EFFECT OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF MATHEMATICS STUDENTS OF KWARA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ILORIN, NIGERIA

Adetunji Kamaldeen Olarewaju (PhD)[1], Alanamu Toaheedat (PhD)[1], Adefila Enilara Justina[1], Muhammed Mustapha [1]

[1]Department of Mathematics, Kwara State College Of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria

Karlmarx4@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of early marriage on academic performance of mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria. Three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses respectively guided the study.The population of the study comprised 50 NCE II female Mathematics students. A 15-items structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Impact of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Mathematics Students Questionnaire (IEMAPFBSQ)" was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics ofmean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while Chi-square (x^2) statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.The findings revealed that socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values when combined have significant causes on educational development of female students in the institution. The findings further revealed that early marriage have significant impact educational development of female students in the study area and also ways the scourge of early marriage can be curbed in our higher institutions of learning. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others, that Government and college management should come up with a policy or formulate laws forbidding early marriage (below 18 years of age) and enforce sanctions on perpetrators of this human right abuse after proper-adjudication. Curriculum planners should endeavor to include sex education as part of school curriculum so as to educate students on the danger of premarital sex to their lives. Furthermore, the educational administrators should embark on massive sensitization of parents/guardians on the importance of girl child education.

Keywords: Early marriage, Female, Mathematics, Academic performance, Education

Introduction

According to United Nations (2016) early marriage also known as child marriage is defined as any legal marriage or cohabitation between two parties in which one or both partiers is or are blow theage of 18 years. However, in sub Africa region, the issue of early marriage is common with females who are physically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing. According to Elujekwute (2017) child marriage involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place with or without formal

registration and under civil, religion or customary laws. Phinney (2018) observes that marriage is primarily meant for people who attained the age of 18 years and above and are physically, socially and psychologically mature, capable of handling social and economic situations. International Centre for Research on Woman (ICRW, 2017) reports that early marriage has many negative consequences both for teenage girls and boys as well as the society in which they live, ranging from educational stagnation, poverty, health care to maternal mortality and among others.

Elujekwute further maintains that early marriage is a violation of human rights in general and of girl's rights in particular. For both girls and boys, early marriage has profound physical, emotional, intellectual and psychological impacts on their development. This hinders effective and efficient educational development and productive opportunities of individuals for national growth and development, Bunch (2018) states that marriage at early age of one's lifeconflict with his/her academic pursuit. Therefore, married woman are bound to achieve less in education or not to continue with formal education. Marriage during the teenage is common in North-Central, Nigeria. Despite national laws and international agreements forbidding early marriage, this phenomenon still persist in many parts of Nigeria particularlyin the North-Central, Nigeria, where there is a strong tie to traditional and religious practices.

According to Weigh (2019) early marriage is more common in the northern parts of Nigeria where many parents prefer to give away their daughters at a very young age for cultural andeconomic reasons. This has increased the rate of illiteracy and poverty among females in North-Central, Nigeria and society at large. Omotayo (2015) states that, girls who have dropped out of school or not been enrolled in the first place are likely to be pushed into early marriage and usually prevents them from starting or resuming their education. Bayisenge (2015) states that early marriage is due to various factors such as, the search for economic survival, protection of young girl, peer group and family pressures, sexuality, wars, civil conflicts, socio-cultural, religious values and controlling female behavior among others. It isa violation of girls human rights as it deprives her from freedom, opportunity for personal development and other rights in the society. This practice stands in direct conflict with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) such as the promotion of basic education, fight against poverty, the prevention of HIV/AIDS and reduction of maternal mortality rate (UNICEF, 2015).

Bunch (2018) reports that the widespread practice of child marriage makes it increasingly difficult for families to escape poverty in the developing world due to low income, thereby undermining critical international efforts to fight illiteracy, HIV/AIDS and other development challenges. Samara (2018) states that women who marry ata young age are likely to find the motherhood a role focus of their lives at the expense of formal education development and training for employment. Samara further observes

that early marriage exposes girl-child to many social and economic challenges such a divorce, prostitution among others. Early marriage inevitably denies children of school age their right to the education; they need for their personal development, preparation for adulthood and contribution to the future wellbeing of their family and the society.

