

EFFECTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON FEMALE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT IN JOS SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of early marriage on female students' academic attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The researchers used descriptive survey research design. The design was suitable for the study since the data collected were from questionnaire students of secondary schools. The researcher raised 2 objectives and 2 research questions. A questionnaire of 15 items were designed and given to students in the selected junior secondary schools by the researcher for proper monitoring of the questions and further explained how the respondents will fill the questions. The researcher used 100 students. 100 questionnaires were given to the teachers and students of the study area. All the questionnaires were returned to the researcher for analyses. The mean, standard deviation and SPSS were used to analyze the research questions. The study revealed effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment include; Students dropped out of school due to child marriage, early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications, early marriage leaves the child with little or no education and early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood, which affects the education of girls in schools. The study recommended among others that there should be counseling unit with the responsibility of educating and enlightening the female students on academic issues by Ministry of education. Also, Policies concerning girl child education should be strictly followed by the government to create awareness the effects of early marriage.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Early Marriage, Effect, School, UNECEF.

INTRODUCTION

A marriage is a legally recognized union between a man and a woman in which they are united sexually, cooperate economically, and may have children through birth or adoption (Strong, DeVault, and Sayad, 1998). Early marriage is defined as any marriage carried and below the age of 18 years before the girl or boy is physically, physiologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing (Sibanda, 2011). Early marriage is a symbol of poor orientation. Throughout the world, marriage is regarded as a moment of celebration and milestone in one's life. Sadly, the practice of early marriage involves the deprivation of fundamental human rights. Young girls are robbed of their youthfulness and required to take

on roles, they are not emotionally prepared for. Majority of the young girls have no choice about the timing of marriage or about their partner. Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too tender to make an informed decision. Premature marriage deprives them of the opportunity for personal development as well as their rights to full reproductive health, wellbeing, education and participation in civil life.

Adhikari, Adhikari, Oli, Rai, Kumari, Devkota and Humagain (2023) stated that early marriage is the union of two opposite sexes below the age of 20 as per the existing law of Nepal. The reproductive organs of adolescent girls have not properly developed before the age of 18 years. Early aged marriage as well as early aged pregnancy causes various problems during pregnancy and delivery. So, early marriage (before 20 years) is banned in Nepal. There has been consensus in literature that early marriage disrupts, disturbs and distorts the academic performance of female students, but these does not imply that all students involved in early marriage perform poorly in education.

Early or Child marriage can be defined as a formal union before age 18 is a reality for both boys and girls, although girls are disproportionately the most affected. Early marriage is widespread and can lead to a lifetime and disadvantages and deprivation. It involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place with or without formal registration and under religious and under religious or customary laws.

Right from the beginning of ages, the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl child has been a topic for debate. In 2004, Children's national Day, the UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Nigeria, had a presentation of statistical result of schooling children to non-schooling children in the contemporary society. the research presentation shows that over 7.2 million Nigerian children are out of school as they engaged themselves in hawking, as maid to people or otherwise.

Early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood, which adversely affects the education of girls in schools. In spite of the recognition of women education, there are many barriers in the way of women to get higher education and contribute their maximum impact to the betterment of the society. The mindset of the society does not allow girls for higher education in that, it promotes gender inequality and ensures prioritization of economic resources for boy-child (ren). They get fewer opportunities not only in education, but also in all facets of life (Daraz, 2012). Studies conducted by Goldien (2007) revealed that many young married women face many problems and leave their education uncompleted due to different social and cultural factors. Even if they are fortunate to complete their education, their performance is abysmally poor. This termination of education and abysmal poor performance in their studies is the outcome of the challenges encountered when combining education with their responsibilities as home-keepers in their families.

Tjamela1 and Tingum (2021) viewed that girl's school dropout worsens the prevailing situation in Lesotho. The World Bank (2018) reported dropout rate of 35.1% in 2014. This is attributed to a range of factors including high early marriage rates, early and unplanned pregnancy, gender-based violence, providing home-based care and being used as child labour such as domestic workers. As such, girls might potentially lose out on the knowledge and

skills development that would lift them out of poverty and contribute to their economic prosperity (NSDP II, 2018).

