Of the 23 head teachers interviewed, 18 said no such policies existed. One head teacher said, "*As a school, we don't have any policies from the Ministry of Education or our school that can authoritatively help us handle female teachers suffering from domestic violence".* Two head teachers said they were unaware; three said policies exist. I tried to probe further from the head teachers, who said they have policies but were unclear. One head teacher from a private school gave this response: *"[The] Ministry of Education and Sports, together with [the] National Curriculum Development Centre, have integrated sexuality education in teaching and learning where it addresses issues of domestic violence, economic violence and behavioural change, among others."* Another head teacher from a government school said, *"PTA regulations on the dos and the don'ts, Ministry of Education and Sports regulating the number of lessons per teacher in a class and the standing order on the absenteeism in the school."* Furthermore, another head teacher, also from Government school, said, *"The foundation body does not tolerate aspects of domestic violence."* All these indicate that there are no clear policies in

the schools on how female teachers experiencing domestic violence can be supported since the head teachers cannot authoritatively spell or explain them. Probing into how they then handle such issues, I realised that they were not very clear in their responses, but all indication was that such issues are addressed as they come, and no standard rules have been put in place. The reactions from the younger head teachers reveal a lot of gaps, implying that head teachers cannot authoritatively handle issues of domestic violence that affect the female teachers in the secondary schools where they teach.

Headteachers in secondary schools in Uganda are responsible for managing the human resources within the schools they head. The human resource department is not a fully-fledged department within the education structure at Secondary schools in Uganda. For the researcher to find out about the support that female teachers with experience of domestic violence receive from their head teachers, respondents were asked if their head teachers were aware of their challenges and, if so, how they learnt about them. Five of the 20 female teachers agreed they shared the challenges with the head teachers. Of these, three said they did that after the head teachers learnt about them already, so they had no option but to talk about their ordeal, while two said they looked at their head teachers as people who could help them. They wanted them to know what they were going through so that as they performed their duties, the head teachers would not be surprised. One told me that it was in a state of rage that she poured it out to the head teacher but later regretted why she had made a fool of herself to someone with a bad reputation like her head teacher; 15 said they did not share anything with their head teachers.

The head teachers were also asked whether the teachers shared their predicament with them. Six head teachers said the women shared with them. Although this did not

tally with the records of the female teachers, it is still understandable because it is very likely that not all female teachers faced with domestic violence in Kitgum District were interviewed. Eight head teachers agreed they knew the challenges and learnt through the grapevine, even where the women never shared. Indeed, I proved this when they referred me to the female teachers that they were indeed victims of domestic violence even when the teachers never shared with them. When the head teachers who knew the problems but did not receive any reports from their teachers, to whom they were supervisors, were asked why they did not offer support to these women who they knew were struggling, they gave reasons that it was not good to meddle into domestic issues of people unless they confide in you. However, three admitted feeling sympathetic and did not know how to approach the ladies.

In having conversations with the female teachers who said that they never shared their domestic problems with the head teachers, several reasons were given, mainly that the head teachers were not trusted, that the head teachers were not helpful; they were not different from any other men and that the female head teachers were arrogant. Others gave reasons related to cultural factors, such as women should not talk about domestic challenges outside the house and that speaking of domestic problems is difficult. Others considered the issues personal problems that they could manage by themselves. These were some of their responses.

FV.11 said, "The Headteacher was asking me if I had problems, but I did not share any problem with him. I answered 'No' because I don't trust him, and I did not see how helpful he would be to me". Likewise, FV.8 said, *"I have never told my head teacher and cannot tell him. He is a man and may never have any feelings to support me"*. FV.10 gave a similar response: *"He is a man, and I feel he would not care [about] what I am going through."* These reflect the attitudes of female teachers towards

male head teachers, and such attitudes cannot give them the freedom to share with their supervisors freely. On the other hand, failure to share with the head teachers can be a perception of men by women arising from cultural reasons. For that matter, FV.5 had this to say:

> *It is difficult to talk about domestic violence freely. In our culture, women are always taught to keep domestic issues in the confine[s] of the home. "ot umu lok" (meaning 'the house covers issues'). Then, I could not talk about my challenges, but now, as things stand in my house, I can talk about them anywhere. I don't care what people say now. I have lost respect for my husband and cannot hide my sufferings…*

This means that women try as much as possible to cover their domestic issues until such a time that they become unbearable. That is the time they can talk about them anywhere and to anybody. The woman said that when a woman begins to do that, she is ready to quit and does not care what happens to the marriage anymore.

Eight women respondents interviewed said they do not share with their head teachers because they do not trust them. Some of them felt that communicating with the head teachers would give them more pain since they would go and talk about their problems to others. FV.8 gave reasons why she thinks many female teachers who suffer spousal abuse do not confide in the head teacher: "*Many teachers don't open [up] to head teachers because of a lack of trust. I don't want my private life to become public*". FV.7 put it bluntly, *"Private schools always employ young administrators who don't interact well with staff. So why do I go to him? I feel it is worthless. After all, he will not keep quiet.*

According to the perception of the female teachers, headteachers of private schools appear to be more interested in performance than the individuals working for them. This is evident by what one respondent in her 30s, FV.11, said, "*I have not shared with the head teacher because he has not bothered to ask me. I know he will want me to teach, and therefore I want to keep safe lest my contract shall [should] not be renewed." At the same time, another said, …. Some administrators don't want to hear anything outside teaching and the school".* The view is expounded more as follows:

> *Do the administrators ever care about what the teachers go through? Their interest is to have you in school. Perform all your roles and leave problems of home at home. I wish they knew that you can never separate me from my problems.*

Such comments and narratives point to the need for a lot to be explored concerning the management styles of the head teachers.

Up to 15 female teachers shared that head teachers cared more about the school's performance and, therefore, never cared about the state of mind of those expected to deliver services. My interviews with head teachers confirmed the female teachers' feelings on where the head teachers' priority lies. The head teachers feel that anything that hinders them from performing their roles, specifically those that hinder students from passing examinations, must not be tolerated. One head teacher from a private school had this to say:

> *As a school, we are there to deliver services so that students can perform. I must be honest that many times, we are on the performance*

of staff, and this indeed makes us (to) overlook the teachers' personal needs. If I allow individual teachers to bring their problems to school, the performance will go down. You know the competition in private schools. At least I can sympathise with a female teacher who shares with me her problems…

Some female teachers need to share their problems with the head teachers. They feel they will not help them either because they have problems, or they care only about the school rather than the people who work there.

During the interviews, the female teachers were asked whether the support given by the head teachers was helpful and enabled them to perform their work well. The responses were varied. Some appreciated the help, while others did not consider the support helpful. This was by giving general guidance and support. The female teachers who valued sharing with their head teachers said they encouraged them by talking to them, giving them off-duty time, adjusting their timetable, and giving them less load. In addition, they supported them financially by giving them advances. FV.2, thus, remarked, *"I thank my head teacher; he was understanding. He encouraged me to move on with my work and gave me the moral support I required"*. FV.3, who was not ready to talk about her domestic problems to the head teacher until her father–in–law came to school to collect her forcefully to go home to settle issues between her and her husband, had this to say:

"… However, when the head teacher learnt about my problem the day my father–in–law came to school, he would occasionally call me and ask how I was feeling and whether I could teach. I always told him I was OK. I did not want to share much with him because it would cause me pain".

When we analyse such statements, we realise that, sometimes, even where head teachers are supportive, the female teachers could be more convinced and welcoming of their support. Still, few female teachers recognise such support, and indeed, there are also head teachers who show care.

Headteachers also helped the female teachers by giving them off-duty time and reducing their workload. FV.5, who, besides being in a violent relationship with the husband, also had health issues, was appreciative of her head teacher: "… He was supportive. He reduced (on) my teaching loads…" Similarly, FV.3 mentioned that the head teacher was supportive: *"Sometimes, he would also give me permission to go home and rest"*.

In a similar vein, others were given additional responsibilities as a way of helping them get some additional allowances to sort out their problems. FV.9, who had a very unsupportive husband and yet had many children, had this to say, *"…He made me (to) become a games mistress deliberately and gave me [the task] to oversee incentives. To him, the assignments would give me some small allowances to solve some of my financial issues…. He is very understanding."*

From the research, the headteachers who do not support female teachers with experience of domestic violence are more than those who are supportive. However, the few who care support the women in performing their roles.

In my conversation with the head teachers, they gave several ways by which they supported the female teachers. Four head teachers mentioned that they always encouraged the women to move on, while three said they called the husbands and tried to engage them to settle their issues. One head teacher, who is in his late 40s

and has been a head teacher for about ten years narrated how he tried to support a female teacher by engaging the husband in a conversation. He said:

> *I called the husband and talked to him. He was not apologetic at all…He told me that traditionally, a man can marry as many women as he wants, so his wife must get to terms with his interest if peace is to prevail in the home. He said his wife is very nagging and proud.*

Two head teachers guided them to accept their faith. One young head teacher, who had been in his position for less than five years, had this to say,

> *I talked to her at length and advised her that should she develop [the] desire to fall in love again, she should take her time to study men she dates and not rush because she needs someone to stay with.*

Another one said, *"…I offered her guidance and counselling to settle down and wait for another man coming soon."* With this guidance and support from head teachers, one can ask how useful it is to calm a woman in domestic pain. However, few women acknowledged that some of the support was helpful. Two admitted they gave off-duty time to the affected teachers. Other responses were giving fewer responsibilities and referring them to senior women teachers.

All in all, what many of the head teachers considered as support was more of taking administrative steps instead of focusing on the female teachers and their challenges. One said, *"I took my time to call one because she was not behaving well."* When I probed to find out what he meant and what support he gave to the lady after calling her, he answered, "*She was always coming late to school and always in bad moods. I still need to take more time with her before any intervention."* This, as well as many

other responses from the head teachers, leaves a lot of doubt on how helpful their support can be to the female teachers in times of want. Given the demographics, such responses mainly came from relatively young, inexperienced head teachers, suggesting they could lack skills in managing human resources.

4.7.2 Support given by co-workers

Other support given to the female teachers with experience of domestic violence from the school came from the co-workers. The co-workers refer to teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. Eleven participants said they shared their problems with their co-workers in the schools where they served during the experience of domestic violence. Various reasons made the respondents seek support from their co-workers. Some of the reasons given are to enable them to know what they are/were going through so that they can stand in for them in doing work where it became difficult for the female teachers to perform their duties. The women admitted that, in most cases, their co-workers were very supportive and benefitted from their help, which included moral support, physical presence in time of need, financial aid and doing part of the work on their schedules at school.

Although the sharing with co-workers aimed at solving the problems of the female teachers, to some respondents, sometimes it added more pain because those who were told never kept the information confidential and, on the other hand, started being judgmental, adding to the pain of the women. FV.2 narrated the betrayal in this way:

> *…My babysitter overheard when I was being discussed in the presence of support staff, and some of the students were nearby. My friends were sharing my secret and blaming me for marrying a man with [a] very low level of education. I cried uncontrollably in school; this was no secret even to the*

students I teach. The head teacher and some teachers counselled me and asked me to forgive them. Initially, I wanted to leave the school and go far away. The pain, guilt, and betrayal by my husband and friends left me desperate…

