

**IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN  
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIENI WEST SUB-COUNTY, NYERI  
COUNTY**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Education and Social Sciences in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Conferment of Master of Education in  
Leadership and Management Degree**

**Kenya Methodist University**

**2017**

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## ABSTRACT

Child abuse has become a global problem that needs to be tackled if children are to be given the right to education and freedom. Early exposure to adverse childhood experiences including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are strong predictors of poor academic performance. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kieni West Sub-county, Nyeri County. The objectives of the study were to establish the level of awareness of child abuse among pupils in public primary schools, to determine the influence of child abuse on pupils' school attendance, to establish the relationship between child abuse and pupils' behaviour, and to determine how child abuse contributed to learning disorders among pupils in public primary schools. The study was guided by social learning theory. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study comprised 52 head teachers, 560 teachers and 2,275 pupils. A sample of 26 head teachers, 280 teachers and 228 pupils was selected using proportionate random sampling. A pilot study was done in two randomly selected schools in the neighbouring Sub County in order to enhance validity and reliability. Data was collected through questionnaires for the teachers and pupils and interview schedules for the head teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data and content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. Relationship between variables was tested using the Chi-square test. To assist in data analysis, SPSS version 20.0 was used. Results were presented using charts, descriptions and tables. The findings of the study showed that pupils had low level of awareness of child abuse, and child abuse was found to affect school attendance, pupils' behaviour giving rise to disorders and all the hypotheses were therefore rejected. Based on the findings, recommendations were made by various authors stating that child rights in social studies are insufficient towards teaching on issues touching on child abuse. The school management, churches, media and non-governmental organizations should also be more vigilant in creating awareness about child abuse and the guidance and counselling departments in primary schools should be strengthened to handle different cases of child abuse. This would help the abused children cope better and improve the quality of their lives. Peer counselling among pupils should be encouraged. It was suggested that further investigation should be carried out to find out other factors which could be contributing to the poor performance among the learners.