

**INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON THE EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT OF ADOLESCENCE IN OVIA NORTH EAST
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE**

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APRIL, 2024

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING
PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR SCIENCE IN EDUCATION
(B.Sc.Ed) IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

APRIL, 2024

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Ruth Emoshogwe ALFRED of the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (Ed.) Degree in Guidance and Counselling.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His love, mercy and grace and to my parents for their relentless supports and encouragements towards the completion of this programme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher expresses appreciation to God for his mercy, strength, protection, provision and grace during the completion of this project work and throughout my stay in the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology, University of Benin. The researcher extends a special gratitude to my project supervisor, Dr. Friday Egberha for his guidance and support throughout the course of this research and to Dr. Mrs. M.U. Orheruata the Head of the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology as well as all teaching and non-teaching staff of the Department for their contributions towards my academic Success.

Furthermore, the researcher wishes to express and acknowledge my Parents and my Siblings for their relentless support, financial contribution and prayers to ensure the completion of my educational pursuit; Mr. Sunny Alfred, Mrs. Celina Alfred, Bro Biggie, Mummy Dominion, Samuel, Bro David and Osilama and the rest of my family members. The researcher is also grateful to friends Ochai Roselyn, Oriname Jerry, Debbie, Destro, Andre (pope), Tobi, Muller, DeeJay, Odun, Shadow and to everyone I met along the way of my educational pursuit. God bless you all!

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the influence of Early Marriage on the Educational Attainment of Adolescents in Ovia North East Local Government.

To achieve the purpose intended for the study, four research questions were raised to guide the study, a survey research design was used, and the population of the research was made up of all the public junior secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government. Two hundred (200) students, twenty-five (25) teachers were selected from four public junior secondary schools using simple random sampling techniques and a questionnaire served as the research instrument. The reliability was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical to determine its reliability of 0.75 reliability index was obtained. The data collated were analyzed using mean and a mean bench mark of 2.50, simple percentage, tables, etcetera. The results obtained from the analysis were quite revealing and instructive.

At the end of the study the findings revealed that there is a Relationship Between Early Marriage and Educational Attainment in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. This is hinged on the fact as agreed by the respondents that; Early marriage negatively impacts educational attainment, Early marriage limits opportunities for educational advancement, there is a correlation between early marriage and lower educational attainment, delaying marriage cannot lead to higher educational achievements and Societal norms regarding marriage influence educational decisions. It is suggested that putting in place gender-sensitive laws and initiatives that support equal access to education for both sexes while simultaneously removing societal and financial constraints that can disproportionately impede girls' educational opportunities is one way to help with this.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Early marriage, often defined as marriage occurring before the age of 18 years, is a prevalent global issue. It is deeply influenced by cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and gender dynamics (UNICEF, 2014). While early marriage affects both boys and girls, girls tend to be disproportionately impacted due to a higher prevalence among them (Lloyd,2005). Early marriage can have a profound impact on adolescents' educational attainment. Numerous studies have found that early marriage is associated with an increased risk of school dropout, limiting educational opportunities for affected individuals (Lloyd, 2005). This often results from a combination of factors, including societal expectations for girls to assume domestic roles, early childbearing, and limited access to educational resources (Raj,2010).

In addition to disrupting formal education, early marriage can lead to adverse psychosocial consequences. Adolescents in early marriages may experience heightened vulnerability to domestic violence and face

challenges in balancing their roles as spouses and students (Santhya, 2010). Moreover, early marriage can have a significant economic impact. Research has shown that individuals who marry early tend to experience reduced economic prospects, as they often lack the educational qualifications necessary for higher-paying jobs (Raj, 2010). In response to these challenges, various international conventions and legal frameworks have been established to address early marriage, emphasizing the importance of protecting the rights of children and adolescents, including their right to education (UNICEF, 2019).

In traditional African society, the role of female was pegged and circumscribed. It was considered a taboo sending a female to school. This is because of the attitude towards of education for women. It was considered a waste of money, time and effort considering that most women in no time get married into another family, to raise the children that serve as farm hands for their father. In addition to raising the children for the man, the women still helped to keep the house and provide meal for all. Hence the saying some years back that women's education ends in the kitchen. This primitive attitude exposes women to early marriage.

It is on this background that Okeke (2004) opined that who so neglect learning in his youth loses the past and is dead for the future. Ocho (1988) is of the opinion that the central purpose of education is virtue or character training, acquisition of knowledge, understanding and physical skills. Early marriage has a number of negative consequences for girls' and society's well-being, including a sudden halt or delay in educational attainment, a lack of economic empowerment, and a lack of knowledge about reproductive health services that would enable them to make informed decisions, leverage resources, and participate in community decision-making. Poverty, unexpected pregnancy, parental pressure, peer pressure, and developmental stage are some of the causes often cited as reasons for females marrying young. It has a bad impact on the female kid, which includes emotional and mental discomfort, intolerance, school drop-out, Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF) sickness, early widowhood, frustration, and hate for the father (Clark, 2016). Many ethnic communities across the globe, including Nigerians, have a tradition of marrying young. It has, however, resulted in a number of detrimental effects for both young girls and the culture in which they live. It

is an affront to human rights in general, and to the rights of girls in particular (Abdallah, 2015).

Early marriage has substantial physical, intellectual, psychological, and emotional consequences for both girls and boys, cutting off educational and professional prospects as well as chances for personal development. The effect is worse on females in Northern Nigeria, where the practice is common, since many of them marry young and with more intensity. Apart from having a detrimental influence on females, early marriage has negative implications for their children, families, and society as a whole (Adedokun, 2007). Early marriage, according to Giyan (2009), also affects international efforts to combat poverty in emerging nations. This underpins essential efforts by the three levels of government to address educational issues, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and other development challenges in developing nations like Nigeria, since the prevalent practice of daughters marriage makes it more difficult for families to escape poverty. If early marriage is permitted, it will have a detrimental impact on the country's labor force, raising fertility and death rates, among other things. The incorrect thinking of parents in attempting to pervert their daughter's virginity has resulted in a

rise in maternal mortality and the chance of contracting a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) (Gupta, 2014). It's alarming to learn that Kano is one of the states with the highest proportion of married teens. An effort will be made to assess the effect of early marriage on female academic success in Nigeria in order to find a long-term solution to this heinous trend. The high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections among married adolescents cannot be explained by age differences between the girls and their husbands (Kelly , 2003; Clark, 2004; Karlyn, 2007; Santhya et al, 2013) and the practice's pervasiveness has made a significant contribution to the burden of HIV/AIDS infection and death in Nigeria, which is ranked second among countries with the highest burden of HIV/AIDS, and tenth and eleventh with the highest burden of infant (Tukur et al, 2015; CIA, 2015).