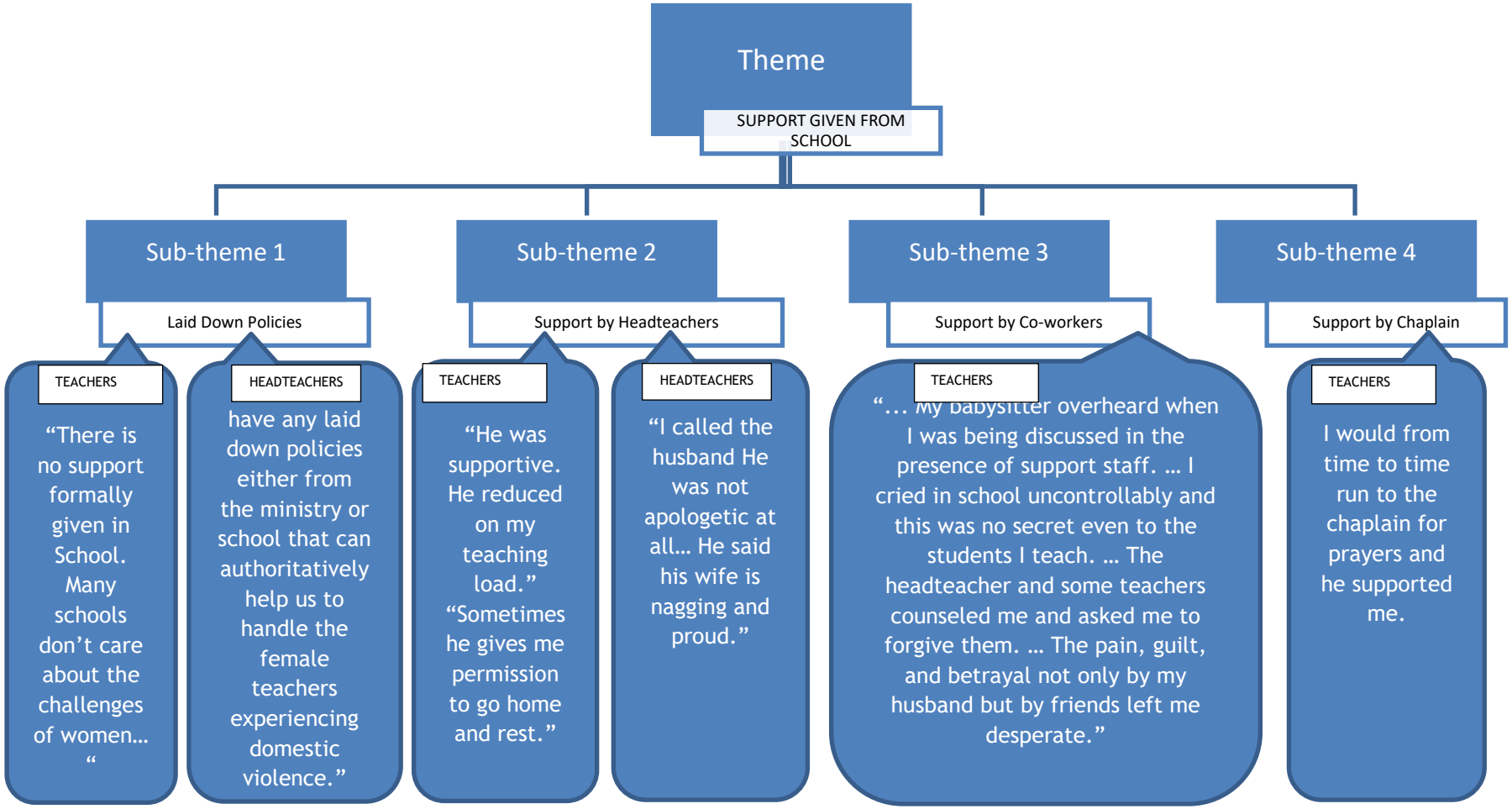
Although female teachers shared with their co-workers, some did not communicate with them, and this also was because of several reasons like shame and attitude. Where they did not share, therefore, means they could not get any help. Most of those who did not share wanted to keep their family issues secret, and others did not believe colleagues could help them with their challenges. FV.1 said, *"I have also not shared with my co-workers except one. Marital problem [Marital problems are] everywhere; you only must know how to deal with it [them]. Telling everyone may make you hurt the more."*

4.7.3 Support given by the school chaplains

Four of the 20 women interviewed admitted that they get support from their school chaplain. Only two schools had a chaplain, one Government-aided and church-founded, while another was private and church-founded. The participants who shared with the chaplains were those from where they rendered their services. The numbers are few because they said that, in most cases, the chaplains were mainly concerned with students' issues. Therefore, even where they needed spiritual guidance, they preferred to get it from other spiritual leaders than the ones serving in their schools. Since the study did not look at the chaplains as respondents, it became difficult to understand why the female teachers never preferred them. In my interactions with the head teachers, only one said she alerted the chaplain on the problem a female teacher was undergoing and asked him to talk to the teacher. None of the private schools, specifically those not founded by the church, considered chaplains as key to

the school establishment. For government-aided schools, they said there was no provision from the Government. Still, when asked why they could not link with the churches around, they responded that it was a good idea to be considered for the future, while others argued that the churches around should make the first move to come and have conversations with them for the placement.

Figure 12: Thematic areas of support the female teachers receive from schools



Source: Researcher (2023)

4.7.4 Support Female teachers would wish women with domestic violence to get

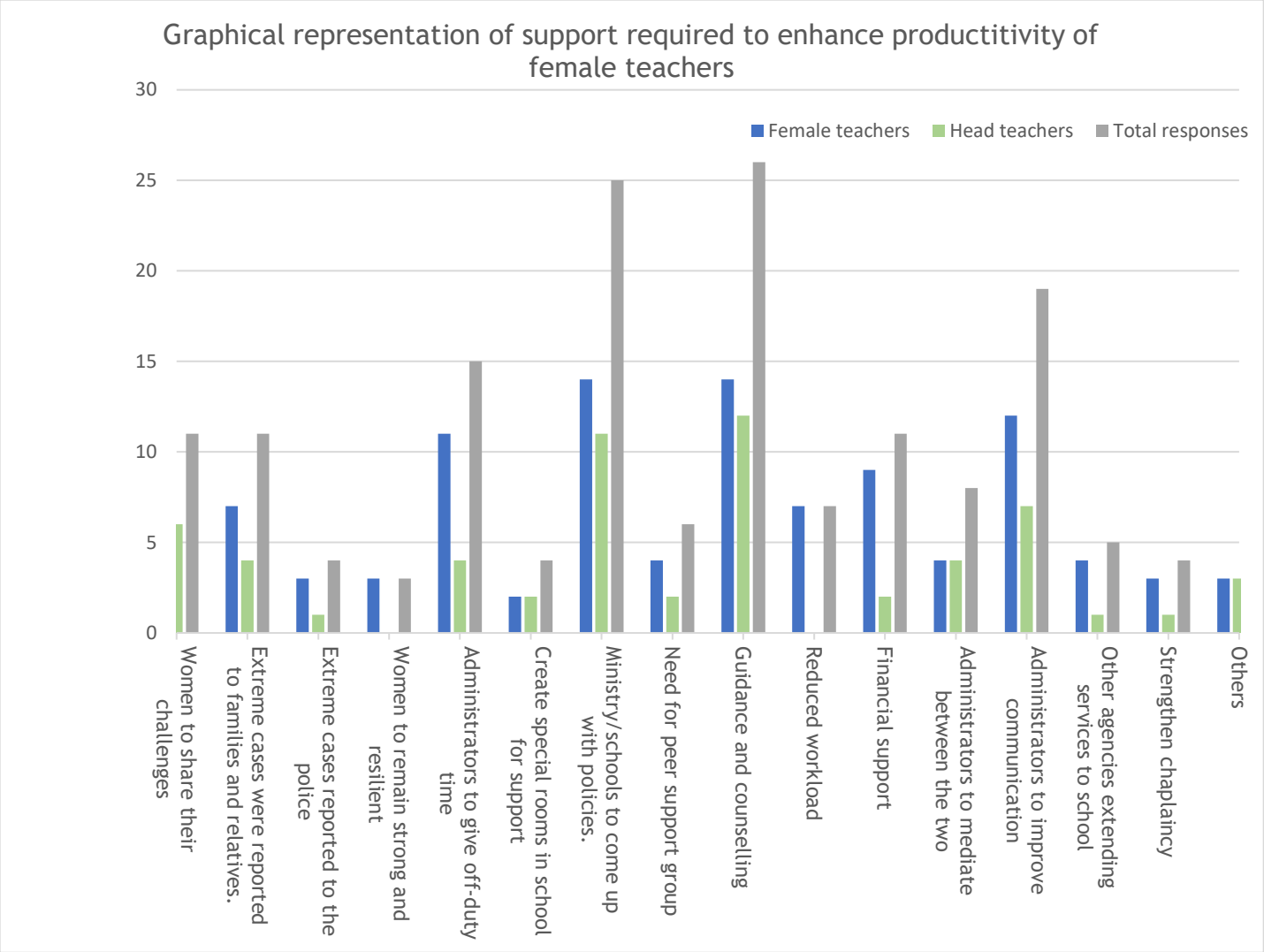
Having identified the support that the female teachers experiencing domestic violence receive from school, the researcher wanted to find out whether that was adequate or other support that the women would wish to receive. Several responses were received both from the female teachers and from the head teachers interviewed.

Table 4: Wishes of respondents on support required

Support required	Female teachers	Head teachers	Total responses
Women to share their challenges	5	6	11
Extreme cases were reported to families and relatives.	7	4	11
Extreme cases reported to the police	3	1	4
Women to remain strong and resilient	3	-	3
Administrators to give off-duty time	11	4	15
Create special rooms in school for support	2	2	4
Ministry/schools to come up with policies.	14	11	25
Need for peer support group	4	2	6
Guidance and counselling	14	12	26
Reduced workload	7	0	7
Financial support	9	2	11
Administrators to mediate between the two	4	4	8
Administrators to improve communication	12	7	19
Other agencies extending services to school	4	1	5
Strengthen chaplaincy	3	1	4
Others	3	3	6

Source: Field data (2023)

Figure 13: Support required to enhance productivity of female teachers



Source: Field data (2023)

Interviews with the respondents, both the female teachers with experience of domestic violence and the head teachers, revealed that the support given to the female teachers from the schools

is inadequate and that these women need to be supported more if they were to be productive at school. From their wishes, the most popular ones were seeking counselling services, which received 14 responses from the teachers and 12 from the head teachers. They believed that domestic violence affected the mental health of the women who were victims. Therefore, the best way to help them so that they could perform their roles in schools would be through guidance and counselling from professionals. The respondents reported that professional counsellors would know how to talk with them while keeping their secrets. However, most noted that professional counsellors were lacking in schools and the study district. FV.13, who firmly believes that counselling can significantly support female teacher, said, "*A guidance and counselling unit should be established and made functional in schools with well-qualified staff. I know how helpful this will be to the female teachers. I am a beneficiary of this.*" FV.11 confirms this by saying, *"An office can be created where I can go and sit alone when overwhelmed with pain in school, but a female senior person can be put in the department of guidance to counsel women in need."*

The head teachers supported the idea of counselling, with one stating that "*Our school is private, and church founded. The foundation should put in place [a] guidance and counselling unit of the school"*. In exploring guidance and counselling, the researcher confirmed that none of the schools had established a professional counselling department. Only one respondent received professional help while attending her course at Uganda Christian University. My interaction with her portrayed her as more composed and not so much troubled by the struggle, except when she talked about the part where the husband forced her to abort her child. This suggests that the experience of domestic violence can have a lasting impact on the victims and

continue to affect them even when they feel that they have recovered through triggers that remind them of the experience.

While many agreed that counselling the women would help, emerging views depicted the saying that "it takes two people to tango" and, therefore, both spouses must be together during the counselling sessions. One of them strongly put it this way, *"You can counsel the women, but you would not have handled the problem, that is, the man Men must be part of the counselling"*. Asked whether they felt the men would agree to be counselled, many women said it would be difficult since the men always did not want them to share their domestic issues outside the home. The head teachers admit that the men might not be willing to take the counselling sessions because it is not easy for them to agree that what is happening is that bad.

Respondents wish to have policies in place, which received 14 responses from teachers and 11 from head teachers. Although they talked of policies, many still linked this up to counselling. A female teacher, FV.19, said, *"Government needs to establish a policy to establish a formal office where female teacher[s] and even men suffering domestic violence can visit for support."*

Conversation with the head teachers confirmed this as they pointed out the challenge of having no laid down policies by schools. One head teacher noted, "As a school, we don't have any laid down policy either from the Ministry of Education or from our school that can authoritatively help us to handle female teachers suffering from domestic violence". The other one stated:

> *We don't have any policy on that. Many times, we focus on the students. We want teachers not to miss their lessons, and how they balance their home problems*

and school performance is their business. We are a private school, and students' performance keeps us afloat.

Aware that domestic violence in schools is real, and yet the head teachers say they do not have clear policies on handling the problem, I wanted to find out what they do. One head teacher pointed out:

When confronted with such problems, I need help with how to address the issues. We handle this case by case and mainly use the general skills acquired from other areas. I have been a victim because one female teacher accused me of being biased [ed] and favouring another in a similar situation. Well-laid-down procedures would be of help to the school administrators.

Headteachers do not dismiss allegations by female teachers of headteachers practising favouritism. They attribute this to the absence of policies and standard procedures for handling victims of domestic violence in schools. Several issues determine the decision to support such a teacher without formal guidance. Such as how severe the case is, how loyal and committed the victim is to her work, the availability of substitute teachers and the mood and relationship between such a teacher and the head teacher.

Another head teacher stated:

We have policies on granting permission to staff who cannot be in school. However, we are not specific on issues concerning domestic violence. As a school,

we are there to deliver services so that students can perform. I must be honest that many times, while assessing staff performance, we often overlook the teacher's personal needs.

From the narratives given, policies on domestic violence for female teachers are either insufficient or non-existent in the schools in Kitgum district. Therefore, handling issues related to domestic violence against female teachers at a school level is an area of concern.

To improve communication with their teachers, administrators also received significant responses: 12 from teachers and seven from the head teachers themselves. Most female teachers feel that for them to be helped better, they wish that their head teachers should improve their communication with the female teachers. Female teachers think that the head teachers are not close to them and do not communicate well with them; therefore, they also keep to themselves as subordinates. Responses such as these were received. FV.7 said, "…*The head teacher must be keen and get close to the staff so that they can share with them their challenges….*" Likewise, FV.6 said, "*Administrators should be open and free with the staff so that teachers can open to them*". Administrators agree that they often focus on financial mobilisation for the school, academic performance and discipline of the students and staff. This, they agreed, sometimes created communication gaps. One of them said:

Administrators need to have their doors open so that such female teachers can freely approach us. When we open our doors to them, we can openly discuss with

them and suggest how they can be helped. If we ignore them, we may eventually destroy them, which means they will fail to perform their duties effectively.