Statement of the Problem

According to UNICEF (2018), early marriage has immensely contributed negatively to the future of women especiallygirl-child. It could be seen as an intimidation! On the young women's life in general which could lead to psychological imbalance. In Kwara State, concerns have been expressed by stakeholders, especially educational administrators, parents and students over issues of early marriage among female students in tertiary institutions and indeed persist in Nigeria inspite of the demonstrated commitment by states and federal government to Universal Basic Education and higher education opportunities for female students vary in urban and rural areas. United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2018) reveals that 60% of female children are deprived the right to education through untimely marriage among female students. The report associates this trend with poor economic situation, cultural values and indiscipline (premarital sex). This seems to be responsible for increasing cases for mothers are below 18 years in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of early marriage on academic performance of Mathematics student of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Specifically, the study intends:

(1) To examine the relative contribution of socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values as causes of early marriage on academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

(2) To establish the extents early marriage impact on academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

(3) To provide how the scourges of early marriage can be curbed on academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

(1) What is the relative contribution of socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values as causes of early marriage on academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin?

(2) To what extents does early marriage impact on the academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin?

(3) How can the scourges of early marriage be curbed on academic performance of Mathematics students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised female Mathematics students in NCE II in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Stratified random sampling technique will be adopted to select 50 NCE II female Mathematics students out of the entire total population of NCE II Mathematics students

The instrument for data collection will be a questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Impact of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Mathematics Students Questionnaire (IEMAPFBSQ)" was used for data collection. The data collected will be analyzed using simple descriptive statistic of Mean and Standard Deviation to answer research questions. The research hypotheses will be tested using Chi- square (x^2) test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance with SPSS packages.

Research Question One:

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of respondents on the impact of socio-economic, indiscipline and cultural values on academic performance of female Mathematics students.

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
1.	High rate of poverty deprived female students their educational development in the school	30	5	9	6	3.49	0.74	Accepted
2.	Socio-economic background as a result of lack of funds and other educational needs contributed significantly to early marriage among female students in the school	27	4	10	9	3.25	0.85	Accepted
3.	Indiscipline (premarital sex) contributed significantly to the causes of early marriage among female students in tertiary institutions.	20	12	8	10	3.12	0.94	Accepted
4.	The cultural practices encouraged early marriage among Tiv and Hausa people in the school	6	8	34	2	3.30	0.78	Accepted
5.	Female students who lack moral virtues engaged in premarital sex and become victims of early marriage in the school.	3	18	8	21	3.34	0.81	Accepted

Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation	**3.30**	**0.8**	**Accepted**

Source : Field work, 2024

Table 1, shows responses of respondents on mean and standard deviations of respondents on the impact of socio-economic background, indiscipline and a cultural values, as causes of early marriage on academic performance of female Mathematics students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. The result reveals that items 1-5 have mean scores and standard deviation of 3.49 (STD. 0.74), 3.2 (STD. 0.85), 3.12 (STD. 0.94), 3.30 (STD. 0.78), and 3.34 (STD. 0.81) respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making, it means the mean scores for items 1-5 were above the cut-off points of 2.50 an indication that socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values has positively impacted on academic performance of female Mathematics

Research Question Two:

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of respondents on the impact of early marriage on academic performance of female Mathematics Students.

