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EARLY MARRIAGE AS CORRELATE OF EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS IN WOMEN DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated early marriage as correlate of educational and vocational aspirations of married female Students in Women Day Secondary School in Maiduguri. The objectives of the study were to determine relationship between early marriage and educational aspirations of married female students in women day secondary school in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The study further investigate relationship between early marriage and vocational aspirations of married female students in women day secondary school in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design to correlate early marriage, educational and vocational aspirations among married female secondary school students. The population

Keywords: Early Marriage, Educational Aspirations, Vocational Aspirations, Married Female Students.

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of the study was 1,554 married female students. Three hundred and seven (307) married female students were sampled through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated and pilot tested using Cronbah's alpha, the result of pilot test which yielded a reliability coefficient of (r = 0.97) (r = 0.93) Cronbach Alpha. The study concludes that early marriage has negative relationship with educational and vocational aspirations of female students in Women Day Secondary School in Maiduguri, Borno State. Based on the findings, Borno State Government should open functional Counselling centers in every institution, workplaces and communities to meet up students' problems on education, economic, social and vocational. Implementation of mentorship programs that will connect girls with successful professionals in their desired field.

Introduction

Education is a basic tool that can be given to women to fulfill their roles as full members of the society. This is because education improves the mind and it has the ability to rectify and modify certain elements of human behaviour. Hence, women from different cultures can relate positively to this achieved status if they are educated. National Policy on Education (2013) sees education as the process which helps to develop the total man politically, physically, mentally, socially and technologically to enable individuals' function effectively in any given environment in which the person may find himself/herself. Similarly, education of women benefits not only the women but also the society at large. Education has been accepted universally as one of the catalysts used for social, economic and technological development. Indeed, no nation which wishes unto greater heights, will easily neglect the need for the provision of education to all its citizens.

Early marriage refers to any marriage agreement of a child below the age of 18, in accordance with the article of one of the conventions of the right of the child Foundation for Women's Health Research Development (FORWARD) (2011), according to United Nation Children's Education Fund UNICEF (2001), early

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marriage refers to the practice of marriage during or before adolescence. Although the perception of early marriage varies from one geographical location to another. In most developed countries like America and Asia, Johnson and Dye (2005) observed that early marriage in America could mean marrying before the age of 23. Developing countries and rest of the world stick to the collectively accepted minimum age of 18 years for marriage.

Educational aspirations are the goals and ambitions individuals have for their academic pursuits. These aspirations are influenced by various factors, including personal interests, family background, societal expectations, access to educational resources, socio-economic status, race and gender. Individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have higher educational aspirations due to greater exposure to educational opportunities, role models, resources, self-efficacy, motivation and goal setting that influence individuals' beliefs about their own capabilities and their aspirations for educational success. Studies indicates that early marriage often acts as a significant barrier to educational attainment.

Girls who marry early are more likely to drop out of school or have limited educational opportunities compared to their unmarried counterparts. This is primarily due to a range of factors directly associated with early marriage. One of the key factors is the interruption of education that occurs when girls are married off at early age. Early marriage often forces girls to abandon their education, as they are expected to assume adult responsibilities, such as managing household chores, bearing children and fulfilling societal expectations of a married woman. These responsibilities consume their time and energy, leaving little room for pursuing educational goals.

Vocational aspirations are the wish to select occupations to earn a living (Oscar, 2009). Vocational aspirations therefore, refers to decision made by a student on his/her upcoming work, career on profession or occupation. Access to vocational training opportunities by students permit them choose the profession of their choice according to their abilities, skills and interests

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(Osamaigo & Oniyama, 2009). According to Arikpo (2007), vocational education is that education which empowers Nigerians to acquire the necessary skills and competencies for occupations which result in self-sufficiency and self-dependency.

Women who marry early often face increased health risks due to early pregnancies, inadequate reproductive health care and higher vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections. Education is often disrupted, limiting their opportunities for personal development and economic independence. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty and affects societal progress. Early marriage is often associated with societal norms and cultural practices that prioritize traditional gender roles and domestic responsibilities over educational and professional pursuits for women. Such cultural pressures can discourage girls from pursuing their educational and vocational goals, reinforcing oppressive gender stereotypes and limiting their choices for the future.

Early marriage significantly impacts the educational and vocational aspirations of females. It perpetuates gender inequalities, limits access to education and hinders opportunities for professional growth. Addressing this problem necessitates a concerted effort to challenge cultural norms, enhance educational opportunities and provide support mechanisms to empower young females to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to determine:

1. relationship between early marriage and educational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.
2. relationship between early marriage and vocational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

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Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1: there is no significant relationship between early marriage and educational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: there is no significant relationship between early marriage and vocational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Related Literature Review

Marriage is seen as a union born out of love, provides a source of social recognition and a gate way to level procreation, responsibilities and belief. Bama (2018) carried out a study on educational aspirations of secondary school girls in rural areas and their incidence on academic achievement. The sample consisted of 165 female students from three secondary schools in Fungom Sub-Division of the North-West Region of Cameroon. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting the sample. Three research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Information about their academic performance was obtained from school records. Frequencies, percentages, t-test and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) were used in analysing the data. The analysis of data collected were done manually and with the aid of a statistical package.

The findings showed that girls in Fungom feel that education is important and have an average self-esteem. About 47% of secondary school girls aspire to secondary high school while 52% aspire to obtain University degrees. Secondary school girls in Fungom have limited range of vocational interests, there is a low correlation between educational aspirations and academic achievement of girls in this study and girls with high educational aspirations perform better than those with low educational aspirations.

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Chawla (2018) examined educational aspirations of secondary school students in relation to their achievement scores. The study was guided by three objectives and three hypotheses. The population for the study comprised of all the secondary students from Panipat City, India. Stratified and simple random sampling were used, 200 students were taken randomly as sample, 100 students from two governments and two private schools. Mean, S.D, t-test and Correlation techniques were used to analyse the data. The finding showed that, significance of mean difference in educational aspiration among government and private school students came out to be 1.86, which is not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance, which implies that there is no significant difference in educational aspiration of government and private secondary school students. There is no significant gender difference in educational aspiration of secondary school students too. The findings of the study also indicate that, value of "r" is 0.68 and approximately 0.7 shows that, there exists a moderate degree positive correlation between educational aspirations and academic achievements of secondary school students studied.

Ross, Glewwe, Prudencio and Wydick (2018) examined whether international child sponsorship increases educational and vocational aspirations among a sample of 2,022 sponsored children in Kenya, Indonesia and Mexico. Survey research design was used. The data used for the study were analyzed using simple percentages. The findings indicated that, sponsorship increased indices of self-esteem by 0.24σ, optimism by 0.26σ and expected education by 0.43 years. There are also positive but mostly insignificant effects on vocational aspirations and a significant increase in an overall aspirations index of 0.29σ.

Raja and Pandian (2018) investigated the level of educational aspiration of high school students in Tamil Nadu, Karapakkam, Chennai. Normative survey method was used for the study and simple random sampling technique were used to select 819 samples from Villupuram district in Tamilnadu. Two objectives were raised and two hypotheses were tested. Data for the study were analysed using SPSS and descriptive analysis, differential analysis and

ANOVA statistical techniques were utilized in the study. The findings revealed that rural and urban school student is not significant difference in the level of educational aspiration and no significant difference among the educational status of parents (illiterate/School Education/Higher Education) in the level of educational aspiration of high school students.

NPC and ICF (2019) investigated career aspirations of women in 21st century and reported that women, who marry early, consider their jobs to take second place next to marriage and childbearing. The findings found out that, socio-cultural practices and geographical locations hinder students on vocational aspiration. Early marriage has a lot of influence on the vocational choice of the children.

Rukhadze (2018) carried out a study on early marriage as a barrier to the career and educational opportunities for the youths in Georgia. The survey aimed to study the effect of early marriage on education and career opportunities of adolescents. The survey was conducted with 45 respondents (28 women & 17 men). The findings showed that early marriage is a barrier to education, which later reduces employment opportunity as well. Adolescents have positive attitudes towards education, but only 1/5 of them were able to continue their studies after marriage. About 85% of the adolescents do not have a job, but they received essential financial and psychological support from their parents. Majority of the respondents did not have any specific plans to continue their study. However, they hope that in the future they will be able to get an education and be employed. One of the crucial factors for preventing early marriage is raising of awareness of adolescents, their parents, families and society about the issues such as risks of early marriage and family planning. Besides, it is impotent to provide information and services to adolescents to support their participation in education, improve their employability opportunities and social integration.