Another one not only agrees but goes on to suggest how it can be done:

Headteachers and school administrators must move close to the teachers through informal connection by visiting them, talking to them on other issues (other) than academics and organising social gathering[s] in school to get closer to staff and know their problems.

Headteachers feel that the teachers do not communicate their domestic challenges has a lot to do with the female teachers themselves. For example, one of them said, *"When they don't open, what do you expect a headteacher to do…? The sick one looks for the doctor"*.

Another popular response by the respondents was that administrators should give off-duty time to women involved in domestic problems. This received 11 responses from the teachers and four from the head teachers. The female teachers said sometimes they require time off from duty to get settled, to solve problems at home or when the fights and misunderstandings become unbearable. The idea of granting off-duty time to women involved in domestic violence is more popular with female teachers, yet the administrators seem not to like it very much. A very senior head teacher had this to say as regards not supporting off-duty time:

Female teachers have performance challenges in most cases. They fail to balance school issues and personal issues. They need to be rational and realise that the

school must perform, and this can only happen when they work hard and produce results. Much as I sometimes sympathise with them, I also have my job to protect them. They must also save their job. If they become over-emotional, they will lose their job…

While some head teachers see women asking for permission to be out as being unserious, lazy, and not caring about their work, the female teachers say that time off is good for them because sometimes, in the middle of a difficult family problem, a female teacher may not be productive at all. Concerning such head teachers, a female teacher, FV.11, provides a significant line of reasoning, namely:

…Even if you don't permit me to stay away from school, I shall be there by body and not be helpful to the school and the children I teach. At the end of it all, the children will be the ones to suffer. A head teacher should give me time off so that when I return, I work harder when my mind is stable.

To the women, the time off school is helpful to sort out domestic problems nurse injuries, attempt to resolve conflict, settle emotional stress, and have time to relax before returning to school ready to teach.

It is worth noting that while up to seven women wished their workloads to be reduced, none of the administrators mentioned this. This could be a pointer to the voices of some female teachers that the administrators do not care about them but about their performance and the head

teachers who say the female teachers must leave home problems home. This is counterproductive to having female teachers perform their work at school effectively.

Similarly, up to nine female teachers interviewed would wish to receive financial support from the school to enable them to solve their problems. From the conversations, most of these female teachers undergoing domestic issues have financial problems because their spouses do not support them and, in some cases, exploit them. Therefore, getting some financial support would be a relief to them. According to them, the financial support would help in the day-to-day running of the home, paying utilities, and medical care, supporting the children and relatives, and meeting personal needs, among others. FV.9 said, *"The state I am in, financial support would also be something that [the] school can give to people suffering"*. Likewise, FV.18 agrees with this by saying, *"Some advances can be given to them by [the] school to solve some of their financial challenges"*.

Headteachers supported the idea of a financial boost; they recommended the move to boost female teachers financially. One stated:

> *Teachers who are staying [Teachers who live] in areas with vast land should supplement their salary through planting and growing crops, and where the school has no land, they could hire from the community. Lack of finances has been one of the most [common] contributors to domestic violence. So, if they can get some money to support themselves other than salaries, they could be more settled and thus [there would be] less violence.*

Others said that female teachers should seek opportunities that generate income that do not affect school business and the learners, for example, making simple school materials to supply and operating a mobile money outlet. Although headteachers wish for female teachers to be financially empowered, many suggest that this can be done outside the school.

Another view that was not popular but seems to carry weight involves those who felt that the school should have a centre established where they can have their children safe as they perform their work at school. On this, FV.10, who had a young son but felt that she could not let her mother look after her son as an alternative safe place because of the attitude of his stepfather, said:

> *When you have [a] burden from your husband, [an] economic burden, and [a] burden from the children and work, it can break a woman. I would wish schools to have centres in the school where our babies are kept. In that way, the women would remain with the burden of the men but be sure that their children are safe in school.*

Such statements imply that women cannot be settled in school when they leave their children at home and can fail to perform their school roles.

Few respondents would wish domestic issues referred to the police, three women and one head teacher. The reason is that police and other legal means would breed more conflict, and where children are involved, it disadvantages them. Some who still love their husbands say that this will jeopardise any form of reconciliation, and other women complain that the corruption in

Uganda and the system's ineffectiveness will frustrate them even more. The women (n=7) feel that where things become complicated in the home, one would rather have the matter resolved by family members and relatives than take it to the police.

Other responses given include both positive and negative wishes. Some women prefer to be left alone in their pain. FV.1, while struggling with words and expressing bitterness in a low tone, said: "*People must recognise my pain and leave me alone. Let me suffer my misfortune of loving this man alone…*". When I was probing into creating a centre in the school for peer support, she was not against it but said such space should be left for them to sit alone. She responded, *"Yes, I would love to sit alone, cry [over] my pain, but not for anyone to come and console me"*. That may point to the fact that some of these wishes may not support helping these women perform their work.

Others would wish that the administrators show them unconditional love. FV.6, who is one of the most affected participants with a long-lasting effect of domestic violence on her life, had this to say:

> *What I want is love. My head teacher and other staff must be close to me and assign me responsibilities so that I feel loved and feel that I am useful and wanted [needed]. Once women [who are involved] in domestic violence receive unconditional love, they will think that they are not failure[s]. I can attest to this.*

This conversation was carried further by asking why a woman involved in domestic violence feels she is a failure. The perception of such women is that they are undergoing domestic violence because they are not worthy; they are responsible and therefore feel rejected, and one of the ways that they can be restored and encouraged to perform their work is by being loved the way they are.

4.8 Female teachers' comments on the study

Winding up the interviews, the researcher asked the respondents to comment on the study. This was done as an exit question to validate their perception of the study, which could give me an impression of their overall views on the data collected.

Ten women commented that they were happy to be part of the study and share their experiences with the researcher. To them, this was the right thing to do because no one had ever bothered to find out from them whether they had such problems. FV.14, who remained very stern and sad throughout the interview, lamenting on how she feels the world has been unfair to her, finally made a comment that did not match her facial expression, "*I feel relieved and happy. My sharing with you has lifted me up. Thank you. Know that you have done the right thing*". This comment also left me confused as to whether she realised how I struggled to get information from her and therefore wanted to try to be friendly, or whether she was happy that the interview was over, or whether it was true that she felt relieved after the conversations that made her pour out her frustration.

The women felt that the study would help to expose what the female teachers go through silently as they execute their duties (n=15) and that the findings can be used to support and help the women who suffer domestic violence. On exposing the suffering of the women, FV.10, one of the participants who is currently going through a lot of pain because of the volatile relationship with the husband, had this to say, *"It is a good study… let the suffering of the women be exposed to the government and everyone. I pray the women will be supported when they learn what is happening in their schools."* Likewise, FV.16, a woman in her 40s who separated from her husband, shared the same feelings, saying:

> *Women go through a lot. This is the perfect topic. Please use it to open the eyes of us women in bondage. Many people think that only illiterate women suffer from domestic violence. This now gives an accurate picture. Please talk about our pains… When we walk out of such relationship[s] that can never work, the society gives us name[s]…*

This could be representative of the feelings of many female teachers who have experienced of domestic violence and yet do not have avenues to talk about it and seek help.

The female teachers feel that when their ordeal is exposed, they can be helped. I received 14 responses pointing to this. Of these, three came in the form of questions about how the research would help them, like "*How can people in my situation be supported?*" and *"How will you use the findings to benefit us?"* These women were in their 30s, and my interaction revealed they were at a loss. They want their marriage to work, and yet, on the other hand, the challenges

seem to be pushing them to the edge, leaving them confused on whether to stay on or leave, thus affecting their functioning in general but specifically their roles in performing their administrative and teaching roles.

Others came in the form of comments such as the one from FV.7, namely: *"Women go through a lot. The lockdown has made things worse for women and their families, and many women have left their husbands…. It is my prayers that the research will be used to help us"*. FV.13 sounded so sure of the help and said, *"Please conduct and finish your study fast and let female teachers benefit from it"*. Such comments only help explain the desperate states these female teachers are in and require some form of intervention.

Respondents gave their expectations of the help they require. FV.11 said, *"We live in a changing world, and when women read about the work, it can help encourage them to speak up and to boldly seek support without feeling ashamed"*. When the findings are disseminated to the women, it will draw the attention of many stakeholders right from the school to the government, and that is how they can benefit. Five responses pointed to this. Five admitted that the interviews alone had been of help. They felt encouraged, inspired, and had new energy.

Table 5: Respondent comments on the study

Comments/Remarks on the study	Responses
Happy to be part of the study	10
Findings be used to support/help women in domestic violence	14
Government to come up with policies	03
Use the study to expose what women go through	15
Study has encouraged/supported/energized me	06
Share the findings	05
I have personal fear	01

Source: Field data (2023)

Conclusion

This study brought out the experiences of the female teachers on domestic violence and how it affects their teaching roles in schools. The female teachers and the school head teachers explained how domestic violence affect the victims in performing their roles, mainly arising from poor service delivery and poor interpersonal relationship. It explored ways of coping and the roles of the schools in supporting them. Findings revealed that the women coped through seeking support from families, co-workers, spiritual leaders and through formal ways like the police, probation and sometimes through legal redress like separation from the husbands. Other means of coping included depending on internal resources/self to solve one's problem like thinking positively and by working hard. Negative coping included self-isolation, crying as well as drinking alcohol and physical fights. Others included flexibility, listening to gospel music, among others. The women suggested how they could be helped. They also mooted the plans

they had. It was found out that the women still had hope and ways they would wish to be supported. They expressed their views on what they felt about the study which they said would help to expose their sufferings when the findings are disseminated.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of female secondary school teachers experiencing domestic violence, focusing on how domestic violence affects their teaching and administrative roles in the schools where they work, as narrated by them, how they cope with the challenges of domestic violence as they perform their work. What support do schools provide to female teachers who experience domestic violence to enable them to perform their roles well? Based on experiences shared, the study developed an in-depth understanding of these female teachers' experiences and how their experience of domestic violence affects their roles as teachers. It allowed the participants to tell their own stories and identify their challenges in performing their work and how they balance the domestic violence experiences with their work as teachers.

This chapter discusses major findings related to the literature to help answer these research questions: How does domestic violence affect female teachers' teaching roles in Kitgum District secondary schools? What are the female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles? How do the female teachers affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties? What support is available in schools to female teachers who experience domestic violence? The chapter also summarises the study's major findings that: a) domestic violence significantly affect the teaching roles of female teachers in secondary schools in Kitgum District, reflected in poor

performance in teaching and low interpersonal relationship; b)The female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles including issues of low inter-personal relationships, reduced administrative work, learning outputs, mentoring and care of students; c) The female teachers affected by domestic violence cope using mainly informal means, with some being counterproductive, and few cope using formal mechanisms; d) School support to female teachers affected by domestic violence, is not adequate at least in the context of supportive policy and practice, school leaders support, peer-support, moral and spiritual empowerment. Victims/survivors are not fully supported with empathy by their respective school heads to negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties.

5.1 Demographic characteristics

From the study, most respondents were between 31 and 40 years old and had bachelor's degrees as the level attained in their e. This agrees with the report from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics that states a higher proportion of older women reported experiencing violence than younger women (UBOS, 2021). However, on the other hand, it contrasts with another study, whose findings revealed that females aged 16-24 were the most vulnerable to non-fatal violence (Rennison, 2001). This deviation could point to the nature of the study population. To become a secondary school teacher in Uganda, one must be about 23 years old, the lowest limit, yet the age range given by Rennison (2001) looks at all females. Besides, the age range between 31 and 40 years, which dominates this study, could be because the women are mature and willing to talk freely about the pain they go through in the family without caring about their spouses

knowing about it. Overall, this age range of the respondents is between 31 and 40, which is very significant for the teachers to get grounded in their performance and is also associated with productivity. The negative impact of domestic violence is bound to affect the teaching and learning process in secondary schools.

Findings from the study reveal that female teachers experience domestic violence despite their level of education and that most of them do not take action to protect themselves against the violence and, therefore, settle in and accept the violence in the name of public opinion, religious affiliation, family interest, children, self-pride, and dignity of belonging to the universally acceptable institution of marriage. This finding contrasts with the studies that revealed that educated women are more likely to know their rights, know how to ensure their rights are protected, are most likely to challenge gender norms that normalise violence and are less likely to be abused because their husbands consider them valuable. Besides, education contributes to a woman's overall reasoning, confidence, and empowerment, thus revealing a pattern of reduction in the proportion of women who reported to have experienced violence as their education increased. (Al-Khateeb, 2005; Koenig et al., 2003; Mshana et al., 2021; UBOS, 2021).

