

Effects of Social Habits and Girl-child Marriage on Students Academic Performance in Social Studies

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ABSTRACT The study investigated the effects of social habits and girl-child marriage on students' academic performance in social studies. A total of five hundred students were selected through cluster and random sampling method from all junior secondary schools in Ogun state. Two self-developed instruments: Social Habits and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SHSAPQ) and Girl-child Marriage and Academic Performance Questionnaire (GCMAPQ) were administered on the respondents with reliability co-efficient of 0.79 at 0.05 significant levels. An inferential statistics of Chi-square was used in testing the hypotheses and the result of the study showed that modern technological advancement especially, addiction to social media on the internet has a great effect on students' academic performance. The researchers concluded that negative social habits among the students are to be discouraged in order for them to record good academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Girl-child marriage is a social phenomenon which cuts across nations, religions, cultures and ethnicities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO 2004), girl-child marriage takes place around the ages of 15 and 19 years when a permanent sexual relationship is contracted. Child bride takes place in all parts of the world from south Asia to Europe, Latin America to the Middle East, North America, Africa and beyond. In certain countries, even when the legal marriage age is 18 years cultural traditions take priority over legislative law (Nour 2009). United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) report covering 2000-2011, estimated that about thirty-four percent of women fewer than 25 years in developing nations get married before age 18, 2010 figure indicated that about 67 million which is about twelve percent of the women got married before they attain the age of 15 years. On the other hand United Nation International Child Education Fund's (UNICEF) report indicated that the highest incident rate of girl-child marriage emerges from Africa with over 70 percent of the girls marrying before the age of 18 years in three nations. Among these nations, Niger has the highest rates of early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, seventy-six percent of Nigerian women within the age range of 20-24 years marry late while twenty-eight percent marry early, before the age of fifteen. Between 1995 and 2004 a sample survey carried out by UNICEF reported that the current rate of early child mar-

riage cannot be determined due to lack of infrastructure and violence in some regions of the world.

UNICEF (2015) reported that child marriage prevalence can be referred to as the percentage of women from 20-24 years that got married before the age of 18 years. This phenomenon is rare in developed countries but still a regular feature of developing nations as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Twenty countries with the highest rates of child marriage

S. No.	Names of countries	Percentage (%)
1.	Niger	76
2.	Central African Republic (CAR)	68
3.	Chad	68
4.	Bangladesh	65
5.	Mali	56
6.	Guinea	52
7.	South Sudan	52
8.	Burkina Faso	52
9.	Malawi	50
10.	Mozambique	48
11.	India	47
12.	Somalia	45
13.	Sierra Leone	44
14.	Nigeria	43
15.	Zambia	42
16.	Nicaragua	41
17.	Nepal	41
18.	Madagascar	41
19.	Eritrea	41
20.	Dominican Republic	41

Source: UNICEF State of the World's Children, 2015

The data in Table 1 is based on a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and other National surveys.

At the international and local levels, there have been serious agitations about girl-child marriage cum excessive social activities among secondary school students.

WHO (2004) defined social habits as the various social activities performed by individuals within their physical and social environments. These social habits include among others, watching of home videos, playing Ludo games, night clubbing, and excessive midnight calls, chatting with friends on social media such as Facebook, 2go, Instagram, Badoo and a host of other social networks. In a report submitted by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW 2005), WHO Safe Motherhood (2004) and UNICEF Report of 2001, there is an average age of 15.5 years when these girls are married and this is mostly common in developing nations around the world. Although the rates vary considerably from country to country, the practice of these social problems is highest overall or predominantly high in Africa, and in South and Central Asia. A cursory look at the Table 2 attests to this fact.

It should be noted that if these trends continue unabated, an additional 1.2 billion girls will be married by 2050 because in developing countries 1 in every 3 girls marry before the age of 18.