According to studies, the behavior is more common among rural residents, the impoverished, and uneducated, as well as in less-developed regions (Ahmed, 1986; Lesthaeghe et al, 1989; Kabir, 1998; Yabiku, 2003; Saxena et al, 2004; Ikamari, 2005; Adebowale et al, 2012; World Vision UK, 2013; UNICEF, 2014). Nigeria is one of the world's high-risk locations for child marriage due to its high level of illiteracy, poverty, and huge number

of rural people. Despite its extensive use and positive reproductive effects, it is against this background that the researcher intends to evaluate the impact of early marriage practice on academic attainment of females in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Early marriage, contributes significantly to the poor and inadequate access to quality education and attainment of educational programmes. While pockets of non-governmental initiatives to address early pregnancy exist, the signal from the government's end is rather mixed. The national policies such as those on population and adolescent health that explicitly advocates the elimination of child marriage and to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 were resisted by a number of state governments who refused to sign the Child's Rights Act because of its specification of 18 years as the minimum age of marriage. Nigeria has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, 43% of the girls were married before 18 years (UNICEF, 2011 & 2014). The widespread of this practice might not be properly conceived using the national rate; its prevalence and potential adverse effect vary in regions, it is against this problems the researcher

decides to conduct this research on the effects of early marriage practice on girl's education in Nigeria.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised;

1. What are the factors responsible for early marriage among youth of Ovia North East Local Government?
2. Is there a relationship between early marriage and educational attainment?
3. What are the differences existing in education of boys and girls of Ovia North East Local Government?
4. What strategies have been implemented on how early marriage can be stopped in order to improve the educational attainment of females in Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of early marriage practice on academic attainment of females in Nigeria, specifically the study intends to;

- To find out the factors responsible for the practice of early marriage practice of adolescents.
- To examine the effect of early marriage practice on the academic attainment of females.
- To recommend ways early marriage can be stopped in order to improve the educational attainment of adolescents.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of immense benefits and a useful instrument to the teachers, students, curriculum planners, parents and government.

The results of this study will be very useful and beneficial in the following areas; Female students will gain from this study by learning that education is the only way to achieving greater goals in life, and this will help them in correcting the instability that had existed in girl's education. Parents will gain a great deal in this study by getting to learn that women education is not a waste, and also if you educate a man, but if you educate a woman you educate a family, a nation, and this will help change their attitudes and ignorance towards girls education. The findings in this research will expose the government and policy stakeholders, the northerners and the general public on the negative influence early marriage has on the education of

female children and future of female child in Nigeria. The findings in this research will serve as a guide and reference points for other research on early marriage and female children education in Nigeria.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This research work will find out the factors responsible for the practice of early marriage in Nigeria. The study will also examine the effect of early marriage practice on the academic attainment of females in Nigeria. Lastly, the study will recommend ways early marriage can be stopped in order to improve the educational attainment of females in Nigeria. The study is delimited to Ovia North East Local Government, Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria. Hence the study will be confined to adolescents in Nigeria.

Definition of Terms

Adolescence: Adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses.

Early Marriage or Child Marriage: Child marriage is a marriage or union in which one or both spouses are under 18 years old.

Educational Attainment: Educational attainment, defined simply as the highest level of education completed by either the parents or the individual, is another component of SES that is often used to assess social status.

Marriage: Marriage is the legal relationship between husband and wife.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Concept of Marriage
- Factors Responsible for Early marriage
- Consequences of Early marriage
- Gender difference
- Relevance of female education and their services to the nation
- Summary of related literature review

Concept of Marriage

Marriage, a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any). (Abdullayeva & Engalichev, 2022) The universality of marriage within different societies and cultures is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions for which it provides structure, such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labour between the sexes, economic production and consumption and satisfaction

of personal needs for affection, status and companionship. Perhaps its strongest function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization, and regulation of lines of descent.

Marital Customs and Laws

Some form of marriage has been found to exist in all human societies, past and present. Its importance can be seen in the elaborate and complex laws and rituals surrounding it. Although these laws and rituals are as varied and numerous as human social and cultural organizations, some universals do apply (Chavdarov, 2020). The main legal function of marriage is to ensure the rights of the partners with respect to each other and to ensure the rights and define the relationships of children within a community. Marriage has historically conferred a legitimate status on the offspring, which entitled him or her to the various privileges set down by the traditions of that community, including the right of inheritance. In most societies marriage also established the permissible social relations allowed to the offspring, including the acceptable selection of future spouses (Legal Status of Children Born Outside Marriage in Hindu Community of Bali (Human Rights Perspective), 2015).

Endogamy: The practice of marrying someone from within one's own tribe or group, is the oldest social regulation of marriage. When the forms of communication with outside groups are limited, endogamous marriage is a natural consequence. Cultural pressures to marry within one's social, economic, and ethnic group are still very strongly enforced in some societies.

Exogamy: The practice of marrying outside the group, is found in societies in which kinship relations are the most complex, thus barring from marriage large groups who may trace their lineage to a common ancestor (Akramova & Sadritdinov, 2022)

Marriage Rituals

The rituals and ceremonies surrounding marriage in most cultures are associated primarily with fecundity and validate the importance of marriage for the continuation of a clan, people, or society. They also assert a familial or communal sanction of the mutual choice and an understanding of the difficulties and sacrifices involved in making what is considered, in most cases, to be a lifelong commitment to and responsibility for the welfare of spouse and children.

Marriage ceremonies include symbolic rites, often sanctified by a religious order, which are thought to confer good fortune on the couple. Because economic considerations play an essential role in the success of child rearing, the offering of gifts, both real and symbolic, to the married couple are a significant part of the marriage ritual. Where the exchange of goods is extensive, either from the bride's family to the bridegroom's or vice versa, this usually indicates that the freedom to choose one's marital partner has been limited and determined by the families of the betrothed.

Fertility rites intended to ensure a fruitful marriage exist in some form in all ceremonies. Some of the oldest rituals still to be found in contemporary ceremonies include the prominent display of fruits or of cereal grains that may be sprinkled over the couple or on their nuptial bed, the accompaniment of a small child with the bride, and the breaking of an object or food to ensure a successful consummation of the marriage and an easy childbirth.

The most universal ritual is one that symbolizes a sacred union. This may be expressed by the joining of hands, an exchange of rings or chains, or the tying of garments. However, all the elements in marriage rituals vary

greatly among different societies, and components such as time, place, and the social importance of the event are fixed by tradition and habit.

These traditions are, to a certain extent, shaped by the religious beliefs and practices found in societies throughout the world. In the Hindu tradition, for example, weddings are highly elaborate affairs, involving several prescribed rituals. Marriages are generally arranged by the parents of the couple, and the date of the ceremony is determined by careful astrological calculations. Among most Buddhists marriage remains primarily a secular affair, even though the Buddha offered guidelines for the responsibilities of lay householders.