What stands out from this study is that education does not necessarily protect women from exposure to domestic violence. Educated women still experience spousal violence in society irrespective of status, which is grounded in the power relation in the feminist theory, and it is a status quo that must be changed if female teachers are to do their work effectively.

The study reveals that most head teachers had the experience of being head teachers for less than five years, thus making it challenging to provide professional and social support to female teachers with experience of domestic violence. The findings regarding the demographics of work experience agree with earlier studies that revealed a positive relationship between principals' knowledge and school performance, particularly over the first five years in service. Earlier research also found that the more work experience, the more the performance of principals tends to be higher; on the contrary, the less work experience, the lower the principals' performance tends to be (Clark et al., 2011; Salwa & Bukman, 2019; Soetjipto, 2007). This suggests that female teachers with experience of domestic violence are most likely less supported by head teachers who are inexperienced in the management of schools, which can thus hurt the teachers' performance.

5.3 Sources of domestic violence in marriage

The study findings identified several causes of domestic violence in the marriage of female secondary school teachers. These include extramarital affairs, unnecessary power and control by the men, lack of financial support/ financial exploitation, physical fights arising from power relations, lack of trust, denying the female teachers to go to work, characters of the men, stalking and emotional abuse such as sexual deprivation, disrespectful verbal utterances as well as disrespectful actions. The negative influence of the men's relatives is also one of such causes. This aligns with other studies (Idris et al., 2018; Kelmendi, 2015; Krista, 2015; Murphy,2009; NCADV, 2015; WHO, 2012; Rahnavardi et al., 2017;).The feminist perspective underpinning this study fits here well, where violence happens because of the drive for power and control,

subordination, and economic exploitation. This reveals the characteristics of a patriarchal society, which does not respect that an educated female teacher should be treated with respect. What stands out from this study is that none of the female teachers mentioned alcohol as a reason for domestic violence with their spouses. Yet, it is a widespread phenomenon among the study population. This can be attributed to the population size.

5.4 Female teachers' perspective on the effects of domestic violence on their teaching roles

The interview interactions with the female teachers and head teachers pointed out several reasons hindering the female teacher's performing their teaching roles well arising from their experience of domestic violence, with the major themes being Poor service delivery evidenced by absenteeism, missing lessons, poor preparation before classes, all which come about because of interferences from the spouses. Further contributors to poor service delivery arise from low self-esteem that the female teachers develop or perceive because of domestic violence hindering them from performing their roles through lack of concentration, sleep loss, fatigue, and isolation. Findings also reveal that the women fail to perform their roles because of poor interpersonal relations between the female teacher and her students, her co-workers, and the administrators. These findings align with earlier studies where women agreed that domestic violence would considerably impact their work life (Alaniz & Estella, 2017; Leblanc & Barling; Ararat, et al., 2014; Swanberg, 2016).

This study further agrees with other studies on educational institutions focusing on teacher absenteeism and its implications for students' achievements. The relationship between teachers' absence and students' achievement is a statistically significant negative relationship

with students' standardised mean academic achievement (Bold et al., 2007; Roby, 2013). This implies that female teachers absent from school because of domestic violence negatively impact students' learning achievement. They fail to teach and cover the syllabus on time, are not consistent in attendance, and fail to make themselves available in schools to guide the students.

Although students' performance cannot be limited to one variable of absenteeism, we cannot ignore it for this study because even after being away from school, the women still return to school in an unstable mind and without preparing their lessons. This is because of recovering from past incidents of domestic violence or in anticipation of the next move of their spouses to hurt them and how they can avoid that. This can be understood well in motivational theory advanced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the female teachers are desirous of safety and cannot get it from their spouses. This will not motivate them to perform their roles in school well.

The study, however, contradicts other earlier studies done where gender organisations assume that employers are unable and unwilling to accept that whatever happens at home, the employee will invariably come to work and perform their roles; therefore, domestic violence was not a problem at their respective companies (Meinert, 2017; Rayner-Thomas, 2013; Swanberg et al.,2005). Such findings may come when organisations are very protective of what goes on in their workplace, their identity and name without taking the plight of the workers or where they have a very supportive work environment that helps the workers overcome stressors. In all, domestic violence affects the teaching roles of female teachers in school. Any contrary views to this, in my opinion, point to the fact that such views continue to make women

educationalists suffer and can affect performance. This study shows that all women are aware of the negative impact but are unwilling to make it stand in the way of their performance. Crucially, where organisations and institutions feel that domestic violence cannot have a spill-over in the places of work, like schools, they fail to address challenges that these women go through that can impact their work.

In school settings, where you fail to discuss with colleagues and members of your department matters about the subject you teach and where you are not free with students, teaching and learning become challenging. Fatigue and lack of sleep are both disruptive to lesson delivery and preparation. Therefore, where adequate preparation is not done for teaching, where a teacher comes late to class or misses lessons, curriculum delivery is affected and cumulatively affects performance. Domestic violence issues must be addressed so that the spill-over does not greatly affect the performance of the women who must teach students. This study highlights the impact of domestic violence because even women who leave relationships are still preoccupied with memories of negative expressions made by their partners, mistreatment of the past, reminders of challenges of managing the children, and regrets. This suggests a longitudinal study to consolidate the findings.

Teachers have multiple and complex roles that require commitment and focus if teaching and learning are to be effective. These teaching roles are crucial to the success of the teaching and learning process. Yet, the study reveals that domestic violence interferes with the smooth implementation of such roles. The efficient functioning of any institution lies heavily in the commitment and performance of the staff. This also applies to school settings and, therefore,

requires that a teacher who performs her work be stable and free from domestic violence. This suggests a strong and supportive system to ensure that teaching and learning are not interfered with.

5.5 Female teachers' perspective on the effects of domestic violence on their administrative roles

The study also established the administrative roles narrated by the female teachers, and these included interactions with the students outside classroom settings to understand and follow up on students' problems, encouraging them to participate in co-curricular activities, implementing character and moral education, and monitoring their discipline. Furthermore, the female teachers perform other duties like being class mistresses, dormitory mistresses, senior woman teachers, patrons of clubs, heads of departments and heads of subjects as additional responsibilities. At the same time, they also liaise with parents and other stakeholders, not forgetting routines like attending meetings and being on weekly duty. The teachers also mentor their students and have a silent role to remain a parent figure to the students while in school, and at the same time, they are role models. This is not different from the roles in other studies (Po Leung, 2001; Sule et al., 2015; Bowman, 2004). These roles, however, cannot be implemented well by the female teachers experiencing domestic violence.

This study reveals that violence inflicted by the spouses on female teachers affects their capacity to get to work. The female teachers say they report late, are absent or leave school early, more specifically during challenging times, and some also do it to avoid violence at home. General absenteeism from work by female teachers with experience of domestic violence is also

revealed in other studies (Swanberg, 2005; Scott et al., 2017; Reeves & O'Leary, 2009). Other studies also showed that employers are disadvantaged as it is difficult to maintain productive operations when employees are constantly absent, tardy or display low productivity levels (Reeves & O'Leary, 2009). Therefore, it does not matter what kind of institution, but absenteeism affects performance in place of work, as evidenced by this study in secondary schools.

This study also reveals that teachers' presence at school does not necessarily translate into effectiveness. The women come to school unprepared, lacking concentration, and simply being present to protect their jobs, but this does not translate into performance. The lack of concentration is in line with other studies conducted among nurses, where ½ of survivors felt less able to concentrate on their work and could not work to the best of their ability, and many took sick leave (Gupta, et al., 2017). On the other hand, the administrators are more concerned with their physical presence in the school, as revealed by this study. This contradicts studies that bring in key roles of school supervision by administrators in the pedagogical and administrative duties of a teacher to ensure good performance (Sule et al., 2015). Headteachers cannot rate the teachers' performance by their physical presence only. They must closely monitor the level of preparation, delivery, assessments, and relationship with students, and once this is not done, the teachers' performance may remain lacking.

The findings of this current study are that female teachers agree that their capacity to work is affected because the domestic violence they experience makes them lose self-esteem and feel that they do not have any worth. This makes them lose confidence before the students. They always feel isolated and do not interact with co-workers well, thus affecting their work. This is

consistent with other studies that have come out pointing out that the behaviours of the spouses have overwhelming effects on the performance of the other spouses at work. The victims feel unwell, tired and distracted (Mcferran, 2011; Swanberg & Macke, 2006).

Similarly, a report produced by the Australia National Domestic Violence and Workplace Survey (2011) shows that ½ of the respondents from 3600 who faced domestic violence admitted that violence affects their capacity to work. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, there are esteem needs where human beings desire self-esteem and self-respect. They need to attain freedom and independence, which gives them confidence as they do their work. They want respect from others and to be recognised and appreciated (Bennett, 2006). When female teachers feel that they are respected, they develop self-worth, enabling them to perform well in their workplaces. Domestic violence hurts female teachers, who always feel that their spouses do not respect them and think they are worthless. Consequently, they lose confidence, which is key to a teacher's profession, and this affects the productivity of women who are victims of domestic violence unless a good measure of coping is provided to them.

The women who experience violence begin to pirotise what work to perform in school. They always take on the core work of teaching but ignore other administrative work like attending meetings, supervising students in activities outside class and they fail to mentor them and show them care. In this way they fail to mould a learner holistically.

5.6 How female teachers cope with domestic violence

In the study, the female teachers make descriptive reports on how staff affected by domestic violence negotiate through the challenges of performing their duties as schoolteachers. The

findings reveal that female teachers do not limit themselves only to one source to seek support against the violence being inflicted on them by their spouses. Female teachers with experience of domestic violence seek mostly informal ways of coping with the challenges of domestic violence imposed on them, while some also resort to formal paths. The informal methods include sharing about situations with others, depending on internal resources, having fun with peers, flexibility and seeking refuge from God. Others include seeking counselling, seeking the law and negative coping like drinking alcohol and fighting. This is consistent with earlier studies, where it has been found that many victims actively engage in multiple help-seeking strategies and access various resources to address their victimisation experiences (Barret & St Pierre, 2011; Swanberg, 2005;). Also consistent with earlier findings, most limited the help-seeking to informal sources (Swanberg, 2005; Cynthia, 2013; Zhouh et al., 2017; Kolnik et al., 2017).

Further consistent with this study is that Women in domestic violence situations who cope by sharing the violence inflicted on them always do this with peers and family members like parents, siblings, and relatives of spouses, among others (Gupta, et al., 2017; St. Vil et al., 2017; Ansara & Hindin, 2010). The female teachers suffering from domestic violence share with others to relieve pain, seek advice, be in self-pity and self-blame or seek material resources.

From the research findings, social support given when female teachers seek support helps reduce violence's adverse effects. This finding aligns with earlier findings recognising social support in reducing the adverse psychological outcomes in survivors of intimate partner violence and that social support is vital for individuals coping with a stressful life situation such as domestic violence (Kareen et al., 2021). However, there are instances that such measures of coping have

proved counterproductive in cases where it turns out that the people confided in turn this as a topic of gossip and blame the female teachers, who then get more hurt.

The study findings show that female teachers rely more on informal systems to cope with challenges than formal ones. This finding contrasts with a study that reports almost half of the women with experience of domestic violence accessing at least one formal support system as a measure of coping (Fanslow & Robinson, 2010). Other research shows that when and where women seek care and support if they have suffered from violence depends on many levels, such as individual levels (women's autonomy in decision-making, unaware of existing policies), family and community levels (societal norms around the acceptability and expectation on violence against women), and institutional level (availability of trained workforce, appropriate responses to the need of the victims) (Sapkota et al., 2016). This study agrees with the reasons given. However, in contrast, all the women are aware of most existing laws but are not ready to cling to them because of fear of losing their marriage and having the community judge them. They also believe that revealing would expose them to co-workers and students and can then affect their work as teachers. This could be because female teachers take themselves to be role models and, therefore, are shy to talk about problems of domestic violence that have negative connotations. Society expects teachers to be good examples in all aspects, like marriage and social life. However, this can become a problem because not reporting their challenges means hiding them and struggling with them, which, in the long run, can affect their teaching and administrative roles.

The research findings indicate that sharing done by women with experience of domestic violence has a positive outcome and strengthens female teachers to continue their teaching and administrative roles. This is like in other studies where the benefit of sharing has also been positive, that women who suffer from intimate partner violence encounter more positive than negative consequences when they disclose their pains to others. (Giesbrecht, 2022), Therefore, across the board, in professions like health workers, other working women, market women, and women in low socio-economic status, among others, where research has been done, sharing has been established to be a suitable means of coping (Cynthia, 2013; Alsaker et al., 2016). Female teachers in domestic violence should be encouraged to seek help by talking to others about their problems. However, as they engage, care must be taken to do this with the right people to avoid more damage. Much as the informal system is very helpful in coping for female teachers in domestic violence, institutions should go beyond this and look for professional support from counsellors.