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
6.	Early marriage can negatively affect excellent academic performance of NCE II female students.	9	6	30	5	2.43	0.83	Accepted
7.	Female students who got married may not continue with their education pursuit.	25	16	1	8	3.27	0.87	Accepted
8.	Married female students have limited opportunities to further their formal education.	24	19	2	5	3.34	0.87	Accepted
9.	Many husbands are apprehensive to send their wives to school after marriage, over fear of control on their spouse.	27	9	7	7	3.70	0.91	Accepted
10.	Child rearing hinders academic advancement of female students in	20	16	13	1	3.23	0.85	Accepted

	tertiary institutions			
	Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation	**3.19**	**0.71**	**Accepted**

Source : Field work, 2024

Table 2, shows the mean and standard deviations on the impact of early marriage on academic performance of female Mathematics students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. The result from the data collected and analyzed shows that the items 6-10 have meanscores and standard deviations as follows 2.43 (STD. 0.83), 3.27 (STD. 0.87), 3.34 (STD. 0.87), 3.70 (STD. 0.91) and 3.23 (STD. 0.85) respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making it means, the mean scores for items 6-10 were above the cut off points of 2.50 indicatinga high level of acceptance that early marriage has impacted on academic performance of female Mathematics students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

Research Question Three:

Table 3: Mean Rating and Standard Deviations of respondents on the ways of curbing scourge of early marriage on academic performance of female Mathematics Students

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
11.	Free and composedly tertiary education for female students will enhance and curb early marriage in the school.	20	22	8	0	3.34	0.81	Accepted
12.	Providing female students with useful sex education will help in curbing early marriage among female Mathematics students in the school.	26	18	4	2	3.30	0.78	Accepted
13.	Sensitization of parents/guardians on the importance of girl child education, as enhance curbing early marriage in the school.	20	12	7	11	3.12	0.94	Accepted
14.	Federal government should make laws and enforce sanctions to offenders after proper adjudication.	27	4	10	9	3.25	0.85	Accepted
15.	Curriculum planners should include sex education as part of school curriculum to	30	10	9	1	3.49	0.74	Accepted

educate students on the danger of premarital sex.			
Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation	3.30	0.80	Accepted

Source : Field work, 2024

Table 3, shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on the ways of curbing scourge of early marriage on academic performance of female Mathematics students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Where the result reveals that items 11-15 have mean scores of 3.34 (STD. 0.81), 3.30 (STD. 0.78), 3.12 (STD. 0.85), 3.25 (STD. 0.94) and 3.49 (STD. 0.74) respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making, it means the mean scores for items 11-15 were above the cut- off points of 2.50. Indicating the ways scourges of early marriage could be curbed on academic performance of female Mathematics students

Discussion of Findings

This finding agrees with the views of Njokwu (2013) who found out that socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values significantly predict the causes of early marriage on educational development of female students in North-Central, Nigeria. This finding is in line with Elujekwute (2017) who observed that highrate of poverty in the society has deprived many Nigerian children rights to acquire quality education and other benefits as citizens of the country. Elujekwute also revealed that socio- economic background of female students; lack of money to pay school fees and afford other educational needs as well as the basic needs of live in the family contributed significantly to the early marriage among female students in the study area. Elujekwute further maintained that one of the reasons why many young female students drop out of school, jumping into early marriage and could not continue with education but found themselves hawking along streets, beer parlors and open places to earn a living, low income to cater for the demands of the family among female students also contributed significantly to the causes of early marriage among female students. The female students who lack moral virtues engage into premarital sex, and became victims of early marriage as a result of unwanted pregnancy. Lucky (2015) who stated that many ethnic groups in Nigeria are fast moving away from their cultural norms, believes and practices to embrace westernization for meaningful growth and development. As such, pay more attention in school and record high academic achievements than single girls. Elujekwute further adds that many husbands are apprehensive in sending their wives to school on the fear of loss control over them on theirattainment of higher educational levels. This has made wives in their homes to be reduced in status to mere housewives.

Elujekwute (2017) suggested that Federal Government should come up with policy or formulate laws forbidding early marriage (below 18 years of age) andenforce sanctions on perpetrators of this human right abuse after proper-adjudication.

Parents should also be discouraged from the temptation of giving out their female child to marriage at an early age.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that early marriage has significantimpact on educational development of female students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. The study also concluded that the variables of early marriage investigated in this study such as socio-economic background, indiscipline and cultural values as causes of early marriage, impact of early marriage on educational development of female students and ways of curbing scourge of early marriage among female students has significant impact on educational development of female students in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

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