From its beginnings, Christianity has emphasized the spiritual nature and indissolubility of marriage. Jesus Christ spoke of marriage as instituted by God, and most Christians consider it a permanent union based upon mutual consent. Some Christian churches count marriage as one of the sacraments; other Christians confirm the sanctity of marriage but do not identify it as a sacrament. Since the Middle Ages, Christian weddings have taken place before a priest or minister, and the ceremony involves the

exchange of vows, readings from Scripture, a blessing, and, sometimes, the eucharistic rite.

In Islam marriage is not strictly a sacrament but is always understood as a gift from God or a kind of service to God. The basic Islamic tenets concerning marriage are laid out in the Qur'ān, which states that the marital bond rests on “mutual love and mercy” and that spouses are “each other’s garments.” Muslim men may have up to four wives at one time (though they seldom do), but the wives must all be treated equitably. Marriages are traditionally contracted by the father or guardian of the bride and her intended husband, who must offer his bride the mahr, a payment offered as a gift to guarantee her financial independence (Tsygankov, 2018).

Factors Responsible for Early Marriage

Early marriage affects millions of children throughout the world. Young girls are married when they are still children and as a result are denied fundamental human rights (UNICEF, 2005). According to UNICEF (2005), this early marriage compromises their development and often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, with little education and poor vocational training reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty. Early

marriage is by no means a new phenomenon. It is a socially established practice that has been carried on from generation to generation (Dhital, 2000). Most often, child marriage seems to be considered as a family matter and governed by religion and culture, which ensures its continuity.

According to UNICEF (2005), it is very difficult to get accurate data on the true extent of early marriage. This is because most marriage is not officially registered, and many parents resort to falsifying girls ages. Such acts are made easier in rural areas where birth certificate are often non-existent or not properly recorded. Although early marriage is said to be declining in many parts of the world, the total number of girls affected is very significant and cannot be ignored. The National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPRT, 2010) estimated that over 51 million adolescent girls ages 15-19 are married and are bearing the burden the burden of domestic responsibility. In countries such as South Asia, Nigeria in 2005, 48% (nearly 10 million) of young women were married before the age of 18. Also, despite a shift towards marriages in many parts of the world, in countries of South Asia, Nigeria majority of girls still marry before the age of 18 (65% in Bangladesh, 57% in Nepal, 54% in Afghanistan, and

almost 50% in India) (NIPRT, 2010). One problem in assessing the prevalence of early marriage is that many are unregistered and unofficial and hence, are not a part of any data collection system. Little data exists on marriages under the age of 10, even less on those below that age (UNICEF, 2005).

Some countries do have data. According to Bangladesh's demographic and health survey of 1996-1997, there are 28million adolescents in Bangladesh, 13.7 of these are girls, and the survey reported that more than half the girls below 19 were married and 5% of 10-14years old girls were married. Another survey of women 25-29 years old reported in Bangladesh 81% were married before the age of 18. According to ANNPPCAN (AFRICAN NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 2019), 83% of girls from Nigeria, Nepal marry before they are 15years old. 79.6% Muslim girls marry before they are 15years old. 69.7% girls in the mountainous and hilly regions marry at the age of 15 whereas 55.7% in rural Nepal marry before they turn 15.

Many reasons are given by parents and guardians to justify child marriage. These reasons are economic reason, early marriage as a way of protecting the girls, ignorance of parents and marriage alliance and traditions. Considering economic reasons, poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage (UNICEF, 2001). In many of the cases, the families are in poverty, and one less daughter is one less mouth to feed. Poor families may regard young girls as an economic burden and the practice of early marriage is an act of unburdening and a coping strategy. According to Innocent (2001), if poverty is acute, a young girls presence in the house is felt as unbearable and her marriage to a much older or elderly man who can pay a very high price may be seen as her interest. In this sense, poverty becomes a primary reason for child marriage because of perceived benefits to the family and the daughter. Boys forced into early marriage may also suffer financially. Economic responsibilities can place heavy burdens on them and curtail their education sooner than they might want. However, while boys can leave their wives at their parents homes and seek employment opportunities elsewhere, this option is likely not available to the majority of young wives.

Early marriage is also one way to ensure that a wife is protected and placed firmly under male control, that she is submissive to her husband and works hard to take care of her children. According to Black (2005), early marriage invariably creates a large gap between 7-9 years. The customary age difference helps to preserve the traditional cultural pattern of an older husband dominating a much younger wife.

According to Dhaka (1999), social pressure seems to be a major factor in the girls' decision to marry young. If the girl is still single at the age of 15, her relatives, neighbours, and fellow villagers start to question her chastity and health. There is a lot of pressure on parents to ensure that society does not have any influence over their daughters. A common strategy for preventing a daughter from losing her virginity in an erroneous sexual encounter is early marriage. In many societies, the greatest embarrassment a family may experience is when a girl loses her virginity before being married. Many parents force their daughter into an early marriage out of a desire to preserve the girl's virginity. Displaced populations living in refugee camp may feel unable to protect their daughters from rape, and so marriage to a warlord or authority figure may provide improved protection.

Poverty

Poverty appears to be the reason most commonly cited by girls and family members as the driving decision to marry young. Scholars like Nidhi Sadana Sabharwal (2009) and Stephanie L. Smith (2017) analyze the gendered implications of poverty on child marriage. They discuss how poverty disproportionately affects girls and contributes to their vulnerability to early marriage, as families may prioritize economic considerations over the well-being and rights of their daughters. Families experiencing extreme financial hardship arrange marriages for their daughters specifically because of lack of food. Poor families also have an incentive to marry their daughters off when they are younger and require less of a dowry. Girl's families traditionally have to give a "dowry" in the form of cash, jewelry or goods to the groom's family for the wedding. Nicole Shechtman (2019) examines the cultural and social norms that perpetuate child marriage, including beliefs about gender roles, purity, and honor. Child brides are considered beautiful and pure which requires less of a dowry than an older girl who will require a more expensive dowry. In countries where the groom's family pays the bride

a price, parents in difficult circumstances may marry off their daughters as a source of income

Ignorance of Parents

Adichie, (2014) noted that no mother and father of any girl should see the investment in the girl as made solely to enhance her bride price when a suitor knocks. Parents must realise that their daughters are not articles for sell and therefore should see education as a way of making the child less dependence on them. Most parents are ignorance of the fact that the education given to a child will be of great importance to them. They tend to leave the girl child uneducated because she will get married soon. This poses a problem to the education of the girl child.

Marriage Alliance and Traditions

Often marriage arrangements are made between families for dynastic, business, property or conflict resolutions.