This study's findings, however, contrast with other studies that state that most women keep quiet and do not talk about the violence inflicted on them because domestic issues must remain within the private and confidential sphere of relationships. They believe that disclosure or help-seeking is not constructive, but conflict within the marriage should be resolved with the partner (Mshana et al., 2021). This can imply that educated women are empowered and come out to talk more about what they go through in their marriage. However, the contrast may also be because of the small sample size and the limitations of the snowball method. There can be many female secondary school teachers who undergo domestic violence and remain discreet about it; therefore, this study failed to capture them. A different sampling technique or a larger sample

size might have produced findings that are different from the findings of this study. What needs to be noted, however, is that the sharing with administrators is limited.

This research revealed that very few women rely on formal systems as a strategy for coping. This is consistent with earlier research confirming that only a few victims of domestic violence access formal services (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). However, from the findings, the few women who sought support from the formal system were all grateful and satisfied with the support given to them. This is also consistent with other studies where approximately ½ to ¾ of women who accessed formal services felt that they had received a helpful response and, in another study, where up to 83% of the victims reported that they had received some formal support through improving their finances, promoting physical safety, increasing self-esteem, improving social connectedness, and providing mental respite as well as motivation or purpose in life. ((Fansow, 2014; Swanberg et al.,2005). This is a surprise considering the geographical location and population of the study area. There are a lot of stereotypes about legal institutions on the issue of being ineffective and dysfunctional. Many people believe that the police and similar institutions are unsupportive, so very few female victims seek support. This suggests that the women probably got this support by chance. However, it should point to the fact that such institutions and others must be attractive to women seeking support. Such institutions must build on this platform, particularly in creating awareness for female teachers and other women to use such formal systems to handle their problems of domestic violence and for the formal institutions to become functional and have trust restored in them to address domestic violence. They must have the laws on domestic violence enforced. For them to develop, sustainable improvement calls for commitment, change of attitude, and adherence to the rule of law

without compromise or negative vices like corruption and poor work culture. Therefore, the importance of supporting those services to respond appropriately to victims of domestic violence remains a priority and requires continued sustainable levels of funding as well as development of and training in appropriate institutional responses. Schools need to tap into the benefits of receiving formal support for their staff to enable them to perform their teaching and administrative roles well.

Putting this into perspective, most female teachers in secondary schools do not want to use formal systems in place to address their issue of domestic violence because they feel that will complicate their relationships more. Many women felt that staying in the relationship was better than contending with the uncertainty they would face by living without any consistent income to meet their children's basic needs (UBOS, 2021). The issue of financial security and personal safety comes into play as the women struggle to cope. This means that even where women are empowered, there is that feminist underpinning that men remain the source of security, perceived or real, to the women. The women still hang onto the men to give a sense of security to make them motivated to perform. The question of why women still cling to violent men as security and yet are unsafe in such a relationship is difficult to explain and, therefore, becomes a good area for study.

Therefore, across the board, in professions like health workers, other working women, market women, and women in low socio-economic status, among others, where research has been done, sharing has been established to be a suitable means of coping (Cynthia, 2013; Alsaker et al., 2016). Female teachers in domestic violence should be encouraged to seek help by talking to

others about their problems. However, as they engage, care must be taken to do this with the right people to avoid more damage. Much as the informal system is very helpful in coping for female teachers in domestic violence, institutions should go beyond this and look for professional support from counsellors.

The finding from this study is that Women depend on internal resources/self to overcome their struggle and continue performing their work in school. They feel they are the ones to devise means of getting out of the pain inflicted on them and continue performing their roles as teachers. To attain this, the female teachers say they do this by keeping a positive living in the hope that either things will get better or even, in a dysfunctional marriage, their hope remains in the future when they bring up their children. The positive thinking also gives them a sense of self-worth. Further ways of depending on the internal resource/self are by working very hard to keep one busy and for survival. The study findings are that such women go to school and perform their duties even when they experience domestic violence, meaning that they always make efforts to organise their lives around domestic violence that happens at home and continues at the place of work. The study reveals that none of the women left teaching because of the domestic violence they experienced. They love to do their job professionally, though they sometimes find themselves at crossroads and continue their work amidst struggles. Those findings are similar to research conducted earlier, where women asserted that it was never the professional part that felt deficient; their feminine selves felt small, weak, timid, insecure, and unwomanly, allowing the abusers to control them. Women always learn to arrange their lives around the violence that erupts behind closed doors (Mailis, 2019; Weis, 1998). This means that even when experiencing domestic violence, the women try to carry on with their teaching and

administrative roles to provide learning for learners. However, the feminist underpinning drags the women behind even where they want to perform. The effectiveness of their performance remains something that should be moderated by giving them useful support to make them function at their places of work.

The findings suggest that female teachers cope by relying on themselves, making them divert their minds from the problems and focus on their schoolwork. They work very hard to compensate for the time that sometimes they are forced to be out of school. By working very hard, they become self-reliant, gain independence, and focus more on their career. For this to happen, they get positive in everything they go through. This agrees with earlier studies that revealed that women involved in domestic violence displayed a strong work identity that allowed them to excel at work, move beyond their negative experiences, live productive lives, and develop strong self-worth, which transferred into their personal lives (Clotfelter,2009; Hodges & Cabanilla, 2011; Itimi et al., 2014; St. Vil et al., 2017). This explains why some female teachers overcame the stressors of abusive relationships and continued to teach without many disruptions to their functioning. For the female teachers who had a strong conviction to remain functional even when being abused by their husbands, they worked hard. They performed particularly well, focusing on what they loved best at school, like co-curricular activities and physical education, while others kept on delivering for the love of the students. This helped restore their self-worth and thus meant looking beyond abuse and performing their work well. For such women, co-curricular activities like games and sports can help as therapy, which is probably why they focus on them. What requires further research is how sustainable the practice is and whether it has no negative bearing at all on their productivity, as they always must teach.

This is consistent with an earlier research study conducted by Ararat, et al. (2014), where 16% of working women subjected to domestic violence by their partners reported that they solved their problems independently. Such female victims could be doing this out of shame of not wanting people to know what is happening in their lives. However, it still points to the theoretical underpinning of feminism guiding this study that women still take what society feels about them seriously, irrespective of their status. This suggests that there is a need to create awareness that domestic violence is counterproductive to self and even to institutions where the victims work. Therefore, schools and other organisations should encourage women to be open for help and to clear their minds that they are not responsible for the violence inflicted on them and should not feel guilty to talk about it but instead seek support.

The research findings highlight that Flexibility in performing work at school gives time to the female teachers affected by domestic violence to cope because it gives room to adjust to perform their roles. They do this by keeping the students busy without lesson plans or teaching notes. This means that physical presence gives a sense of satisfaction to the child. The study reveals that some women just presented themselves to work because they fear losing their position and only group it under flexibility. Being present in class or at school without necessarily being productive is a significant disadvantage to the teaching and learning process. In such a situation, school administrators may not witness behaviours of being late or being absent from such teachers and yet their productivity is compromised. By contrast, others try to work and finish all the planning, scheming, and marking at school to avoid interference from the spouses at home. They also plead with head teachers to relieve them of other responsibilities, so they remain with a manageable workload as they deal with their struggles. School administrators

must be watchful and effective in supervising the teaching and learning process to avoid female teachers with experience of domestic violence just appearing at school and being ineffective. Instead, remedies should be made to support them to help them perform.

All the female teachers in this study mentioned God and spirituality as key factors in making them cope. Prayers give them hope and keep them moving, anticipating the situation to improve. Turning to God and reading the scriptures helps them to cope. Forgiveness is a word that most of them talk about, saying when they forgive the men who hurt them, they get relieved from their wrongs; their burden is then cast to Jesus, who cares and can calm the storm in their marriage. They also seek support from religious/spiritual leaders who help them when they are emotionally upset, and sometimes, they find solace in singing or listening to gospel songs. This finding is in line with other studies that revealed women in domestic violence seek refuge and always get empowerment in God (Dwarumpudi et al., 2021; Hodges & Cabanilla, 2011; Mshana et al., 2021; St. Vil et al., 2017;). Whether or not these women were committed Christians, they looked to God for refuge. This is because of the hope that God's message gives, and therefore, even within affliction caused by the domestic problem, they remain hopeful and make all efforts to carry on with their teaching and administrative roles.

From the findings, reliance on God mainly arises from the hope that comes with it. Research tells us that hopeful victims reported less depression, higher job satisfaction, outstanding organisational commitment, less work distraction, and lower intention to leave employment (Kelly, 2012; Itimi et al., 2014). In this case, such female teachers continue to perform their administrative and teaching roles well despite being prone to domestic violence. This study,

therefore, strongly shows that we cannot underrate the power of belief in God/spirituality to make female teachers cope well and therefore strongly suggests faith-based interventions as a remedy for supporting women faced with domestic violence. What is surprising in this study is that even church-founded schools did not have a policy on how to handle women affected by domestic violence and therefore, a call to the foundation bodies and administrators to look more into the well-being of staff for better performance—spirituality as an empowerment tool for comfort and relief.

From this study, what came out as distinct is that of the people/institutions where help was sought; no one mentioned receiving help from mental health services. Some had received help from general practitioners mainly because of physical injuries inflicted by the spouses. This contrasts with some studies conducted where mental health assistance was sought by women with experience of domestic violence (Fanslow & Robinson, 2010). This again could be an issue of sample size or, considering that these are teachers, they could be trying to receive help from others, or it points to a level of resilience of the women as expected by the culture. Another reason for this can be that there are no known or limited services for mental health in the geographical area of study. This, therefore, calls for more investigation to find out why they do not seek support from mental health services. The fact that they don't seek mental health services suggests that it negatively impacts the teaching and administrative roles, an aspect that must be addressed.

The study findings are that some female teachers cope in negative ways. Although most of the physical fights are started by the men, a few female teachers, when provoked, retaliate by

fighting and abusing their husbands to give them a sense of relief. This tallies with earlier studies, which found that sometimes women adapt to negative coping strategies such as self-injurious behaviours like cutting, digging their nails into their skin, etc. (Cynthia, 2013). This is reactionary and, in many cases, is not helpful because it ends up in regrets, more pain and straining relationships. Therefore, for a female teacher, negative coping only helps in the short run to ease emotion but never solves the problem. It instead affects the teaching and administrative roles of female teachers more.

The study finding is that Some women who experience domestic violence use alcohol as a coping mechanism for the violence they experience. They do this as self-medication. This is consistent with the earlier study, yet drinking as a coping means can lead to increased problems rather than helping an individual deal with current issues (Øverup et al., 2015). Although Øverup et al.'s (2015) finding is from research conducted among adolescents, it remains consistent with my study where the female teachers involved in substance abuse as a remedy to the domestic violence they experienced ended up with more problems. They started drinking increasingly, neglecting their schoolwork, getting resistance and reprimand from school supervisors, and becoming a problem and disgrace to society, eventually placing them in a worse situation. This suggests that not all coping strategies female teachers use in making them perform their professional roles are helpful. They should be supported not to end up in destructive measures. Besides, substance abuse as a coping strategy is not acceptable in the teaching profession in Uganda, where it is against the professional code of conduct. Therefore, female teachers in domestic violence should avoid taking alcohol for coping.

Another unhelpful strategy that the female teachers use is the tendency to give up life and wanting to commit suicide. This was expressed by two teachers who are in their early 30s of age. These same women also employ verbal abuse and physical fights more frequently. Other studies also agree that women struggling from the experience of domestic violence usually present with a tendency to suicide. According to the study, this tendency originates from the inability to find and lack of necessary knowledge about supportive resources and mental damage incurred during a violence-filled life. Such a life can cause stress and tension in the victims, leading to mental disorders and a non-normative reaction (Bahraml et al., 2015). While this is agreeable, what came out from my study is that women with experience of domestic violence who never had other social support, particularly from their families, are the ones who contemplated or attempted suicide.

From the study findings, some female teachers left their marriages as a coping measure. This number is small and contrasts with other research conducted where the number was significantly high (Fanslow,2010). This could mean that the female teachers are resilient and try as much as possible to remain in the abusive relationship, hoping for a change from their spouses, trying to cover up and remain as role models, as expected of teachers by the community or adhering to the feminist perspective where women are expected to remain submissive and stay in their marriages at all costs. However, the reasons for leaving are similar. This contrast may be due to the population and culture where the study was conducted. The fact that fewer women leave their marriages still points to the patriarchal nature of our society, where women who run away from their husbands are harshly judged. It is disappointing that this applies even to empowered women like teachers in secondary schools.

