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The Dynamics of the Nuclear Family on Domestic Violence Post-COVID-19 Pandemic in Uganda

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Abstract

This paper presents the dynamics of the nuclear family on domestic violence after the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda. Family dynamics influence how young people view themselves from others, and the world. Family impacts the behaviors and the future well-being of its members. Each family owns its identity, secret codes, rules, expectations, and communication. Dynamics represent the forces that can shape interactions within a family. Family dynamics investigate the progress of searching for and uncovering the emotional motivations and possible hidden psychological reasons for behavior. After the COVID-19 pandemic, many disappointments happened in the family. The annual Uganda Police report as of May 2022 indicated that in 2021, 17,533 domestic violence cases occurred. This period was supposed to be a time of bringing family together instead of harassing each other. Children ended up becoming the victims. COVID-19 period was exposed to multiple risk factors that increased the likelihood of experiencing perpetrating violence in the nuclear family.

Keywords: Dynamics, Nuclear family, Family dynamic, and Domestic Violence

Résumé

Cet article présente la dynamique de la famille nucléaire en matière de violence domestique après la pandémie de COVID-19 en Ouganda. La dynamique familiale influence la façon dont les jeunes se perçoivent par rapport aux autres et au monde. La famille a un impact sur les comportements et le bien-être futur de ses membres. Chaque famille possède son identité, ses codes secrets, ses règles, ses attentes et sa communication. La dynamique représente les forces qui peuvent façonner les interactions au sein d'une famille. La dynamique familiale étudie les progrès de la recherche et de la découverte des motivations émotionnelles et des éventuelles raisons psychologiques cachées du comportement. Après la pandémie de COVID-19, de nombreuses déceptions sont survenues dans la famille. Le rapport annuel de la police ougandaise de mai 2022 indiquait qu'en 2021, 17 533 cas de violence domestique

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avaient eu lieu. Cette période était censée être une période pour rassembler les familles au lieu de se harceler. Les enfants ont fini par devenir les victimes. La période de la COVID-19 a été exposée à de multiples facteurs de risque qui ont augmenté la probabilité de commettre des violences au sein de la famille nucléaire.

Mots-clés : Dynamique, Famille nucléaire, Dynamique familiale et Violence Domestique

Introduction

Nuclear families maximize the closeness and reap practical benefits by having regular family meetings to make plans and discuss problems. Even small children should participate in some family decision-making and problem-solving. When all family members feel they are valued and their voices are heard, they are more likely to cooperate. When families plan activities and spend time together, they have more shared memories, which enhances their sense of family. COVID-19 destroyed the dynamics in the nuclear family structure as a result of many domestic violence cases. The Dynamics in the Nuclear Family is composed of parents and their biological children.

Ubaibi (2017) described the family dynamic as the scheme of family members' relations and interactions, that include many prerequisite elements such as family arrangements, hierarchies, rules, and patterns of family interactions. He further indicated that each family has unique characteristics, having several helpful and unhelpful dynamics. Family dynamics influence how young people view themselves, others, and the world. In the same way, family impacts the behaviors and the future well-being of its members.

After COVID-19, many nuclear families ended up producing unwanted children (Abu-Elenin et al., 2022). The spacing of children became very difficult. Earlier alone, the majority of parents wanted one or two children only. The personal decision was taken without the interest of the other. Meyerhoff (2006) realized that the parents could tell that when they were dealing with two infants at once was too overwhelming for them. Having siblings born together were more likely to relate as peers and playmates. The COVID-19 time caused fights among family members from time to time.

The issue remained the birth order. In psychology, the traits of the child depend on the birth order. This affects each child's development and causes parents to overlook the needs of each child (Abu-Elenin, et al., 2022). When family members plan and interact, each one experiences a sense of belonging, wholeness, and dignity. This is reinforced with family dynamics when it comes to addressing the transitions between persons and within the systems in which they are embedded, based on what everyone expects within the family as a therapeutic intervention.

Realizing the expenses of the firstborn, the costs, and energy, parents get other children without family financial income. Based on the birth order, the second child does not get enough attention from their parents. The children's imbalances create significant changes in the family dynamics. When a father is present for the birth of their child, the relationship with the child in the first months of life tends to be enhanced. The question is, for how long? Many fathers run away from their families and leave responsibilities to their wives alone. The parents become uninvolved with the children, limited to visits and telephone calls. Whatever their choice, mothers are found to raise their children according to their ideas and values, and they

reap many of the rewards of parenting. On the other hand, they undertake heavy responsibilities and risk the loneliness of parenting without a partner with whom to share both the burdens and the good times (Meyerhoff, 2006). Therefore, they need support from any well-wishers.

The Violence at the Nuclear Family Level

Many families in Uganda are living in violent relationships with their intimate partners. The turning point in leaving a violent relationship often centers on a need to protect their children, financial independence, and find alternative livelihood options. Violence in the family is characterized by a pattern of control and intent to coerce or harm and takes many forms. Violence in the family can happen between anyone or close intimate relationships, including children, parents, grandparents, siblings, or any person in the family. The survey of UBOS (2020) found that violence encompasses a wide range of abusive behaviors perpetrated by a range of family members.