Williams, Becky and Theophilus (2018) investigated challenges of women in technical and vocational education in Federal College of Education (Technical)

Gusau. The data for the study were obtained using the administration of questionnaire. The research design for the study was descriptive research survey. The population of the study comprised female students at Federal College of Education (Technical), Gusau, Zamfara State. The sample size was 120 female students. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used in selecting students of the school as respondents. Chi-square test was used to check the impact of the challenges of women in technical and vocational education on their quest for vocational knowledge. It was recommended that, the government should pay stipends, provide good learning environment and necessary educational facilities to women who are into vocational and technical education.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), a correlational study seeks to establish a relationship between two or more variables to determine relationship between the variables. The population for this study comprised of all married female Secondary School Students from JSS 1 to SS 3 in Maiduguri who got married before their 18th birthday. There are one, thousand five hundred and fifty-four (1,554) married students Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of three hundred and seven (307) respondents. The instrument used for this study is Questionnaire for Married Girls in Secondary School (QMGSS). and a coefficient reliability of (r = 0.97) (r = 0.93) were realized. This shows that the instrument was consistent and reliable for the study.

Results

Data were analyzed and presented as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between early marriage and educational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

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Table 3

Results on Relationship between Early Marriage and Educational Aspirations of Married Female Students in Women Day Secondary School Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P-Value	Remarks
Causes of Early Marriage	307	1.4				
Educational Aspirations	307	5.2	2.8	.016	.779	In sig.

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Pearson correlation of early marriage and educational aspirations of married female secondary school students in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria was found to be very weak positive relationship (r = .016, p = .779). Hence, the Ho_1 was accepted. This shows that an increase in early marriage have very little decrease in educational aspirations of married students.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between early marriage and vocational aspirations of married female students in Women Day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Table 4

Results on Relationship between Early Marriage and Vocational Aspirations of Married Female Students in Women Day Secondary School Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P-Value	Remarks
Causes of Early Marriage	307	1.4				
Vocational Aspirations	307	9.9	5.7	-.090	.114	In sig.

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

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The findings show low and negative relationship (not statistically significant) (r = -.090, p = .114). This shows that an increase in early marriage would lead to decrease in vocational aspirations of married female students at women day secondary school Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Hence, the Ho_2 was accepted.

Discussion

The study examined early marriage as correlate of educational and vocational aspirations of married female Students in Women Day Secondary School in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The findings of this study on relationship between early marriage and educational aspirations established that, there was a weak positive and not statistically significant (r = .016, p = .799) between causes of early marriage and educational aspiration of married female secondary students. This shows that an increase in early marriage have very little decrease in educational aspirations of married students. It is also observed that, most of them realized the danger of early marriage to their educational aspirations, that marriage is attached with so many responsibilities such as serving their husbands, children and other domestic activities which incidentally become inhibitive factors to their education. These findings are in consonance with UNICEF (2005) who reported a gloomy picture of vulnerability of girls' possibility of marrying early before 18 years in developing countries and most especially northern Nigeria is a point of concern because its consequences are enormous including educational backwardness and loss of values and status of womenfolk. These findings need the intervention of guidance and counselling; it is important that stringent measures have to be put in place to control its escalation. Those that are in despair are to be encouraged to pick up their pieces and live on.

The finding on relationship between early marriage and vocational aspirations of married female secondary students was found to be low negligible positive and not statistically significant (r = -.092, p = .114). This shows that an increase

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in causes of early marriage would lead to decrease in vocational aspirations. These acts of early marriage plunge the victims into state of despair and blurred future, considering how important a successful woman will be in the home front and national development, if she is accessed to a good and rewarding vocation, her impact will be felt in all aspects of lives and national development (NPC & ICF, 2019). It is found that early marriage influences both educational and vocational aspirations of married female secondary school students negatively, so it should be discouraged at every location, social setting and communities where early marriage practice is prevalent.

Conclusion

Indication from the study shows that early marriage is found to have negative relationship on both educational and vocational aspirations of married girl students of Women Day Secondary in Maiduguri. This is because of several forms of pressures applied. Some examples are, family responsibilities, spousal influence, number of siblings and the like. This is a signal of a bleak future according to UNICEF (2005) if it is allowed to continue eating deep into the society. Most female students who got married before attaining 18 years are going to continue in abject poverty, low education, unskilled laborers and low economic/societal status. Therefore, counselling is recommended as one of the decisions for curtailing it prevalence amid the girl-child.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Borno State Government should open functional guidance and counselling centres in every institution and communities to meet up students' problems on education, economic, social and vocational.
2. Implementation of mentorship programs that will connect girls with successful professionals in their desired field.

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