Although some female teachers leave their marriages or leave and return for various reasons, some women persevere and stay in such relationships. From my study, most women live with the hurt and continue to perform their roles amidst those challenges. In my interaction with them, they gave several reasons for enduring their marriage life. Others keep in the relationship because of their love for the family they want to hold together and fear of losing children. It is also clear that women stay in relationships because of the stigma attached to separation, fear of retaliation from the men, hope for a change in the men, lack of family support and lack of alternative means of economic support. All these agree with research conducted earlier (WHO, 2012; Ararat, et al., 2014)

5.7 Support given to the female teachers at school

The study reveals that secondary schools in the study area lack formal support systems to handle issues of domestic violence inflicted on the female teachers, and the absence or limited support to the female teachers in the schools affects their effectiveness and productivity in performing their roles as teachers. Most of the headteachers from the study findings focused only on the work these teachers are expected to do in the school but not on the well-being of the victims. This compares to other findings, where women rarely sought support because, generally, they had negative experiences of seeking workplace-based support since their requests for flexibility in deployment were denied (Oliveiva & Doliveiva, 2008). However, it contrasts with earlier studies where supervisors gave support through the supervisors' compassion, managers', and co-workers' support by screening telephone calls, partnering the victim of domestic violence with another employee, assistance programmes, and providing a positive and healthy work

environment. Others include making allowances for vacation or sick leave and flexible work arrangements (Alaniz& De Los Santos, 2017). A deliberate attempt should, therefore, be made by creating awareness among the teachers so that they can willingly talk about their problems to the head teachers and, at the same time, the headteachers can be supportive.

This study reveals that all the women interviewed are unaware of any school policies to handle issues of domestic violence that affect them. Most headteachers also confirmed that they did not have any specific policies, whether developed by the school or sent by the government, to help them manage teachers with domestic violence. This finding agrees with another study conducted by the US Bureau of Labour Statistics (2010), which says that many organisations lack policies on handling domestic violence in their places of work. This calls for the need of educational institutions to device means to put systems in place to support in mitigating effects of domestic violence on staff and the schools.

My study reveals a disparity in how managers deal with situations that emerge in domestic violence because there are no standard policies to address issues of domestic violence against staff in schools. This is consistent with studies conducted in other places like the United States of America, where there is a great disparity in workplace practices relating to domestic violence, ranging from the many smaller private organisations that have no policies at all to leading firms in the United States where it is mandatory to have in place policies related to domestic violence (Yuan et al., 2017).

From a managerial perspective, adopting domestic violence initiatives can be complex and risky not only because managers must decide whether to respond to a variety of internal and external stakeholders' pressure but also because they must evaluate whether and how recurring domestic violence initiatives will fit with existing routine (Yuan et al., 2011). This may not be easy for head teachers who want performance, particularly in private schools where job security only hinges on the school's performance. However, the Government can develop standardised policies and ensure that they are enforced in schools. Such approaches can be customised to schools because of variations, e.g., foundation bodies, ownership, and settings. Headteachers can customise these in such a way that employees are not disadvantaged.

The research findings further point out that while it is true that the head teachers recognise that there is a need for and benefit of having in place policies that address the impact of domestic violence, they do not put this as a priority in their school programme because some do not think that domestic violence inflicted on teachers can affect the running of the school since this was a private affair, while, for others, it is because they did not know what to do at all and therefore their areas of focus was on these teachers teaching all their lessons. Such views are consistent with research conducted earlier on other managers in some other organisations where the managers recognised that domestic violence negatively impacted workplaces. Still, only 13% thought their companies should address domestic violence, and 71% did not perceive domestic violence as a major issue at their company (Alice de Jonge, 2015). Such views shared by schools in Kitgum point to the fact that policies do not become a priority to such head teachers because they do not consider domestic violence a major issue in their schools. Until school administrators and policymakers within the education sector begin to view domestic violence as a vice that

affects organisational performance and work towards addressing it, domestic violence will continue to have adverse effects on the roles of teachers in schools.

With such views by head teachers, domestic violence can remain the experience of the female teachers who are forced to perform even when experiencing domestic violence with devastating effects. If this issue is not addressed, the biggest losers remain the learners and the education system at large in the long run. Workers require safety and security for them to work. Policies on domestic violence in school protect the female teachers who can aspire to perform their duties amidst domestic violence, knowing they are protected at school. Consideration then must be made in making workable policies. For example, policies that address paid leave entitlement, flexible work arrangements and other support for female teachers experiencing domestic violence become necessary. For this to happen, the government and other stakeholders must deliberate to address this so that domestic violence becomes an integral part of everyday decisions at administrative and operational levels.

5.7.1 Head teachers' support

One key gap that this research sought to address is the lack of literature on support that schools provide to help female teachers with experience of domestic violence. The findings from this study reveal that many female teachers with experience of domestic violence do not disclose their problems to the head teachers, making it difficult for them to receive support. This is consistent with other studies where victims rarely report cases of domestic violence to their

supervisors. Most employers never find out about workers being abused by an intimate partner, and if they do find out, they often do not know how to respond, have no agency and have no policy to provide guidance (Giesbrecht, 2022; Sherlee, 2014). When victims rarely voluntarily report to the supervisors, such as headteachers, their problems are not brought to light. Therefore, it becomes very difficult to support such teachers in their challenges. The consequences can then be negative in their teaching and administrative roles. The fact that head teachers are aware that domestic violence exists among the staff calls for them to devise means to improve human resource management in their schools so that the victims of domestic violence can open up and freely share issues of domestic violence and other issues that affect them in their day-to-day performance in schools.

Findings reveal that female teachers with experience of domestic violence have many reasons for not reporting to headteachers. The majority fear that this can harm retention of their job, particularly in private schools; administrators also have their challenges and, therefore, may not be helpful to them; the head teachers are not trusted, and the female teachers feel that they can handle their problems alone without bothering the administrators. Sometimes, they get embarrassed to talk about their problems, and some are uncomfortable discussing their family challenges because of a deep sense of privacy around domestic violence. The findings support earlier studies, where workers avoid sharing their domestic issues with employers for various reasons (Jonge (2015; Ararat, et al., 2014; Tolentino et al., 2016; Logan et al., 2007; Kahui et al., 2014).)

This still points to feminist thinking, where many women take domestic violence as something to be left in the confines of the home or where women who face domestic violence blame themselves for the violence inflicted on them. This suggests that school administrators draw closer to their staff to develop trust and feel free to discuss challenges they face without fear or embarrassment. For this to happen, mature head teachers must know their roles in managing human resources. There is a need to have head teachers with integrity who can keep secrets of the female victims of domestic violence without sharing them.

The findings from this study are that female teachers affected by domestic violence try to cover up their lack of preparation to teach by being present. Whether prepared to teach, they cover this gap by presenting themselves in the classroom, knowing well that teaching and learning cannot be effective without planning lessons. This comes from a lack of trust in their administrators, who are usually not ready to listen to such teachers because they only look at the work they are supposed to do. What comes out is that such teachers cannot teach well, yet the administrators may be kept in the dark, not knowing that the teachers are ineffective. On the other hand, the women do not confide in the head teachers to get a workable solution. Such a situation is consistent with studies conducted on working women in other companies, where behaviours such as reporting late to work, absenteeism and lack of concentration in performance were relatively less likely to be observed by supervisors of companies for possible reasons of women's distrust of their employers (Ararat, et al., 2014). Therefore, this suggests that head teachers dealing with female teachers experiencing domestic violence must implement good practices to ensure confidentiality. This will help not only to build trust but to protect the

victims as well. Employers/headteachers must enforce policies that provide a supportive environment that can make victims of domestic violence feel safe.

The study also points out that female teachers do not confide in their head teachers because they want to keep their jobs. This mainly comes from women in private schools, who fear the potential loss of their jobs. In contrast, the ones in government schools fear being transferred away from their duty stations that are favourable in terms of staff houses, bigger allowances in terms of Parents, Teachers' Association incentives, and being near schools where their children can have access to better education, access to hospital facilities, etc. This finding is consistent with other studies that confirm that victims of domestic violence hide their experiences because of fear of losing their jobs. Crucially, many women are reluctant to tell their managers or co-workers about the abuse they get from their spouses (Swanberg & Macke, 2006; Swanberg et al., 2006).

School administrators know that female teachers are less likely to perform to their best when their needs are unmet. Headteachers must provide an environment that guarantees safety, like ensuring stable employment even when they have domestic violence. The safety needs of female teachers in a school are taken care of by allowing them not to feel judged and having an open discussion with a motive of support. When head teachers do this, they provide female teachers experiencing domestic violence in their homes a sense of love and belonging, feeling connected to the working environment. In this case, they can still feel motivated to perform their roles as teachers in schools amidst such domestic challenges.

My study further reveals that female teachers do not report to the head teachers because they feel it wastes time. After all, employers are less supportive of teachers who have private problems, and they focus only on these women to perform the jobs they are employed. The female teachers with experience of domestic violence must teach all their lessons and conduct other routines amidst the challenges that they face from their spouses. Swanberg and Logan (2004) agree with this when they observe that employers are less supportive to private life issues interfering with their work. Indeed, naturally, such feelings of lack of support leave the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence with no choice but not to seek support from the head teachers and other school administrators. Such teachers most likely remain concerned with the unmet fundamental and safety needs. They fail to move to the level where they feel loved by the school just as they also miss such needs from their spouses. They cannot, therefore, move to the level of self-esteem and performance, and as such, their productivity at the school level remains wanting. School managers must realise that the result of failing to provide support to female teachers is counterproductive to the schools they head and, in the long run, affects the learners as well, thus suggesting the need to seek remedies to address the relationship between the staff and the administrators.

Findings from the study are that some headteachers needed to be made aware of what the female teachers were going through because they were not informed, while others never cared at all about what individuals go through so long as they performed their work. To such supervisors, the service other than the well-being of the female teachers matters. In this way, they feel detached, reluctant, or disinterested in getting involved in challenges that their staff go through outside school schedules. This aligns with earlier research that states that although

managers acknowledge that intimate partner violence has adverse effects, they are often reluctant to formally recognise or become engaged in the issue because they consider it personal (Giesbrecht, 2022).

When these reasons for non-disclosure by the women experiencing violence are analysed, they point to the perception of the female teachers with experience of domestic violence that the work environment is not very supportive. They do not feel free to interact with the school administrators. Such a perception makes the victims shut down on the problem they go through, unwilling to discuss it with their supervisors. It also breeds the feeling and attitude of being left alone to handle their problems. In the long run, this denies support that would have been accorded to them, negatively impacting their teaching and administrative roles. This view is shared by Scott et al. (2017), who discuss the perception of a non-supportive workplace. Thus, this suggests that school head teachers must promote a supportive workplace environment characterised by caring, open communication, and trust that allows staff to confide in the administrators.

Another area of interest revealed in this study is that four of the 23 headteachers are women. Still, of all these women, only one had the experience of teachers confiding in her. In contrast, the female teachers had never approached the other three with experience of domestic violence. If we go by the theoretical underpinning, I expect the feminist approach will make the victims find solace more in fellow females. However, we cannot make this finding conclusive given the limitation in the number of participants. This, thus, gives us room to suggest further

studies on the attitudes of women with experience of domestic violence towards female supervisors.

5.7.2 Support from co-workers

The study findings are that more female teachers who experience domestic violence prefer to report or seek help from co-workers over school administrators. In most cases, these co-workers are female teachers, preferably those with similar experience. Many of the female teachers who receive support from co-workers believe that this support is helpful. The support includes guidance, moral support, financial support and stepping in to cover for them in lesson teaching and other related work in the school when they need help. This finding is consistent with other studies but can only vary on the type of support they receive like giving a listening ear, spending break-time with the victim, assisting with personal matters, referring them to counsellors, and giving them informal brochures, among others (Swanberg et al., 2005). The female teachers in the study say they open up more to their co-workers because they understand their problem better; they care; they are trusted and reliable and feel at peace confiding in them, and they are supportive. This finding, however, contrasts with the conclusions of another study reporting that the support in the work environment may not be sufficient to buoy a victim suffering from depression or who has difficulty getting to work on time because of job interference and that co-workers' levels of assistance to victims were low. And that support from co-workers did little to impact the well-being of the victims in either a positive or negative direction (Kelly, 2012;

Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007). This suggests that much as the women agree that they get support from their co-workers, how much such support is helpful remains a subject of debate.

Such a revelation needs to be explored more; probably, it brings differences in the type of organisation and individuals and the method of study used. However, this line of argument points to the fact that domestic violence is complex and therefore, addressing its impact on workers is also complex. What cannot be ignored is that co-workers, in one way or another, are a significant support to female teachers suffering domestic violence. This is not to underscore that some few co-workers also become tormentors of the victims when they fail to keep secrets and instead become judgemental and a source of gossip that, in the long run, hurts the female teachers who confide in them the more. This still suggests educating the entire staff to remain responsible if their colleagues confide in them. Since survivors are more willing to report to co-workers than to administrators until issues become more critical. co-workers should be empowered to support victims of domestic violence and refer serious issues to administrators for further support and by doing so both the female teachers who are survivors, and the learners will benefit. The former by getting service that mitigate impact of domestic violence while the latter by receiving effective service of teaching and learning from the teacher. In the long run the impact of domestic violence may be mitigated from affecting the school.

Domestic violence against female teachers by spouses can be damaging to school outcomes. However, a supportive environment can help mitigate the negative impact on the schools, suggesting that security, love, respect, and understanding be given to victims of domestic violence, which can help them develop positive energies to overcome or negotiate through the

pains of domestic violence. This will enable them to achieve their aspirations and goals for effective performance in their administrative and teaching roles and beyond to develop their careers. Therefore, how the school environment recognises the challenge and manages the situation, balancing individual, and organisational needs, can be helpful.