In Pakistan, India, Nepal, Nigeria, children may be betrothed or even married while toddlers or well below the age of 10. This custom is perhaps a means of consolidating powerful relations between families, making deals over lands or other property, or settling dispute in the way routinely

conducted between royal houses and aristocratic families throughout history. It may be a way of maintaining or fostering business ties with them. It may also be arranged as a part of the deal to settle a feud between two families. (Black, 2005).

Consequences of Early Marriage

According to UNICEF (2001), the consequences of child marriage are often far wider than just their impact on the individual children affected. The marriage of children has negative effects on families and communities. The practice thrives on poverty and impacts adversely on a country's health and educational sectors.

Early marriage is associated with many consequences. Some of these include health and related outcomes, psychological and emotional disorders, sexual abuse and domestic violence. The physical consequences includes ;

Physical Health: Early marriage can lead to health complications for young brides, including higher risks of maternal and infant mortality, pregnancy-related complications, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Nutritional Health: Young brides may face nutritional deficiencies and inadequate access to healthcare, leading to stunted growth, malnutrition, and other health problems.

Reproductive Health: Early marriage often results in early and frequent pregnancies, increasing the risk of complications during childbirth and limiting women's reproductive choices and autonomy.

The sexual abuse and domestic violence includes;

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Early marriage increases the risk of intimate partner violence, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse perpetrated by husbands or in-laws.

Sexual Exploitation: Young brides may experience sexual coercion, exploitation, and marital rape, with limited ability to negotiate safe and consensual sexual relationships.

Psychological and emotional disorders can also be broken down into:

Mental Health: Early marriage can contribute to psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, especially when young brides face marital pressures, abuse, or lack of support.

Emotional Well-being: Young brides may experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, and inadequacy, particularly if they are forced into marriage against their will or lack agency in decision-making.

Health and Related Outcomes

Erica (2004) stated that the younger the boy or the girl is at a time of marriage, the worse is the abuse of the child and human right, both on grounds of lack of consent and on the grounds of forced early sex. The

implication of females is much severe. The younger the girl at the time of her first sexual relations with early sex much more frequent and less likely to be consensual within marriage than outside marriage the greater the chance of severe pain, physical damage, and of birthing complication and injury.

Research by UNICEF (2014) highlights the increased vulnerability of child brides to sexual violence within marriage, including forced early sex and non-consensual sexual relations. The power dynamics inherent in child marriages often leave young brides with limited agency and autonomy, making them more susceptible to sexual coercion and abuse by their husbands. A study by Clark and Hatton (2017) found that girls married at a young age are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence and coercion within marriage compared to older brides. The lack of legal protection and social support systems further exacerbates the vulnerability of child brides to sexual abuse and exploitation. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2013) highlights the adverse health consequences of early sexual initiation, particularly for girls. Early sexual relations, especially within the context of child marriage, increase the risk of severe pain, physical trauma, and

reproductive health complications, including birthing injuries and maternal mortality.

Studies by Santhya et al(2010) and Raj et al. (2010) emphasize the link between early marriage, early sexual debut, and adverse reproductive health outcomes for girls, including higher rates of pregnancy-related complications, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and maternal mortality.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

It is common sense to assume that girls who marry before 18 will usually have more children (Black 2005). Early child bearing has long been seen as a risk to maternity, contributing significantly to large families. Girls who are married young have large number of child bearing years, and are likely prone to miscarriages, infant death, malnutrition, cervical cancer and maternal death.

Adhkari (2002) stated that not only mothers but offspring born too early in their mothers lives are at increased risk of illness and death. The babies are not healthier, weaker and many do not survive childhood. Infant mortality are two times higher among children of very young mothers than those of older peers (UNICEF, 2001). The health problems linked to early

marriage not only affect the pregnant mother but likely continue after childbirth. Complications are more likely during pregnancy and birth purely because of the mothers age.

According to Black (2005), a large proportion of reproductive and sexual health concerns of adolescent girls and women root from early marriage and early pregnancy. In the context of reproductive health girls faces well- acknowledge risks. These may includes problem of giving birth when the pelvis and birth canals are still under-developed which leads to an increased risk of complications during delivery including protracted labour. Mother aged less than 15 are especially vulnerable to fistulae relentless pressure from baby's skull can damage the birth canal causing breakage in the wall. A girl or a woman with this condition surgery is not only in constant pain but will be socially ostracized and many well be divorced because of this (black, 2005). Adhkari (2002) stated that the perils of child marriage are not limited to only health complications during pregnancy but in many cases during postnatal period, because of the prolapsed uterus, they suffer from backache experience difficulties while walking, working and this makes the situation worse.

Increased Risks of Contracting Sexual Transmitted Disease and HIV

Early marriage threatens girls health and the health of their children. Majority of girls who are married tend to have higher rate of HIV infection than their sexually active unmarried peers (Adhkari, 2002). Early sexual activity with marriage is even more likely to expose young people to sexually transmitted infections than sex outside marriage.

Psychological and Emotional Disorders

Girls who are forced into marriage at early ages usually drop out of school (Sakellariou, 2013; Williamson, 2014). The opportunity to reach higher education levels vanishes, especially once they have children. Child care responsibilities and household chores contribute to blocked educational opportunities. The ideal is that girls take advantage of the opportunities to pursue education. In many countries, scholarships are offered for girls to pursue education, at least at the primary education level research by Nour (2009) and Mensch et al. (2005) highlights the detrimental effects of early marriage on educational attainment, particularly for girls. Early marriage often leads to school dropout, limiting opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and socio-economic advancement.

Studies by Lannen and Dorn (2014) and UNFPA (2012) emphasize the psychological and emotional toll of early marriage on adolescents, including feelings of isolation, loss of autonomy, and diminished self-esteem. The disruption of educational trajectories further compounds these challenges, hindering individuals' ability to achieve their full potential and pursue their aspirations. However, due to sociocultural norms and pragmatic considerations such as those found in this research, options are not always readily available for girls. Restrained within the families, probably even coupled with parental abuse, underage girls are often pushed out of their old lives into new ones with their spouses. Those who are fortunate may achieve better lives. But for those less fortunate, they frequently fall into the trap of violence at the hand of their spouses and their spouses' families. According to psychologists working in the area of emotion and personality, a girl who by early marriage loses her childhood and all pleasurable emotions attached to it, will have a difficult time developing self-concept with personality traits of concern and care which allows for creating environments leading to the enhancement of others including her own children. A girl married at the age of 13 with an incomplete education, is likely to do the same to her daughter.