Ranjan (2023) opined that despite the awareness and changes in human civilization, one in every five women still faces early marriage throughout the world and the majority of them are from Asia. This results in lower education attainment unless some other efforts are made such as mentoring programs to prevent unintended pregnancy and early motherhood (Lin et al., 2019). It creates obstacles in the attainment of education as well as their all-round development. Early marriage girls are discouraged from learning or attempting some newer efforts in their lives. Instead, they are stigmatized and isolated from the societies (Walker & Holtfreter, 2021). As a result, they cannot continue their higher education (HE) and are prescribed to follow social traditions and gender-specific roles. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research and investigate the effects of early marriage on female students' academic attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts, which has the capacity to dash away the educational opportunities and chances for personal growth. It almost leads to pregnancy and childbearing, and is likely to result into a lifetime domestic and sexual subservience. For many young females and young girls in developing and some underdeveloped countries, marriage is perceived as a means of securing and protecting their future. Girls are forced into marriage by their families while they are still children in the hope that marriage will yield returns financially and socially (Shobba, 2009).

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Early marriage continues to be a reality for many of the world's girls because of a form of factors. These include poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, insecurity in the face of war and conflict, and the force of custom and tradition. For example, a girl from a poor household in Senegal is four times more likely to marry as a child than a girl from a rich household (ICRW, 2017). There are many interrelated identified factors almost similar worldwide with small variations between societies that interact to place females at risk of early marriage. These include search for economic survival, protection of young females, peer group and family pressure, controlling female behavior and sexuality, wars and civil conflicts, maximization of fertility where infant mortality is very high (The working group 2000; UNICEF 2001; Mathur et al. 2003).

Ranjan (2023) stated that low educational attainment of adolescent mothers was associated with early marriage practice, the main effect being childbirth and suggest the advocacy and awareness of the right age of marriage and reproductive health. If the families and the parents

are aware of the importance of girls' education, they can contribute to providing a better environment for the girl to attain higher education. Mishra (2022) stated that due to the early marriage; most of the women had faced various health problems, such as anemia, weakness and bleeding during pregnancy and the children also suffered from different diseases, low weight birth and so on. Annan, (2016), opined that early marriage is the type of marriage that fails to put the both parties consent into consideration which could lead to disastrous experiences.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the most prominent problems prevailing within societies and students inclusive is early marriage. Early marriage is defined as a type of marriage where either one or both spouses are under 18 (Wong, 2011). Early marriages are high in places where poverty is prevalent and where birth and death rates are high. In places of higher levels of conflict and lower levels of development early marriage is observed to be higher. In most cases these marriages are forced as it is without the consent of the participants. Furthermore, because of its impact on education, girls and women face other capability deprivations like lack of employment opportunities, poverty, lack of information regarding reproductive health and inability to access individual rights, resulting from early marriage. Early marriage poses great threat to the academic performance of students coerced into it. Poor attendance to class, limited time to read and study, digressed focus from academics to families' welfare, withdrawal at times and poor time management. All these challenges have been identified in existing literature as the effects of early marriage on female academic performance (Shukurat, 2021). Therefore, is upon this premise that this study seeks to examine the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau. The specific objects are:-

1. To examine the effects of Early Marriage on Females Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State.
2. To ascertain the causes or factors responsible for Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State?
2. What are the causes or factors responsible for Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State?

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study is survey research design. The research design employed was cross-sectional survey design involving the use of questionnaires and other relevant sources of data. The questionnaire was tagged "effects of early marriage on female students' academic attainment questionnaire (EEMFSAAQ)". The researchers made use of structured questionnaires as the instruments for the data collection of the needed data. 2 objectives and 2 research questions were formulated and analysed.

A total of 100 participants were randomly selected from the population that constitutes participants for the study. The sample constituted 20 students from GSS Du, 20 students from GSS Bukuru, 20 students from Vineyard Academy Rabin Du, 20 students from High Standard

Dorowa Bukuru and 20 students from Royal Ambassador Bukuru. Data collected were analyzed using rating scale, mean and standard deviation. The bench mark 2.50 was used.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State?

Table 1: Effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment Statistics

	Students dropped out of school due to child marriage	Early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications	Early marriage leaves the child with little or no education	Early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood
N Valid	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.6800	3.8000	3.8000	3.8900
Std. Deviation	.46883	.40202	.49237	.31447
Variance	.220	.162	.242	.099

Table 1 shows Mean, Standard Deviation and total number of respondents. The mean value of Students dropped out of school due to child marriage, early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications, early marriage leaves the child with little or no education and Early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood are all above the bench mark of 2.50. On this premise, the researchers concluded that they are the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment.

Research Question Two: What are the causes or factors responsible for Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau?

Table 2: The causes or factors responsible for Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment

Statistics

		Many poor families make their daughters marry at an early age	Little or no schooling strongly cause marriage at a young age.	When families live in unsafe regions, parents may truly believe that giving out their daughters in marriage is the best way to protect them from danger	Parents marry off their daughters as early to stop them from becoming sexually active before marriage
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.9200	3.2700	3.7200	2.5600
Std. Deviation		.36735	.63333	.62085	.71520
Variance		.135	.401	.385	.512

Table 2 shows Mean, Standard Deviation and total number of respondents. The mean value of many poor families marry their daughter at an early age, little or no schooling strongly cause marriage at a young age, when families live in unsafe regions, parents may truly believe that marrying their daughters is the best way to protect them from danger and parents marry off their daughters as early to stop them from becoming sexually active before marriage are all above the bench mark of 2.50. On this premise, the researchers concluded that they are the causes of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment include; Students dropped out of school due to child marriage, early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications, early marriage leaves the child with little or no education and early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood, which affects the education of girls in schools. This agreed with that of Nguyen and Wodon (2016) that early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications. It compromises their overall development, leaving them socially isolated with little or no education, skills and opportunities for employment and self-realization. They get fewer opportunities not only in education, but also in all facets of life (Daraz, 2012). Also, Goldien (2007) revealed that many young married women face many problems and leave their education uncompleted due to different social and cultural factors.

The findings of the study discovered that the causes or factors responsible for early marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment as; many poor families marry their daughter at an early age, little or no schooling strongly cause marriage at a young age, when families live in

unsafe regions, parents may truly believe that marrying their daughters is the best way to protect them from danger and parents marry off their daughters as early to stop them from becoming sexually active before marriage. This agreed with that of (ICRW, 2017) viewed that many poor families, marrying their daughter at an early age basically is a strategy for economic survival; it means one less person to feed, clothe and educate. A girl from a poor household in Senegal is four times more likely to marry as a child than a girl from a rich household. Little or no schooling strongly correlates with being married at a young age. Attending school and having higher levels of education protect girls from the possibility of early marriage. Early marriage contributes to a series of negative consequences both for young females and the society in which they live. It is a violation of human rights in general and of feminine rights in particular. For both sex, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts, cutting off educational and employment opportunities and chances of personal growth.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the effects of Early Marriage on Female Students Academic Attainment in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. From the results obtained showed that the effects of early child marriage on female students include; Students dropped out of school due to child marriage, early marriage violates the rights of children with negative implications, early marriage leaves the child with little or no education and early marriage leads to early pregnancy and motherhood, which affects the education of girls in schools. Also, the causes include; many poor families marry their daughter at an early age, little or no schooling strongly cause marriage at a young age, when families live in unsafe regions, parents may truly believe that marrying their daughters is the best way to protect them from danger and parents marry off their daughters as early to stop them from becoming sexually active before marriage

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings from the study, the following are recommended:

1. Parents should talk more to their children on the effects of early marriage.
2. There should be counseling unit with the responsibility of educating and enlightening the female students on academic issues by Ministry of education.
3. Policies concerning girl child education should be strictly followed by the government to create awareness the effects of early marriage.
4. All hands must be on decks order to decrease the prevalence of early marriage in among female students in the country.

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