In this study, network support groups that meet regularly were lacking. Yet, Support groups are key to helping with the issue of domestic violence, which can be a good strategy for supporting victims. The women participants feared being seen as a group of victims together because they feared the stigma. Thus, when they sought support from peers with similar problems, it was mainly between two or three people. What is lacking is a recognised support group with programmes and scheduled meetings that are known and followed. This contrasts with other studies where support groups met regularly to discuss their needs and concerns. Moreover, sometimes, such sessions were facilitated by a social worker or counsellor. This helped to reduce apprehension, depression, loneliness, and isolation; it also helped in building networks of friends to socialise with and provide emotional support, including empowering them to value themselves and improve their lives (Mshana et al., 2022). This brings out the benefits of peer groups that female teachers with experience of domestic violence can utilise as an anchor for belonging and support. The contrast here can be explained as stemming from international context of western culture and African culture. In western world where extended families lack, systems are always put in place at institutional levels to support survivors of domestic violence while in the context of the study area, family ties pays key roles in handling issues to do with domestic violence. Schools as educational institutions could be a good place to start such support systems.

5.8 Wishes of the women on support

Cognisant of the problems that female teachers with experience of domestic violence go through and aware that support mechanisms available may not be adequate to address the issues that affect the performance of these women, this study explored alternative ways where the women would feel supported in their struggles to ensure they perform their teaching and administrative roles in their schools. The findings show several wishes or recommendations from the female teachers and their supervisors, the head teachers. These include the recommendation that the women should share their problems with administrators, friends, and co-workers and that, in extreme cases, they can report to families and the police as well as other law enforcement systems. Others recommend that the women remain resilient, seek counselling, and, where necessary, seek group/peer support. School administrators are also asked to grant off-duty time to the suffering women, allocate special rooms to sit and rest, reduce their workloads, provide financial support, and strengthen chaplaincy at school. Administrators are also called upon to mediate between the spouses and improve communication with staff, and, together with the Ministry of Education and Sports, they should put in place policies that address the issues of domestic violence that can mitigate its impact on the female teachers who are victims.

In the findings, both the teachers and the head teachers agree that flexibility in terms of off-duty time, adjustments of timetable and reduced workloads can be a good way for female teachers to cope with their school responsibilities as they perform their work. This is consistent with earlier research, where the women asked for flexible working arrangements (McFerrin et al. 2013; Dheensa et al. 2022). Besides supportive and flexible workplaces, survivors also want

acknowledgement that they may not be able to work to the best of their ability without fearing that they might lose their jobs. Therefore, fear of losing jobs, lack of flexibility in managing female teachers with experience of domestic violence, and lack of recognition all damage their ego and motivation. If remedies to these are not provided within the school setting, it will hinder the female teachers from having self-esteem and actualising their goals in teaching and learning. Thus, this can have a negative impact on their teaching and administrative roles.

What stands out from this study is that where the women ask to be considered for reduced workloads, none of the head teachers agreed to it and where most of the women demand off-duty time, very few of the head teachers agree to this, pointing to earlier discussions as to the fact that administrators are more preoccupied with organisational needs than with the individual needs of the workers who are expected to work even when they are not feeling well. Such attitudes towards the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence force them to appear at work even when they are not ready, just to please the employers but at the expense of the employees and the learners. The logical thing to do is to work out amicable solutions. Consideration should be taken not to disadvantage the learners because school schedules have very rigid timetables. Such flexibility should be determined based on the victim's situation, which can be agreed upon through discussion between the teacher, head of department and the head teacher. By doing this, both the needs of the victim and the organisation’s needs will be taken care of.

The institution and implementation of sound policies are highly recommended by both the female victims and the head teachers, making this the second-highest preferred

recommendation. My study agrees with other findings that employers must develop workplace programmes to address intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence workplace policies should be implemented to help employers identify procedures for responding to employees' work and how employers can help the victims (Chrosister & Linstorm, 2015). However, this should go beyond just workplaces and focus on formulating these policies and making them functional at all levels.

Further to the wishes, the study points out the need for effective communication. This involves pointing out what they go through and making suggestions on how they can be helped while the administrators also leave open channel for the female teachers to reach them for support. This will make the female teachers to feel appreciated and understood. And with that they can then feel motivated to do their jobs well and then aspire to achieve higher goals that can be translated into their increased productivity at school. That can explain why they wished the head teachers should improve communication with them.

The findings are also consistent with a study that took a feminist approach, highlighting that the flexibility available to survivors of domestic violence should prioritise preserving the quality of the relationship, not just the employment relationship itself but the relationship within the workplace. Therefore, flexibility and effective communication become critical to effectively implementing policies available to employees affected by domestic violence (Yuan et al., 2011). This is a good approach because it builds trust and a good relationship and makes the women feel involved in decisions that affect them.

Another wish for the women with experience of domestic violence interviewed calls for creating awareness about how staff with experience of domestic violence can be supported and the establishment of functional counselling services in the schools where such women can seek support. This is consistent with other studies that point to companies that have engaged in active awareness-raising campaigns, implemented manager-training programmes, and provided counselling through employee assistance programmes as well as provision for referrals (Rayner, 2013). All these are reasonable measures to create awareness. However, such programmes must be made functional. Such policies and provisions, when used effectively, can minimise the risks of unproductivity associated with domestic violence in our schools. They can also equip the school management and administrators with how to handle victims of domestic violence who are employees in the school. In this case, training and raising awareness can help to give the head teachers and staff, female teachers inclusive, the knowledge necessary to deal with domestic violence experienced by staff.

What stands out clearly in this study is that much as the female teachers who are victims of domestic violence may want to seek counselling as a coping measure, it is impossible because there are no such services within the schools. None of the participants was aware of such services in the geographical area of the study. The lack of counselling services expressed by the female teachers depicts a situation that agrees with some studies also conducted in Uganda, where the majority of the statutory duty bearers across the study districts have neither received training nor adequate induction on how to provide survivors with immediate and longer-term psychosocial counselling as part of mental health and psychosocial services package (Government of Uganda & World bank, 2020). This gap needs to be addressed by the responsible

structure in the government so that counselling services are brought nearer to the people to support those in pain. Female teachers may not stop experiencing domestic violence inflicted by their spouses; however, good programmes like counselling and support from schools can make them cope well with the problem of domestic violence, and this can make them perform their teaching and administrative roles relatively well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the findings based on the given objectives of the study, relating the results to the research questions and drawing evidence of similarities and differences with earlier literature. The discussions pointed out that the study is consistent with other research findings that domestic violence can negatively impact workplaces. That victims can cope and that workplaces can be of support. In this case, the impact is on the school outcome arising from the teaching and administrative roles of the female teachers impacted by domestic violence. Much as the result of domestic violence is real, the discussion also points out that this can be mitigated by having a supportive environment like from families, church, co-workers, and school administration. The arguments also point to the need for organisations to develop clear policies to support domestic violence victims. The same applies to school managers who can liaise with other education sectors to develop supportive policies that help mitigate the impact of domestic violence in schools. Good interpersonal relationships between the staff and administrators, like communication and flexibility, are also recommended to enable teachers to feel safe and free. A protective and supportive environment helps to encourage victims of domestic violence to feel loved and supported and so strive to achieve

their aspirations in their career, and this can be made available by the school managers who are experienced and knowledgeable of their work. Effective counselling services must be embedded within the school establishment as a key office in supporting victims of domestic violence and the human resources within the setting.

These findings are consistent with earlier studies revealing that when victims of intimate partner violence are hopeful about their future, they are found to be less depressed, have higher job satisfaction and organisational commitment and are better able to concentrate at work (Swanberg, 2005). The findings further reveal that victims who were able to sustain hope that their future would be better were able to function at a higher level at work, feel more pleasure in their work, make positive attachments to the employer, and to maintain a more positive affective stage. Such hopeful situations, as defined by Swanberg (2005), include a feeling of economic empowerment, secure ability to take care of themselves financially, and job security. Such victims can take action to change their life situations. Therefore, this suggests that female teachers with experience of domestic violence who have hope and are supported by their work environment can perform well at school even when they suffer domestic violence. Thus, this prompts us to call schools to provide a supportive work environment for staff.

CHAPTER SIX

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This chapter highlights the study's limitations, recommendations, and directions for further studies, as well as the conclusions drawn from the study's results.

6.1 Limitations to the study

Although this study has provided key findings and information about the perception and experiences of female teachers and domestic violence, exposing how it impacts their teaching and administrative roles as teachers working in the schools, their coping measures and the support they receive from the school, there are limitations to be considered.

The sample size can be taken as limiting. Considering the number of people involved in the study, it may be inadequate to indicate workplace implications stemming from domestic violence inflicted on employees and to draw general conclusions from the findings. However, the study still highlighted the need for employers to develop strategies that can address spill overs from domestic violence in schools.

Snowball as a sampling method has several challenges, which could have affected the research findings – generalizability, credibility, and relevance. This limitation was overcome by collecting data up to a point of theoretical saturation. Besides, in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to get rich data for the study.

The data was based solely on self-reporting by the respondents, the female teachers. The triangulation with administrators was also limiting since it focused mainly on the role of the administrators. Further interviews with other family members or co-workers of the victims could have given the study more understanding of the impact of domestic violence on the teaching and administrative roles of female teachers.

This was a lone study. The sensitivity of the topic made the researcher conduct the interviews alone. This can be an avenue for possible bias. However, care was taken to overcome this limitation by applying several strategies to achieve rigour. This included audit trail, member check, peer de-briefing and flexibility.

Part of the data was collected during COVID-19 and offered great risk to the respondents and the researcher. However, strict adherence to COVID-19-standing operating procedures was stringently implemented.

6.2 Research implications

a) Body of Knowledge

The findings add an international dimension to the literature on domestic violence, which had been mainly based on other areas than women employed in the education sector, specifically at the secondary school level . The study revealed how domestic violence affects female teachers' teaching and administrative roles. Even where they undergo domestic violence that takes a toll on them, they are still faced with the responsibilities of preparing to teach, having contact with the students by guiding them in the classrooms, assessing their work and taking up other

administrative roles like meetings, doing duties, being involved in co-curricular activities, and linking with parents and other stakeholders, among others. This affects their productivity and the general teaching and learning process.

The teachers with experience of domestic violence need to be given attention to let them cope with their challenges. Some policies addressing domestic violence issues must be put in place and made functional at all levels. Headteachers must pay attention and move close to the teachers by trying to balance the personal and institutional needs of teachers with experience of domestic violence such that these victims feel valued and comforted that their needs are addressed.

b) Government

Uganda has laws on human rights and domestic violence, but these seem not to be operational. Such laws would help to protect workers from employers who may not care much about the individual needs of the staff, as reflected in the study. Specific employment laws addressing domestic violence could provide a foundation for the workplace to take steps to provide support to employees actively. Relevant legislation protecting victims can help establish a pathway out of violence and end cycles of abuse.

There was no evidence that head teachers in all the schools have training programmes that can be useful in addressing domestic violence in the schools. Most participants saw no reason for disclosure to the head teachers because they presumed it would be of no help since there were no active strategies to deal with domestic violence issues in schools to help the women in need.

Setting procedures to support the female teachers can make their problems known when they open up. This can make it easy for the school administrators to give them the support required and make referrals where necessary.

To improve a work environment that can be supportive to workers, the head teachers must develop strategies to support the victims. Such steps can include having formal written policies on domestic violence, open discussions about the effects, and supportive statements from school administration and other stakeholders to the victims of domestic violence. This should be well documented and can include checklists on activities to be done once faced with such situations. I know that schools vary in operations; therefore, each school can have its policies drawn from a more extensive framework.

c) Global development needs and goals

This study contributes to addressing issues of sustainable development goals 3(ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages), goal 4 (quality education) and goal 5 (Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls). Goal 5 can partly be achieved by implementing the targets 5.1 through ending discrimination, 5.2 through ending all violence and exploitation against women and girls 5.9 which targets adopting and strengthening policies and enforceable legislations for gender equality. All these have been pointed out by this study and therefore by creating awareness and recognising the challenges that the women teachers go through, recommending ways in which they can be supported as spelt out in the study, gives opportunity and space where women are respected and have freedom to live their lives without

oppression giving them opportunity for improved mental health and wellbeing (goal4) Thus performing their teaching and administrative roles well which in the long run contributes towards attainment of sustainable development goal 4.

6.3 Conclusions

Based on the analysis of data and study objectives, the following conclusions were advanced:

1. Domestic violence was found to significantly affect the teaching roles of survivor female teachers in secondary schools in Kitgum District as evidenced by poor service delivery in teaching manifested by absenteeism which make teachers fail to cover the sylubus, low self-esteem which has a bearing on the female teachers delivering service of teaching well, lack of concentration that makes them fail to do their work well as well as lack of preparation. All these affect the productivity of the female teachers and in the long run disrupts teaching.

2. The female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects their administrative roles included low interpersonal relationships, reduced administrative work, reduced learning outputs and reduced mentoring and care of students.