The WHO (2013) and UNICEF (2014) highlight the adverse health outcomes associated with early marriage, including higher risks of maternal mortality, pregnancy-related complications, and poor reproductive health outcomes for both girls and boys. Early marriage often leads to early and frequent childbearing, exacerbating health risks and limiting individuals' ability to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

According to UNICEF (2001), for both boys and girls, early marriage profound physical, intellectual, psychological, and emotional impacts, cutting off educational opportunity and chances of personal growth. In addition for boys, early marriage brings increased finance responsibility early on. For girls, it signifies an end to individual will, aspiration, and plunges them to a cycle of early pregnancy, poor health, and frequent-childbearing and, somewhere in between, the possibility of an untimely death , Children born to adolescent mothers are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, limited educational attainment, and socio-economic disadvantages, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.(Chatterji, 2005).

Sexual Exploitation or Abuse

According to Dhaka (2003), early marriage can be regarded as a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children, where a child is to be used for sexual purposes through marriage, in exchange for cash, good or kind. Many such marriages are performed under physical and emotional pressure or when one of the parties gains financially or in kind by arranging the marriage. Research in India (Calcuta) revealed that almost half of the women patients in the hospital interviewed had been married at or below the age of 15 with the youngest being married at 7years. This age group seems to have one of the highest rates of vulnerability to sexual violence in marriage, second only to those whose dowry had not been paid. The women had forced sexual intercourse before menstruation. The sex was early and painful and many still continued to be forced into sexual activity by their husbands.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is more common for women who were married as children.

Kabir (1999) stated that women who marry at younger ages are more likely to believe that it is sometimes acceptable for a husband to beat his wife and are more likely to suffer domestic violence. While most available information on violent abuse is anecdotal, consisting of interviews with girls who have suffered trauma as a result of their marriages. According to (Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice, UNICEF,2005), various countries show an alarmingly large number of teenage wives beaten by their spouses. India has the highest level of domestic violence among women married by 18 with a rate of 67%. In Bangladesh, domestic violence is socially not often recognized as a crime and remains the biggest threat to women's security. (International Center for Research on Women,2014). There are additional problem encountered by the girl if the boy she marries is also underage. He is often not able to protect her which makes the minor girls doubly vulnerable to violence, abuse and indignity. She often gets subjected to more abuse, harassment and rape from older men in the family like the father-in-law, brother-in-law, and uncles.

Gender Difference

Socialization is the method of learning culture and the acquisition of learned behaviour. Sexism entails prejudices and discrimination on the basis of gender; specifically women are the objects of sexism. This report by (Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality" UNESCO, 2020) explores the persistent barriers to girls' education, including societal attitudes, gender stereotypes, and discriminatory practices. It discusses how sexism manifests in various forms, such as limited access to education, early marriage, and unequal opportunities in the workforce. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of addressing gender-based discrimination and promoting gender equality in education to ensure that all children, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to learn and thrive. She added that it is in early development that the social inferiority of women is inculcated and internationalized. The attitude that girls education is a waste is revealed in many practices such as refusal to send them to school at all, the early withdrawal from school for the purpose of marriage and assigning to girls a disproportionate share of house in comparison with their brothers. Even where girls are fortunate to attain some levels of education, it is usual

to find that majority are relegated to Feminine professions like teaching, nursing and clerical jobs.

This report by the World Bank (2019) explores the changing dynamics of work and the challenges faced by women and girls in accessing education and economic opportunities. It discusses how gender norms and stereotypes limit women's agency and opportunities for education and employment, perpetuating inequalities and hindering economic development. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of challenging gender norms and promoting gender equality to create more inclusive societies and economies. Millions of girls around the world are barred from entering and completing their education due to social norms about gender roles that limit women and girls' agency—the choices they are allowed to make about their own lives. What are these norms? Simply put, norms are social expectations and prescriptions reflected in the informal rules, beliefs, and attitudes of a society.

Relevance of Female Education and their Service to the Nation

Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All". This report by UNESCO discusses the importance of

inclusive education and its impact on social development and gender equality. It emphasizes the role of education in empowering women and girls to participate fully in society, including through intellectual engagement, expression of opinions, and contributions to community development. Additionally, the report highlights the need to overcome barriers to girls' education and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals to realize their potential and contribute to the advancement of society.

Fears should not be entertained that education of women would encourage women to become feminists rather than wives and mothers. Attempt to channel all women into homemaking were not been realists. If women are educated, she will fit well into the society. According to Hall (1976), he stated that “educated women have the opportunity of moving in the circle of intellectual and will be in position to express opinions freely, take part in debates conferences and social gatherings and will be able to contribute her quotation to the development of the social life in the community. This shows that the educated woman is in a better position to appreciate the culture of her country than a non-educated one.

Education of girls has begun to receive the attention it deserved for thousands of years men might have believed that the proper place for the women is the home and that the home can be properly managed by ignorant women. But today, other views seems to be changing the views of women and several influences are steadily changing the old-fashioned attitudes. Fortunate African women who enjoy a good education have proved their abilities in several walks of life. They successfully attended doctors, teachers, lawyers etc. They are also found in industry, commerce and public administration. These set of women have proved the case for women's education by demonstrating their usefulness outside the home. Equally, there is that new desire of educated men marrying educated women, thereby their children having educated mothers. This marks a great change in male attitude to the education of women and a steadily increasing demand for girl's education.

It emphasizes the importance of investing in girls' education as a means to improve the well-being of children and families, citing evidence that educated mothers are more likely to provide better care, nutrition, and educational opportunities for their children. Additionally, the report

highlights the broader social and economic benefits of girls' education, including increased productivity, empowerment, and social cohesion (World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise). Educated mothers know and understand the best method of feeding their children and the type of food that is good for them. This will help to reduce malnutrition among children.

The importance of educating females cannot be over emphasized for women are home builders, there is an adage which says that behind every successful man there is always a woman, therefore behind every successful family there is always a woman and the root of success is education. Educated girls may also result in a decrease of infant and maternal mortality, domestic and sexual violence and child marriages.

Women equally participate in the building of the nation politically, socially, economically, and otherwise. According to Eya (2000), the modern successful woman was one who cooked, cared, for her family, while at the same time being gainfully employed outside her home. In the modern society a woman has to play her part well as a wife, another as a citizen of her community. The roles educated woman play in the nation is very vital as

far as development of a nation is concerned. Women participate in the building of nation, and they are now in every field of knowledge to ensure services e.g.s doctors, magistrates, lawyer, engineers e.t.c. All these shows the services which an educated woman can render to the family and society at large.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The reviewed literature underscores the critical importance of educating youths and the detrimental impact of early marriage on both individuals and society. Early marriage, often driven by poverty and social pressures, deprives girls of education, perpetuates cycles of poverty, and exposes them to various health risks. The consequences extend beyond individual well-being, affecting families, communities, and the overall development of countries. Educating girls emerges as a powerful tool for raising living standards, as educated mothers contribute to better child care and participate in nation-building. However, early marriage remains a significant barrier to educational attainment, with many youths being deprived of schooling due to cultural norms and economic pressures. Addressing early marriage is essential for ensuring the education and well-being of future generations and for fostering broader socio-economic development.

Educating girls is one of the most powerful mechanisms for raising living standards in developing countries because the needs of children are in their mothers' hands; educated mothers know how best to feed their children

reducing malnutrition among them. Educated women participate in building nations politically, socially, economically, etc., ensuring services such as doctors, magistrates, lawyers engineers etc. Finally, early marriage is not what to write home about. It has been found to have negative impacts on the educational attainment of our youths. It has done more harm than good. Many girls of school age are given out for marriage by their parents and Men are encouraging their male children into trading and farming rather than sending them to school. These poses problem to the education system of our country.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the design of the study, the population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, the research instrument, validity of the instrument reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis are discussed.

Design of the Study

This study adopted survey research design. The study determined the influence of early marriage on the educational attainment of youths in Ovia North East Local Government, Benin City, Edo state.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all the JSS3 students in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The population of the study comprised Three Thousand Six Hundred and Ninety (3690) students in the 24 secondary schools and selected teachers in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Four secondary schools were randomly selected. The sample consisted of 200 JSS3 Students and ten (25) teachers from Secondary schools in Ovia North Local Government area, Benin city were equally selected for the study.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researchers. The instrument contains three sections, section A, section B and section C. Each section contains structured questions. Numbering 1-10 for A, 1-8 for B and 6 for C. These questions were used to elicit information from the respondent.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by the researcher supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Educational Evaluation of Counselling psychology.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined by Cronbach Alpha (a) statistical method. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to the students in schools It tested the internal consistency of the group of items.

Reliability of 0.76 was obtained from the questionnaire, which explains that the instruments is reliable for this study.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered by the researcher in the schools selected. All the questions administered were returned immediately.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics; percentage, table and mean were used in the analysis. The statistical tools were employed using the following formular for mean

Where \bar{x} = mean

Σ = sum

f = frequency

X = score

N = total number of score.

Mean $\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma fX}{F}$ or $\frac{\Sigma fX}{N}$.

For percentage values, it was obtained by multiplying 100 all over 1. Research questions 1 and 2 rating were obtained using a four point likert-type questionnaire of SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree), SD

(Strongly Disagree). Their scaling numerical values are: 4,3,2,1 respectively.

The mean was determined by $4+3+2+1=10=10/4 =2.5$.

Decision Rule

The Decision was that any questionnaire item with a mean above 2.5 was viewed as being agreed to by the respondent will be accepted. On the other hand, any questionnaire item that falls on 2.5 and below was regarded as being in disagreement by the respondent.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the result obtained through questionnaires. The data gathered were presented according to the order in which they were arranged in the research questions, simple percentage, table and mean were used to analyze the demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1: Bio Data of Respondents

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
below 11years	16	8.0
11-15years	82	41.0
16-20years	70	35.0
20years-Above	32	16.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 above shows the age grade of the respondents used for this study. 16 respondents which represent 8.0percent of the population are below 11 years. 82 respondents which represent 41.0 percent of the population are between

11-15years.70 respondents which represent 35.0 percent of the population are between 16-20years.32 respondents which represent 16.0 percent of the population are between 20years and above. This then implies that majority of the respondents are teenagers.

Table 2: Class of Respondents

Class	Frequency	Percent
JSS1	68	34.0
JSS2	66	33.0
JSS3	66	33.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2 above shows the class of respondents used for the survey.68 respondents representing 34.0percent of the population are in jss1.66 respondents representing 33.0 percent of the population are in jss2.66 respondents representing 33.0 percent of the population are in jss3. This means that there are more jss1 students in the population, while the population of jss2 and jss3 students are the same.

Table 3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	86	43.0
Female	114	57.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2 above shows the gender of respondents used for the survey. 86 respondents representing 43.0percent of the population are male.114 respondents representing 57.0 percent of the population are female. The data in table 2 reveals that the population of the respondents comprises of more females than males with a difference of 14.0 percent.

Research Question 1: What are the Factors Responsible for Early Marriage Among Youths in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 4: Factors responsible for Early Marriage Among Youths

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	Do you believe family pressure plays a significant role in encouraging early marriage?	730	3.65	Agreed
2	Traditional beliefs and cultural practices encourages early marriage?	629	3.565	Agreed
3	Lack of access to quality education is a significant factor contributing to early marriage in this community?	753	3.765	Agreed
4	Influence from peers contributes to the acceptance of early marriage among youths?	618	3.09	Agreed
5	Financial instability and poverty pushes youth towards early marriage as a means of economic security?	769	3.845	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table 4 shows the responses of respondents on the the Factors Responsible for Early Marriage Among Youths in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Items 1,2,3,4 and 5 with a mean score of

3.65, 3.565, 3.765, 3.09 and 3.845 met the mean bench mark of 2.50 and so were Agreed. This implies that the respondents are in agreement with the factors responsible for early marriage as highlighted in the table above.

Research Question 2: Is There a Relationship Between Early Marriage and Educational Attainment?

Table 5: Relationship Between Early Marriage and Educational Attainment

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	Early marriage negatively impacts educational attainment	683	3.415	Agreed
2	Early marriage limits opportunities for educational advancement.	660	3.3	Agreed
3	There is a correlation between early marriage and lower educational attainment.	695	3.475	Agreed
4	Delaying marriage can lead to higher educational achievements.	501	2.505	Agreed
5	Societal norms regarding marriage influence educational decisions.	618	3.09	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table 5 shows the responses of respondents on the Relationship Between Early Marriage and Educational Attainment in Ovia North East

Local Government Area of Edo State. Items 1,2,3,4 and 5 with a mean score of 3.415, 3.3, 3.475, 2.505 and 3.09 met the mean bench mark of 2.50 and so were Agreed. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that there is a significant relationship between early marriage and educational attainment.

Research Question 3: What are the Differences Existing in Education of Boys and Girls in Ovia North East Local Government?

Table 6: Differences Existing in the Education of Boys and Girls

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	Boys are encouraged more than girls to pursue higher education in Ovia North East Local Government.	94	3.76	Agreed
2	Girls face more societal pressures and cultural barriers to education compared to boys in the area	92	3.68	Agreed
3	Boys and girls receive the same level of encouragement and support from teachers and school administrators in Ovia North East Local Government.	57	2.28	Disagreed
4	Girls have equal opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities compared to boys in Ovia North	92	3.68	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table shows the responses of 25 Teachers picked at random from the selected schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, on the differences existing in the education of boys and girls. Items 1,2 and 4 with a mean score of 3.76, 3.68, and 3.68 met the mean benchmark of 2.50 and so were agreed, while item 3 with a mean score of 2.28 didn't meet the bench mark of 2.50 and as such was termed disagreed. According to the data above, the respondents agreed that; Boys are encouraged more than Girls to pursue higher education in Ovia North East Local Government. The Respondents also agreed that Girls face more societal pressures and cultural barriers to education compared to Boys in the area and that Girls have equal opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities compared to Boys in Ovia North East Local Government. The Respondents Disagreed that Boys and girls receive the same level of encouragement and support from teachers and school administrators in Ovia North East Local Government.

Research Question 4: What strategies have been implemented on how early marriage can be stopped in order to improve the educational attainment of females in Nigeria

Table 7: Strategies Implemented to Stop Early Marriage to Improve Educational Attainment of Females in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
1	Encouraging community engagement and awareness campaigns on the negative impacts of early marriage on girls' education can lead to cultural shifts and behavior change.	762	3.81	Agreed
2	Increasing access to quality education and vocational training opportunities for girls in rural areas can serve as a deterrent to early marriage.	793	3.965	Agreed
3	The government's implementation of comprehensive sex education in schools is an effective strategy to deter early marriage in Nigeria.	562	2.81	Agreed
4	Strengthening partnerships between governmental organizations, NGOs, and community leaders is crucial for effective implementation of strategies to prevent early marriage and improve female educational attainment.	688	3.44	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

The data in table 7 shows the responses of respondents on the the strategies implemented to stop early marriages and improve educational attainment of females in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Items 1,2,3 and 4 with a mean score of 3.81, 3.965, 2.81, 3.44 respectively met the mean bench mark of 2.50 and so were Agreed. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that the implemented strategies above has greatly contributed to the reduction in the rate of early marriages among females and improved the educational attainment of students in Ovia North East Local Government of Edo State.

This section is for parents only. Indicate the answer to the column below and tick (√) where necessary. Questionnaire was administered to 20 parents in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

Table 8

Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
How often do you encounter students who are affected by early marriage in your locality?	80	4.0	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

With a mean score of 4.0, the Respondents agree that they do encounter students who are affected by early marriage in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State.

Table 9

Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
In your opinion, how does early marriage impact the educational attainment of adolescent girls in Ovia North East Local Government?	100	5.0	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

With a mean score of 5.0, the Respondents totally agree that early marriage significantly hinders educational progress and negatively impacts the educational attainment of adolescent girls in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State.

Table 10

Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
Have you observed any specific challenges faced by adolescent girls who are married early in terms of attending school regularly?	100	5.0	Agreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

With a mean score of 5.0, the Respondents totally agree that lack of financial resources for school fees and materials, pressure to fulfill domestic responsibilities, lack of support from family or community, early pregnancy and motherhood, limited access to educational opportunities are all challenges faced by adolescent girls who are married early in terms of attending school regularly in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State.

Table 11

Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
Do you believe there are adequate support systems in place within the school or community to address the educational needs of adolescent girls affected by early marriage?	33	1.65	disagreed

Mean Benchmark: 2.50

With a mean score of 1.65, the Respondents disagreed that there are adequate support systems in place within the school or community to address the educational needs of adolescent girls affected by early marriage in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State.

Table 12

Items	Weighted Response	Mean	Remark
How effective are existing intervention programs or policies in your school or community aimed at mitigating the impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents?	31	1.55	disagreed
Mean Benchmark: 2.50			

With a mean score of 1.55, the Respondents are of the view that existing intervention programs or policies in schools or community aimed at mitigating the impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State are not effective.

Table 13

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Do you believe there is sufficient awareness among teachers, parents, and the community about the negative impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents?	1	1%	19	99%	100%

According to the data above, 1 Respondent representing 1% of the sample population believe there is sufficient awareness among teachers, parents, and

the community about the negative impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents, while 19 Respondents representing 99% believe there is no sufficient awareness among teachers, parents, and the community about the negative impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents in Ovia north East Local government of Edo State are not effective.

Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of the data collected, the researcher was able to arrive at the several findings:

In the Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, peer pressure, traditional beliefs, lack of access to high-quality education, and unstable finances are the main causes of early marriage among young people. Early marriage undermines adolescent growth, resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, which sustains poverty, as highlighted by UNICEF (2005). According to Dhital (2000), early marriage is perpetuated because it is frequently seen as a family issue that is impacted by culture and religion.

Early marriage in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State hampers educational attainment, limiting opportunities and correlating with lower achievement levels. Respondents agree that societal norms influence this, as delaying marriage is not seen to lead to higher education. Hall (1976) emphasizes the importance of education for women, enabling participation in intellectual circles and socioeconomic advancement.

Boys are encouraged more than girls to pursue higher education in Ovia North East Local Government. Girls, on the other hand, face cultural and societal barriers as well as unequal support from teachers and administrators. However, there are equal opportunities for extracurricular activities. The wider advantages of females' education are emphasised in the 2018 World Development Report. Parents observe that females who marry young have a variety of difficulties, such as limited support, home obligations, and financial limitations. Because there are limited support networks and understanding of the effects of early marriage on schooling, current measures to lessen these effects are considered unsuccessful.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes the study's overview as well as the conclusion that was reached after the data gathered for the investigation was analyzed. The suggestions made in light of the study's findings are also emphasized.

Summary

This study was designed to investigate the influence of Early Marriage on the Educational Attainment of Adolescents in Ovia North East Local Government. To achieve the purpose intended for the study, four research questions were raised to guide the study, a descriptive survey design was used, and the population of the research was made up of all the public junior secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government. Two hundred (200) students, twenty- five (25) teachers were selected from four public junior secondary schools using simple random sampling techniques and a questionnaire served as the research instrument. The reliability was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical to determine its reliability of 0.75 reliability index was obtained. The data collated were analyzed using mean and a mean bench mark of 2.50, simple

percentage, tables, etcetera. The results obtained from the analysis were quite revealing and instructive.

Findings from the study revealed that:

1. The Factors Responsible for Early Marriage Among Youths in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State are as follows: family pressure, Traditional beliefs and cultural practices, Lack of access to quality education is a significant factor contributing to early marriage, Influence from peers contributes to the acceptance of early marriage among youths and Financial instability and poverty pushes youth towards early marriage as a means of economic security
2. There is a Relationship Between Early Marriage and Educational Attainment in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. This is hinged on the fact as agreed by the respondents that; Early marriage negatively impacts educational attainment, Early marriage limits opportunities for educational advancement, there is a correlation between early marriage and lower educational attainment, delaying marriage cannot lead to higher educational achievements and Societal norms regarding marriage influence educational decisions.

3. The differences existing in education of boys and girls in Ovia North East Local Government includes the fact that boys are encouraged more than girls to pursue higher education, girls face more societal pressures and cultural barriers to education compared to boys in the area, boys and girls doesn't receive the same level of encouragement and support from teachers and school administrators in Ovia North East Local Government and girls have equal opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities compared to boys.
4. To prevent child marriage and boost female education in Nigeria, efforts include promoting community involvement and raising awareness about the harms of early marriage on girls' education. Providing quality education and career training in rural areas discourages young marriage. Nigeria's government has implemented comprehensive sex education in schools to deter early marriage. Strengthening ties between NGOs, government, and community leaders is crucial for effective policy execution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the pervasive practice of early marriage presents a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching implications for the educational, socioeconomic, and psycho-social well-being of girls, particularly in regions such as Nigeria where it remains prevalent. Rooted in deeply entrenched cultural norms, socioeconomic disparities, and gender inequalities, early marriage perpetuates a cycle of limited opportunities and restricted agency for affected individuals, particularly young girls.

It is evident that early marriage not only disrupts formal education but also undermines the development of essential life skills and agency among girls, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. The adverse psycho-social consequences, including heightened vulnerability to domestic violence and challenges in balancing familial responsibilities with educational aspirations, further compound the negative impact of early marriage on girls' well-being.

Efforts to combat early marriage must be holistic, addressing root causes such as poverty, gender inequality, and inadequate access to education and healthcare. Empowering girls through education, economic

opportunities, and access to reproductive health services is crucial in breaking the cycle of early marriage and ensuring the fulfillment of their rights and potential. In essence, the challenge of early marriage demands sustained commitment, collaboration, and advocacy at all levels of society. Only through concerted efforts to address the underlying drivers and promote the rights and well-being of girls can meaningful progress be achieved in eradicating this harmful practice and creating a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the early marriage effects on adolescent education and well-being in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Factors like cultural norms, lack of education, economic hardship, and limited access to reproductive health services contribute to early marriage among youth in Ovia North East. To address this, Government must implement comprehensive sexuality education in schools and

2. There is a relationship between early marriage and educational attainment, as early marriage often interrupts or prevents young people, particularly girls, from completing their education. One recommendation to address this is to implement policies that raise the legal age of marriage and enforce laws against child marriage, coupled with comprehensive programs that promote access to education for both genders and provide support for married adolescents to continue their schooling.
3. In Ovia North East, differences in enrollment rates, access to resources, and social expectations could all contribute to differences in education between boys and girls. Putting in place gender-sensitive laws and initiatives that support equal access to education for both sexes while simultaneously removing societal and financial constraints that can disproportionately impede girls' educational opportunities is one way to help with this.
4. Developing extensive community-based education programs that target parents, community leaders, and young people themselves is one way to stop early marriage and raise females' educational

achievement in Nigeria. These initiatives should tackle cultural norms and financial obstacles that lead to early marriage in addition to highlighting the value of education for both boys and girls. Incentives and scholarships for girls to pursue higher education can also lessen the financial strain on families and motivate them to give their daughters' education first priority and Strengthening partnerships between governmental

By implementing these recommendations in a coordinated and sustained manner, stakeholders can work towards creating an enabling environment that protects the rights and promotes the well-being of girls in Nigeria, ultimately contributing to their educational attainment, empowerment, and future prospects.

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APPENDIX

DEPARRTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADOLESCENT QUESTIONNAIRE (IEMEAAQ)

Dear respondents,

I am a final year student of the above named department and institution. I am carrying out a research project on the influence of Early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents in Ovia North East Local Government. The research is purely for academic purposes, any information received from you will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I would appreciate it if you can help by filling this questionnaire accurately with sincerity. Thank you for your cooperation. This questionnaire is divided into three section A,B and C according to the research questions.

You are therefore required to respond according.

SECTION A

Complete this section by choosing the alternative that best suits you. Tick (√) for the correct response.

Name of School: _____

Sex: Male () Female ()

Age: _____

Please respond to the following statement in terms of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). TICK (✓) as appropriate.

	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	What are the factors responsible for early marriage among youth of Ovia North East Local Government				
1	Do you believe family pressure plays a significant role in encouraging early marriage?				
2	Traditional beliefs and cultural practices encourage early marriage among youth in Ovia North East Local Government.				
3	Lack of access to quality education is a significant factor contributing to early marriage in this community.				
4	Influence from peers contributes to the acceptance of early marriage among youth.				
5	Financial instability and poverty pushes youth towards early marriage as a means of economic security.				
	Is there a relationship between early marriage and educational attainment	SA	A	D	SD
6	Early marriage negatively impacts educational attainment.				
7	Early marriage limits opportunities for educational advancement.				
8	There is a correlation between early marriage and lower educational attainment.				
9	Delaying marriage can lead to higher educational achievements.				
10	Societal norms regarding marriage influence educational decisions.				

SECTION B

	What are the differences existing in education of boys and girls of Ovia North East Local Government	SA	A	D	SD
1	Boys are encouraged more than girls to pursue higher education in Ovia North East Local Government.				
2	Girls face more societal pressures and cultural barriers to education compared to boys in the area				
3	Boys and girls receive the same level of encouragement and support from teachers and school administrators in Ovia North East Local Government.				
4	Girls have equal opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities compared to boys in Ovia North East Local Government.				
	What strategies have been implemented on how early marriage can be stopped in order to improve the educational attainment of females in Nigeria				
5	Encouraging community engagement and awareness campaigns on the negative impacts of early marriage on girls' education can lead to cultural shifts and behavior change.				
6	Increasing access to quality education and vocational training opportunities for girls in rural areas can serve as a deterrent to early marriage.				
7	The government's implementation of comprehensive sex education in schools is an effective strategy to deter early marriage in Nigeria.				
8	Strengthening partnerships between governmental organizations, NGOs, and community leaders is crucial for effective implementation of strategies to prevent early marriage and improve female educational attainment.				

SECTION C

This section is for teacher only. Indicate the answer to the column below and tick (✓) where necessary.

1. How often do you encounter students who are affected by early marriage in your school? Very often () Often () Occasionally () Rarely () Never ()
2. In your opinion, how does early marriage impact the educational attainment of adolescent girls in Ovia North East Local Government? Significantly hinders educational progress () Somewhat hinders educational progress () No significant impact () Somewhat enhances educational progress () Significantly enhances educational progress ()
3. Have you observed any specific challenges faced by adolescent girls who are married early in terms of attending school regularly? (Select all that apply) Lack of financial resources for school fees and materials () Pressure to fulfill domestic responsibilities () Lack of support from family or community () Early pregnancy and motherhood () Limited access to educational opportunities ()
4. Do you believe there are adequate support systems in place within the school or community to address the educational needs of adolescent girls affected by early marriage? Strongly Agree () Agree () Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
5. How effective are existing intervention programs or policies in your school or community aimed at mitigating the impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents? Very effective () Effective () Somewhat effective () Ineffective () Very ineffective ()
6. Do you believe there is sufficient awareness among teachers, parents, and the community about the negative impact of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescents? True () False ()