In addition to the above assertion, Adhikari (2010) claimed that girl-child marriage is common among Nigerian girls where their ages at first marriage ranged between 12.4, 13.2 and 15.3 for the year 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively. Girl-child marriage is rampant in the Northern

part of Nigeria with its attendant negative consequences for the individual involved, family and the entire society. It results in the abuse of the rights of the individuals involved. Kaghwa (2007) opined that, for secondary school boys and girls, social habits and girl-child marriage have great negative impact emotionally, physically, intellectually and psychologically on their learning outcomes and most dangerously for girls in the junior secondary school in particular leading to a temporary halt on their personal growth, employment opportunities and educational enhancement.

Besides, these negative social problems have dire consequences on children, family and the society at large. It is not only girls of secondary schools that pays for the consequences of these girl-child marriage and social habits but the society as a whole. It induces pressure on the population size, higher costs of health care and fewer chances for human development, to mention but a few additional problems placed on the society. Also teenage pregnancy, untimely death and abortion becomes rampant in the society (Adhikari 2010). Girl-child marriage and social habits destabilize international efforts to combat poverty in developing countries because when a girl-child is married off at an early age, they are denied of opportunity to access quality education and be equipped with skills that would make them productive.

According to Phub (2009), the indices of student academic performance is his/her advancement from one class to another which is measured in terms of student failure (school drop-out and class repetition) and academic performance. Akeusola (2004) and Adetayo (2004) both observed that school drop-out is higher for female than that of the male at the junior secondary school level and that this is strongly influenced by girl-child marriage and social habits.

Despite efforts to reduce girl-child marriage and social habits by dealing with poverty, customs and traditions and other legal issues the problem still persists. There is a consistent increase in social habits partly because of technological advancement and girl-child marriage in Nigeria. Students in secondary schools are now giving less attention to their studies as a result of technological advancement and other social problems and these have largely affected their learning outcomes in social studies.

However, it is in the light of these problems and the need to proffer solutions that the re-

Table 2: Ten nations with the highest absolute numbers of child marriages

S.No.	Nations	Total number
1.	India	10,063,000
2.	Bangladesh	2,359,000
3.	Nigeria	1,193,000
4.	Brazil	877,000
5.	Ethiopia	673,000
6.	Pakistan	600,000
7.	Indonesia	458,000
8.	Democratic Republic of Congo	291,000
9.	Mexico	260,000
10.	Niger	244,000

Source: Fieldwork

searcher was prompted to carry out investigations into the effect of social habits and girl-child marriage on students learning outcomes in social studies.

Objectives of the Study

There has been a continuous increase in the level of man hour expended by students on social media, addiction to watching home video (most often on African Magic channel), night clubbing etc. In the light of this, it is important to embark on this research work in social studies education to proffer solutions to the factors responsible for students increased attention on social habits which invariably affects their academic performance in social studies.

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at alpha level of < 0.05 significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between social habits formed and students' academic performance in social studies
2. There is no significant relationship between girl-child marriage and general academic performance of students in social studies.

Literature Review

Child Marriage and Learning Outcomes

The level of moral bankruptcy in Nigeria today calls for deep sober reflection and urgent attention to arrest the growing societal drift from abuse, confusion and chaos. Child marriage implies a formal or informal union entered into by an individual before attaining the age of 18 years. This affects both boys and girls, with overwhelming majority of those affected being girls, due to poor financial situations. Child marriage is common for a variety of reasons, namely: poverty, insecurity, as well as political reasons. Marrying of girls at an early age is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South-Asia. This type of marriage is classified into two, arranged and forced marriage which takes place in particular areas of West and East Africa and that of South Asia while marriages of teenagers are common in certain parts of Latin America and few places in Eastern Europe and on the record high in north-

ern Nigeria. Girl-child marriage is an abuse of the girl's rights, including their rights to choose it, when and whom to marry. Several African human rights instruments such as:

→The African charter of the Rights and welfare of the child (article 21)

→The African Youth charter (article 8) and,

→The Protocol to the African Charter on human and Peoples rights on the Rights of women in Africa (Article 6) condemn girl-child marriage.

Omosehin (2009) avers that social habit is a condition which many consider undesirable and needs to be corrected and this implies that a perfectly integrated society would not tolerate any negative value. Kaghwa (2007) explained that social habits may be referred to as significant groups within a population that deviates from or breakdown some social standards. He pointed out two general elements of a given social habit which are the subjective and objective conditions. Henry (2012) on his part described social habits as social activities which affect individuals positively or negatively in their environment. Every social habit has a life cycle which after some decades or centuries will fizzle away and another habit will be given birth to. The fallen standard in the quality of Nigerian education system could partly be attributed to some of the social habits such as gambling, prostitution and the number of valuable hours wasted on social media like Badoo, 2go, Twitter, Facebook to mention just a few. As a result of this unwholesome practice of girl-child marriage a lot of young, promising and vibrant girls have been given out in marriage, in most cases against their wishes. Coupled with this is the fact that these innocent children are sometimes used as shields for protection during war times as it occurred in Sudan, Liberia and Uganda where girls were forced into marriage with war lords with the consent of their families in exchange for protection (UNFPA 2012).

As of 2006, fifteen-twenty percent of school drop-outs in Nigeria were the consequence of early marriages. Nigeria's attempt in 2013 to change section 29, sub-sections 4 of its laws and thereby prohibit child marriages was rebuffed by some section of the society who see it as an affront to their Islamic practice. In a country where Christianity and Islam are practiced by roughly fifty-fifty percent of its population the country finally continues with personal laws from its British colonial era laws where child

marriage is forbidden for Christians. Child marriage is a contentious in Nigeria and widely practiced in the northern region which is a predominantly Muslim area has over fifty percent of their girls marrying before the age of 15.

It is against the backdrop of various positions presented above that this study identified the remote and immediate causes of girl-child marriage, various charters and agreements by reputable agencies and organizations aimed at finding a lasting solution to these problems and navigating measures to combat social habits which are detrimental to the general academic performance of the students in social studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used with the population drawn from all public junior secondary schools, three students in Ogun State South West of Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Cluster and simple random sampling techniques were used to hand pick the schools that formed the study sample. The participants were 100, junior secondary school three students from five of the selected schools in Ogun State, South West Nigeria. Twenty respondents, both male and female were selected from each of the schools randomly picked.

Data Collection

The data were collected through the use of the following questionnaires:

Social Habits and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (SHSAPQ)

The instrument developed by the researcher comprised of two sections. Section A sought for the background information of respondents such as name of school, age, sex and class. Section B consisted of twenty questions categorized under four items: moral values, attitude to school work, habits and social values, all generated from the social studies syllabus.

Validity and Reliability of SHSAPQ

To ensure content validity of the instrument it was given to experts in the field of Teacher Education, Evaluation, Social Studies Education and experienced Social Studies teachers at the university level to peruse and offer their suggestions. The reliability of the instrument was test run in five public secondary schools. The researcher with the assistance of the Vice-Principals and teachers in the schools visited and administered the instrument on one hundred Social Studies students. Kuder Richardson 20 was used to estimate the reliability which gave 0.79 at alpha level of 0.05.

Girl-child Marriage and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (GCMASPQ)

The instrument which was developed by the researcher comprised of two sections. Section A of the instrument sought for the demographic information of the respondents such as the name of school, age, sex and class of study. Section B consisted of twenty multiple-choice questions focusing on four general areas in social studies such as concept of marriage, sex education, HIV/AIDS and family problems.

Validity and Reliability of GCMASPQ

The instrument was validated by ensuring it was handed over to specialists in the area of Teacher Education and social studies education as well as experienced Social Studies teachers at the secondary school level. The reliability of the instrument was ensured by trial testing in five public secondary schools in Ogun State that were not part of those sampled for this study. The researcher, with the assistance of the Vice-Principals and teachers administered the instrument on one hundred students of Social Studies. Kuder Richardson 20 was used to estimate the reliability of 0.84 at 0.05 percent significant level.

Data Administration and Instrumentation

The study was carried out for five days with the researcher going from each school selected to administer the instruments by himself with the assistance of the schools Vice-Principal (administration). The details of the instruments are as follows:

Performance Test

In this study, the performance test was used to measure the students' learning outcome in social studies. Twenty objective questions were drawn and a time of thirty minutes was allotted. Each objective question was allotted one point. All items used in the test were based on JSS 3 Social Studies syllabus. The instrument was authenticated by experts in the field of Social Studies at the university level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant correlation between social habits formed and students' academic performance in social studies.

Table 3 revealed that χ cal. of 36.62 is greater than the χ tab. of 16.919, hence the hypothesis was rejected. It indicated that the result is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence there is no significant relationship between social habits formed and the academic performance of students.

The result of the findings in Table 3 shows that the hypotheses was rejected a view corroborated by Jega (2010), Bawer (2005) and Okigbo (2006) who asserted that the fallen standard in the quality of education in Nigeria could be attributed to the uncontrollable social habits such

as prostitution which is on the increase in schools due to the alarming rate of poverty and hopelessness in the country occasioned by the failure of the leadership over the years.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between girl-child marriage and general academic performance of students in social studies.

Table 4 revealed that the χ cal. Value of 99.85 is greater than χ tab. Value of 16.919, therefore the hypotheses was rejected. This result indicated that the result is not significant at the alpha level of 0.05, which implies that there is no correlation between girl-child marriage and general academic performance of students in social studies.

The result of the data analysis for Table 4 showed that students who got married earlier did not perform well in their academics due to loss of interest and concentration on their studies. In an earlier study carried out by Omosehin (2009) it was reported that about seventy-four percent of students involved in early marriage found it difficult to cope with academics after marriage. Furthermore UNICEF's report of 2001 on 'Early Marriage: Child Spouses' and Lewis (2007) in their findings explained that apart from losing interest in school work they also feel rejected by the society.

Table 3: Relationship between social habits and students' academic performance

S. No.	Relationship between social habits formed and learning outcomes in social studies	A	SA	D	SD	Total	Level of sig.	df	χ cal	χ tab	Decision
1.		46	32	16	6	100	0.05	9	36.62	16.919	Rejected
2.		59	34	2	0	100					
3.		45	28	19	8	100					
4.		31	52	15	2	100					
		181	151	52	16	400					

Source: Field Work

Table 4: Relationship between girl-child marriage and academic performance in social studies

S. No.	Relationship between girl-child marriage and academic performance	A	SA	D	SD	Total	Level of sig.	df	χ cal	χ tab	Decision
1.		48	30	12	10	100	0.05	9	99.85	16.919	Rejected
2.		33	47	18	2	100					
3.		8	90	1	1	100					
4.		34	51	10	5	100					
		123	218	41	18	400					

Source: Field Work.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that girls given out in early marriage were deprived of sound quality education, denied of their fundamental human rights to choose, exposed to unexpected pregnancy, abortion and sometimes untimely death. A married girl who knows next to nothing about sex or reproduction is subjected to pressure to become pregnant immediately or soon after marriage which is detrimental to both the mother and child. Girls who give birth before their pelvic girdle ripens and are exposed to obstetric fibula that is accompanied by constant pains, hence they are vulnerable to infections and eventual rejection by their spouse, families and the community at large. Social habits that are detrimental to the all-round development in which majority of the students from developing nations such as Nigeria are deeply engrossed, it has serious effect on the learning outcomes of social studies. Girl-child marriage thrived mostly in developing countries as a result of poverty, customs and traditions of the people that are not appropriate and barbaric. This researcher's view is that if the various charters and agreements reached by governments' across the globe especially among the nations directly concerned and various action plans are fully implemented among these countries, the target of 2050 to eradicating girl-child marriage would become a reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the results of the findings, the study recommends among others that the provisions in Article 16(2) of the universal declaration of human rights be strictly adhered to; stereotyping should not be encouraged; and that the girl-child be granted the space to grow, learn and be a girl and above all be allowed to fully enjoy her childhood. Social habits that negatively impact children should be discouraged by the parents and that there should be improved girls' access to quality, formal education through the provision of free and compulsory education.

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