3. The female teachers affected by domestic violence are not fully supported with empathetic handling by their respective school heads to negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties.

4. School support to female teachers affected by domestic violence is inadequate, at least

in the context of supportive policy frameworks on peer support, moral and spiritual empowerment, etc., and can be entrenched or enhanced in the management of the schools as empowerment tools for remedy, coping and resolutions.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Domestic violence greatly affected the teaching roles of victim female teachers in secondary schools in Kitgum District. In the context of this, thus, it is recommended that school managers and teachers be made aware of its presence in workplaces and its negative implications on the performance of the employees. According to the participants in this study, this would be possible with planned non-formal awareness campaigns through seminars, talks, and workshops with the potential victims. Moreover, with the Ministry of Education and Sports support, the school managers could involve other relevant agencies to provide information on awareness and prevention interventions.

ii. The female teachers' perspectives on how domestic violence affects administrative roles included low interpersonal relationships, reduced administrative work, reduced learning outputs and reduced mentoring and care of students. Again, it is recommended that stakeholders, mainly the teachers, should be supported with structural interventions such as advisory services and counselling and guidance sessions to enhance their morale and performance.

iii. To negotiate through the challenges of domestic violence while performing their duties,

the female teachers affected by domestic violence should be supported with empathetic handling by their respective school heads. This is possible if the Ministry of Education and Sports plans and carries out interventional actions to empower the school heads with knowledge and skills to intervene and mediate warring spouses.

iv. With inadequate school support to female teachers affected by domestic violence, it is recommended that supportive policy frameworks on peer support, moral and spiritual empowerment, etc., can be entrenched or enhanced in the management of the schools as empowerment tools for remedy, coping and resolutions.

6.5 Possible areas for further research

Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations, the following future research areas are proposed:

- The tool used was snowball sampling, which cannot fully give the prevalence of intimate partner violence in teaching. Some population could have been left out because sampling techniques. This may not point out the effects of domestic violence in a school. A study on all the employees within a school could give the head teachers, other school managers, and other stakeholders a strong rationale for getting fully involved in addressing the issue of domestic violence.

- Similar research should be conducted on male teachers to explore their experience of domestic violence and how they cope in their professional roles as schoolteachers.

- There should be further studies to establish why formal settings are not preferred and

further explore measures to minimise or eliminate barriers to seeking support from formal systems.

- The longitudinal study can be conducted to build on and consolidate the findings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction and Consent Form

This study is being undertaken to acquire a PhD from Uganda Christian University. It is being conducted on "Interrogating the experiences and perception of secondary school female teachers on domestic violence and how it affects their performance in Uganda."

The respondents are being identified through snowball, and coming to you means that I was referred to you by someone who knows you and probably knows that you may be familiar with this subject that I wish to discuss with you. If it is OK with you, an interview will be administered, which will last about one hour. This will depend on your consent, availability, and the time and date of preference.

The session may require me to audio-record the conversation and take notes. All your information will be treated with utmost confidence and ultimately kept anonymous. You are free to interact with me in answering the questions fully or partially. You are free to withdraw at any time and will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

Please sign a consent form once you accept the interview before it commences. This is part of the ethical requirements of the University. You will review the consent paper and seek clarity before appending your signature.

Consent Form

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed for a PhD thesis and that the Uganda Christian University (UCU) Ethical Committee has approved all procedures.

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and get clarity on issues that needed to be clarified in the

beginning. I am clear about what I am supposed to do, and I am comfortable to take the interview.

I understand that I am not obligated to participate in the study, and my participation is voluntary.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage and will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I know that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers.

I agree to participate in this study.

Interviewee……

Interviewer……..

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Female Teacher

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study and share your experience about domestic violence and how it could affect your performance at school. Your responses shall help me to conduct this study, which will allow me to acquire my PhD and to add to the body of knowledge.

The session may take about one hour. With your permission, this interview may be audio-recorded. Our conversation is strictly confidential, and you may stop the conversation at any time.

Preliminaries

How would you like to introduce yourself?

(Age range, number of children, qualification)

Would you like to speak about your teaching career?

How about your marital status?

What things make you happy in your marital life (if any)?

What would you say about things that make you uncomfortable in your marriage (if any)?

Are there any more specific issues that lead to your discomfort?

Impact of domestic violence

Would you like to share how all your marital experiences impact you as a person? (Physical, emotional/psychological, and economic)

Impact of domestic violence on the teaching role of a teacher

Would you like to share how your marital experiences impact you as a professional teacher?

Teaching role

Interactions with students

Impact on administration

Given your domestic issues, how would you describe your experience of administrative roles?

In class, During interactions with colleagues at school, generally

Etc.

Coping with domestic violence to perform your duties.

How do you manage to deal with the experience at home about your roles as a teacher?

Have you ever shared your challenges with the head teacher at school? If yes, how helpful was it and if no, then why? What about your co-workers? Any other person in the school other than the ones mentioned?

Support given to victims of domestic violence.

How would you describe support mechanisms available to teachers in your situation (if any)?

Would you like to describe the form of support you would wish to receive from the school to enable you to deal with the challenges you go through?

What other formal and informal support networks have you had? How useful have they been to you and your work?

What recommendation do you give to support other victims?

Closing

What plan do you have in mind for yourself in future?

Do you have anything that you want to share with me? Do you have any questions about this study?

Could you be contacted again in case I need further information from you? Thank you for your time. Your contribution has been beneficial.

Appendix III: Interview Guide for Head Teacher

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. Your responses will help me conduct this study, allowing me to acquire my Ph.D. and add to the body of knowledge.

The session may take about thirty minutes and will be audio-recorded. Our conversation is strictly confidential, and you may stop the conversation at any time.

Preliminaries

a) Could you briefly discuss yourself (age range, number of children, qualification)?

b) How long have you been in this school?

c) How many female teachers do you have in the school?

d) Sometimes, personnel have personal issues that may affect their performance in school. Would you be aware of such? List them.

e) Are you aware of female teachers who may face challenges with their spouses? (*if the answer is **no**, terminate the interview and thank him/her. If yes, then proceed to the next question*).

f) Have they ever shared with you their challenges? Would you briefly narrate the common challenges?

g) Given your responsibilities as a head teacher, how did you respond?

h) Would you say their family issues affect/affect their performance in school? Please explain more. (Probe into how they impact their teaching and administrative roles)

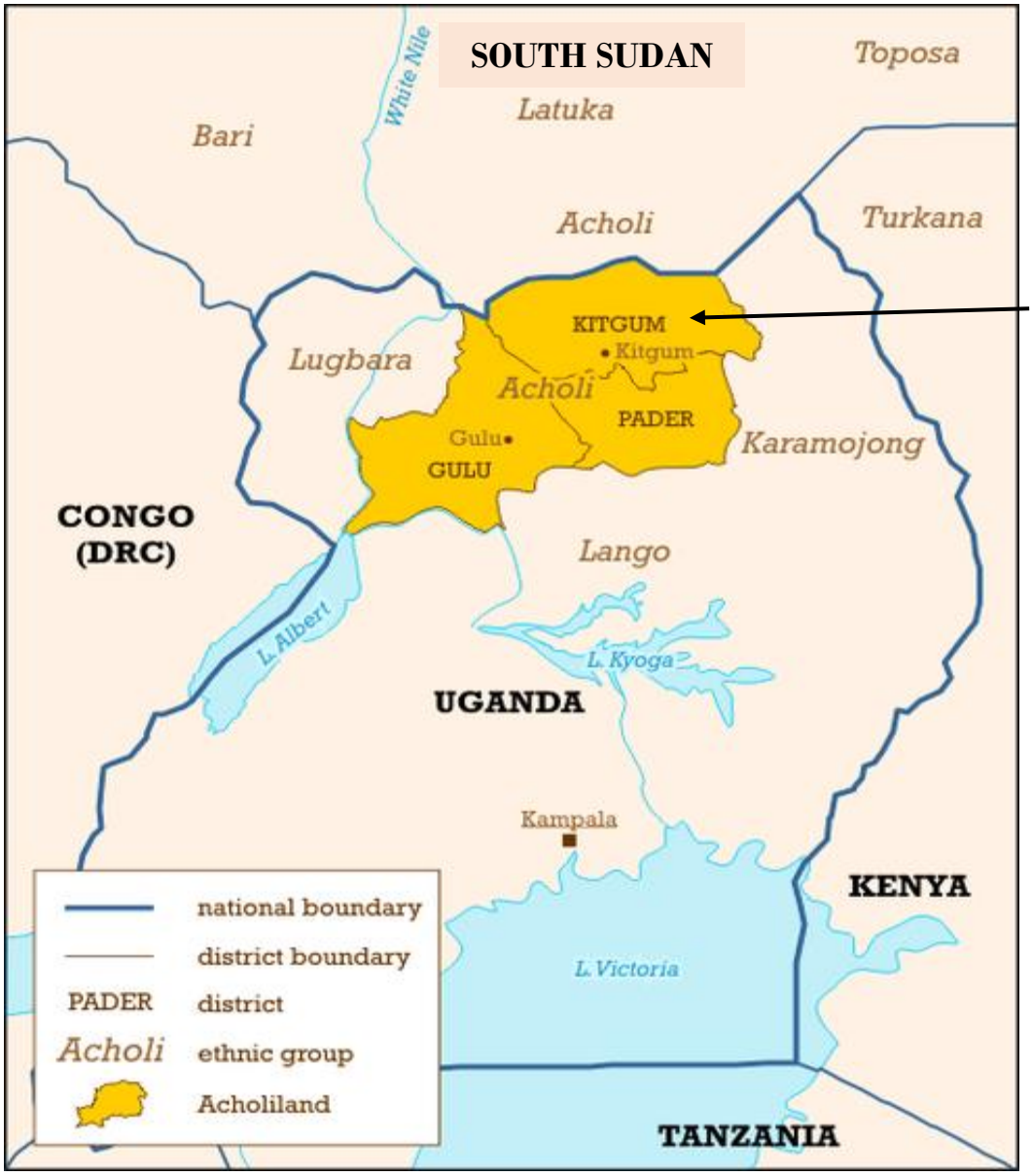
i) Do you have any laid down policies on supporting such teachers? (Both from school or the Ministry of Education & Sports)

j) Would you like to suggest how best they can be helped?

k) Would you support the study by suggesting any teachers or head teachers with relevant experiences?

Thank you for sharing this information with me. This is the end of my interaction with you. However, I may get back to you when there is a need for clarity or additional information.

Appendix IV: Location of Kitgum District on the Map of Uganda



Kitgum district - location in Northern Uganda

Source: Singing Wells (2012)

Appendix V: Map of Kitgum District

Source: Kitgum district official website: https://kitgum.go.ug/lg/location-size

Appendix VI: Research Letters

Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

UNCST

Our Ref: SS1273ES **22 April 2022**

Gladys Ayot
Uganda Christian University
Mukono

Re: Research Approval: **Exploring Experiences of Domestic Violence for Female Teachers in Secondary Schools in Uganda**

I am pleased to inform you that on **22/04/2022**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **22/04/2022** to **22/04/2023**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS1273ES**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project. As the Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. Keeping all co-investigators informed of the status of the research.
2. Submitting all changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local REC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority and a notification to the UNCST.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Please note that this approval includes all study related tools submitted as part of the application as shown below:

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Data collection tools	English	1	01 August 2021
2	Informed Consent forms for Head teachers	English	1	01 August 2021
3	Risk Management Plan	English	1	01 August 2021
4	Informed Consent forms for female school teachers	English	1	01 August 2021
5	Project Proposal	English	1	
6	Approval Letter	English		
7	Administrative Clearance	English		

Yours sincerely,

Hellen Opolot
For: Executive Secretary
UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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KAMPALA, UGANDA

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EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
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19th August, 2021

Gladys Ayot
Uganda Christian University
+256 772695155
Email: abergladys@yahoo.co.uk

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Gladys Ayot, Principal Investigator

Re: UCU-REC Application titled; **Exploring Experiences of Domestic Violence for Female Teachers in Secondary Schools in Uganda.**

Application Number: **UCUREC-2021-172**

Version: 4.0

Type: [ ] **Initial Review**
[ ] Protocol Amendment
[ ] Letter of Amendment (LOA)
[ ] Continuing Review
[ ] Material Transfer Agreement
[ ] Other, Specify:

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
APPROVED
UNTIL
19 AUG 2022
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

I am please to inform you that the **UG-REC-026;** UCUREC approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for the period from 19th August, 2021, to 19th August, 2022.

This research is considered minimal risk category.
As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.

2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.

3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.

4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. **Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 19th August, 2022 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period.** Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by **UG-REC _026:**

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	**Research Proposal**	**English**	3.0	2021-08-16
2.	Informed Consent Form	English	3.0	2021-08-16
3.	Data Collection Tools	English	3.0	2021-08-16

Signed and Stamped

.....

Prof. Peter Waiswa.
UCUREC Chairperson,
pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug

UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
APPROVED
UNTIL
19 AUG 2022
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE