

Abstract

The indifference of school stakeholders to children's schooling and gender-related challenges is what is most irking to them. Research has been done to establish many challenges of school children, including school-related gender-based violence, staggering performance, as well as school dropout. However, less is known about the children's knowledge of these gnaws especially in relation to their immediate sociocultural and school setting. This study therefore aimed at exploring the experiences and perspectives of primary school children regarding school-related gender-based violence and its impact on their schooling. A mixed convergent parallel design was employed and child-focused and friendly data collection activities were adopted. The quantitative data collection exercise involved the eclectic administration of a survey tool to enlist children's experiences and perspectives. Qualitative data was collected from 24 male and female school children aged from 10 to 14 years. Qualitative data was elicited using participatory visual methodologies, particularly draw-and-talk, child-friendly focus group conversations and in-depth interviews. The quantitative data analysis involved linear and multiple regression model that were run to test for the significant predictors of gender-based violence and children's schooling while the qualitative data analysis adopted the IPA model, where themes were inductively obtained from children's voices. Quantitative results indicated school setup as a statistically significant predictor of school-related gender-based violence, as well as children's schooling. The quantitative results also revealed a significant effect of children's experiences and perspectives of school-related gender-based violence on their schooling. On the other hand, the qualitative results highlighted prevalence and nature of gender-based violence; children's exposure to community violence, as well as the violence perpetration and victimization. In the qualitative results, other themes that emerged include sociocultural practices, language use, school infrastructure and participation in academic and extracurricular activities. It was concluded that children are aware of the existence of gender-based violence in and around schools. Children acknowledged experiencing or witnessing gender-based violence in and around their schools; although they greatly attribute their suffering and related impact on their schooling to the unresponsiveness and aloof attitude by those around them. The study recommended that stakeholders in children's schooling should allow them reveal their irks and also pay concerted attention to them as key participants in their development and schooling.