The most common type of violence that women experience is intimate partner violence (IPV). The social circumstances that surround intimate relationship dynamics include the occurrence of Violence among the family members. In the same way, women can be violent in relationships with men, often in self-defense, and also sometimes occurs in same-sex partnerships. The most common perpetrators of violence against women are male intimate partners or ex-partners (UBOS, 2020). The most commonly reported forms of IPV include physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse and controlling behavior, sexual coercion, and socio-economic Violence.

Physical violence is related to beating, which is the most common description of physical IPV, with others including punching, slapping, pushing, throwing objects, burning, and throwing a woman out of the house with force (UBOS,2020). The unmet expectations of partners are the most common triggers of fights or beatings. Psychological or emotional abuse IPV also manifests in the form of psychological violence. Survivors and members experience psychological abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse. The most common psychological abuse that is happening includes a husband scolding his wife, using foul or humiliating language, shouting and screaming, threatening to take away the children, marrying another woman, or sending the wife to her family or place of origin. Sexual violence is occurring within marriage or in the context of intimate relationships.

Economic violence is reinforcing physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Women experienced economic violence, irrespective of whether they lived in an urban or a rural setting. This is caused by money being withheld, over-managed, or considered more valuable than household work typically managed by women. However, UBOS (2020) reports those experiences of economic violence relate to traditional ideas of masculinity, where men are considered the head of the household and the financial provider for the family. Based on the high prevalence of domestic Violence, where 40% of cases pushed Parliament to pass the domestic violence Act, 2010 to provide for the protection and relief of victims.

Theory on the Risks of Domestic Violence

The risks factor of domestic violence are guided by the socio-ecological model (Heise, 2012), which proposes that violence is a result of factors operating at four levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal. Being exposed to multiple risk factors increases the likelihood of experiencing violence or perpetrating violence in the family. Exposure to

protective factors, on the other hand, safeguards men and women from committing and experiencing violence respectively.

Table 1. *Risk factors of domestic Violence*

Levels	Risk factors
Individual	Sex, age, and disability Lower levels of education Health status, including trauma Harmful alcohol use/ illicit drug/ substance use
Interpersonal level	Alcohol and substance use Marital discord/dissatisfaction Financial stress Educational disparity Multiple partners Unequal power relations
Community level	Acceptance of violence Weak Sanctions against violence Weak social connectedness Traditional gender norms and gender inequality The high proportion in the community of poverty, unemployment, and easy access to alcohol
Societal level	Gender norms that perpetuate inequality Social Norms Supportive of violence Discriminatory laws and policies towards women (property, inheritance, family laws) Weak Legal Sanctions against violence Weak social support systems Weak institutional capacity to Respond to violence

There is an unequal power relation in intimate relationships, where gendered power relationships impact a woman's ability to access and control resources, as well as her involvement in decision-making processes. Men are controlling women over money from

sales of household agricultural produce and other financial compensation gained from paid labor (UBOS, 2020).

The study's methodology was desk research, where the researcher viewed different reports from government, journals, civil society organizations, and policies and analyzed critical data to determine domestic violence cases with a focus on police reports.

Results on cases of domestic violence after COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda

Domestic violence is a very critical problem worldwide. The global surveys showed that at least 35% of women have experienced physical or sexual Violence by an intimate. WHO (2013) estimates that the prevalence of intimate partner violence ranges from 23.2% in high-income countries, 24.6% in the Western Pacific region, and 37.7% in the Southeast Asia Region.

Table 2. *Summary of annual Police report 2022*

Domestic violence cases	2021	2020	2019
	17,533	17,664	12,541

The Uganda Annual Police report as of May 2022 indicated that in 2021, 17,533 cases were reported compared with 2020, which indicates 17,664 (Serugo, 2022). Male adults victims were 12,877, and female victims were 871; of which juvenile male children were 811 and female juveniles were 702, and 12,531 cases in 2019. The most commonly reported forms of domestic violence are physical threats, physical beatings, sexual violence, family neglect, and verbal abuse.

Conclusion & Recommendation

In conclusion, it is observed that when an ex-spouse is uninvolved, the single parent often doesn't know what to tell the child. It's essential to allow a child to continue trying to contact a parent until they realize the parent isn't going to respond. Often, the inclination is to prevent this to protect the child from being hurt; this backfire because the child interprets this to mean one parent is trying to keep her away from the other. Once your child realizes that Mommy or Daddy is gone and isn't coming back, you can help by allowing her to talk about the parent as a way of working through her grief. This single-parental care is a result of COVID-19, which caused domestic violence among married people. These caused children to become depressed, often develop minor illnesses such as colds and intestinal upsets, play less, or become more clinging and dependent, and affect the child's development.

The study was based on the dynamics of the nuclear family on domestic violence after COVID-19 in Uganda. It is recommended to the members of the nuclear family system to influence each other for the betterment of their offspring, and in difficulties, to support and sympathize with each other.

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