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Influence of Early Marriage on Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the influence of early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary school in Rivers State. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) objectives, three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses that guided the study. This study made use of descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 10,517 female teachers and students in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 400 female teachers and students. The study made use of stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was self-structured questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency table, mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the findings of the study revealed that frequency, overburdened with domestic work, overburdened with child rearing, poverty and poor health resulting from early marriage influenced the academic achievement of the students. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, government should organize awareness and orientation campaign on how to alleviate poverty through empowerment, it is recommended that school management organize enlightenment campaign for the female students on how the rate of maternal mortality influence the educational achievement of female adolescent students, it is also recommended that government should design a program that would help teachers and students on how to prevent early pregnancy.
Keywords: influence, early marriage, academic achievement, female, adolescent students

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process by which society through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions transmits its cultural heritage, values, skills from one generation to another. Ozochi (2018) stated that, education to many, is seen as a solution for the vast range of task of the society and bed rock for national development. The National Policy in Nigeria Education (2004 revised) saw education as a dynamic instrument per excellence for effecting national development and a potent means for ensuring the welfare of the people and the equalization of life chance. The benefits derivable from educational investment equip the individual for proper understanding of important phenomena and further exploitation of human and material resources. It is on this background that Okeke (2014) opined that who so neglect learning in his youth, loses the past and is dead for the future.

Aghi (2013) observed that, both boys and girls are influenced by child marriage but the issue impacts more negatively on girls in far larger number, with more intensity and is wide ranging. Child marriage is practiced with the belief that it reduces promiscuity among girls. This is purely because of the importance attached to virginity. Often time's husbands want their wives to be virgins for their parents, it is a great honor for their daughters to be found virgins by their husbands, and so girls are married off long before they attain maturity.

The research shows that over 7.2 million Nigerian children are out of school as they engage themselves in hawking or as maid to people or otherwise. According to UNICEF (2015), the major reasons why more girl children are found outside school in the North is that female children are given out in marriage at early age. The marriage institution is very vital in any society; it's legitimate in the productive process and ensures the meaningful preparation of the social norms of the society. But the timing and the resultant impact of early marriage is a source of concern for many who cherish the equitable participation of female in modern education as the case may be in Rivers State.

Early marriage represents one of the greatest challenges of girl-child education in our time. It has considerable implications for social development of child prides, in terms of low levels of education, poor health and lack of personal autonomy. It constitutes a violation of the rights of the girls who are forced to marry early and it profoundly influence their life through substantially lower education prospects. Inaddition, Nguyen & Wodon (2012) also show that if a child is appropriately married and early pregnancies could be eliminated, this could potentially reduce the gender gap in education.

The National Baseline Survey of Positive and Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Girls in Nigeria 1999 revealed that the aggregate mean age at marriage for female children is 16.7 years. In the north-east, the age is 15.2 years and, in the north-west, 14.2 years. This is an indicator of the prevalence of early marriage in Nigeria (Shehu, 2012). However, some parents in Rivers State allow their children for marriage at the age of 16.2 to 16. And this has not been easy for the children. It is against this background that the study examined the influence of early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Concept of Early Marriage

Child marriage is defined by the World Health Organization (2019) as the period between 15 and 19 years of age when girls contract a permanent sexual relationship. At both global and national levels, there has been growing concern about girl- child marriage age (UNICEF, 2001). Although uncommon in most developed countries, early marriages are still prevalent in developing countries around the world. In Rivers State, marriages among young girls are still a very serious problem particularly in rural areas and poor populations in urban areas. Research and literature have exposed a good number of factors for early marriages in the world and Katsina State in particular. These factors range from traditions and customs, religious ties and ignorance of the human rights. Also, early marriage is considered as a means of protecting girls from early sexuality, pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. This is because children themselves, according to existing literature have no decisions regarding their own marriage.

It is against this background the researcher observed that despite national laws and international agreements forbidding early marriages, this phenomenon is still widespread in northern part of Nigeria, especially in Katsina State. Similarly, to the other parts of Nigeria, Katsina State has rampant cases of school drop-outs due to early marriages among teenage girls. UNICEF report of (2005) cited poverty and lack of economic opportunities for girls in rural areas as major factors leading togirl-child marriages with some parents still viewing girls as an economic burden to be hastily disposed of or a valued asset exchangeable for goods, money and livestock Singh & Samara, (2016). Poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage.

Holcamp (2019) contended that most of the schoolgirls' drop out to be higher since parents believe schoolgirls' teaching is of no benefit when they go to their family after marriage. The women have to manage their families and look after their children. Mansory (2017) stated that premature divorces are the main cause of failure of marriage in Afghanistan because there is no tradition of female child education. The female who insist on education after marriage are divorced in Afghanistan. Awan (2014) measured the effects of early marriage on the life of teenage girls. He contends that teenagers faced different hardships after marriage because they had no prior experience of family life. He said that there is close relationship between early marriage and poverty.

Heinonen (2012) argued that poverty is one of the main cause of child marriage because the parents could not afford the expenses of their children and in order to reduce their financial burden they arranged early marriage of their children. Naveed (2012) emphasized that child marriages take place mostly on the pretext of poverty, illiteracy and gender inequality. The physical, social, psychological

and economic consequences of child marriage are severe on girls, who are generally pulled out of primary/secondary education and more likely confront physical, emotional and sexual violence. Pakistan is in the midst of demographic transition and a big portion of the population comprises of children.

Early Pregnancy and Students Academic Achievement

Teenage is a stage in life in which the individual (male or female) begins to develop sexual characteristics. It is usually between the ages of 13-19 years (WHO 2013). At this stage in life, sexual desires are often at their peak. Teenagers are in what Bible calls "the bloom of youth" a time when their sexual organs develop and they become capable of having children. Pregnancy begins at the moment a single spectrum fertilized a matured ovum (egg). In a normal ejaculation during sexual intercourse, about 200, 400 million sperm are deposited into the upper vagina, of this number; a few thousand remain within the virginal and die within 3 days. Only a few manage to make their way into the body of the uterus and move upward to the fallopian tubes where fertilization occurs. Only one sperm penetrates the membrane of the ovum to unit with the egg. When this occurs, a zygote is formed. The fertilized egg then makes its way down to the fallopian tube to the uterus for implantation. The journey to the uterus may result to pregnancy.

Moreso, the fact that most parents pay less attention to their children, coupled with the fact that teenagers today are growing up in a culture in which peers, television and motion pictures, music and magazine often transmit either covert or overt message that unmarried sexual relationship (specifically those involving teenagers) are common accepted and at times expected behaviour have contributed immensely to the moral decadence rampant among our teenagers (Every Woman, Every Child 2015). Education about responsible sexual behaviour and specific clear information about the consequences of sexual intercourse (including pregnancy, sexual transmitted disease and psychological effects) are frequently not offered in the home, at school or in the community settings. Therefore, much of the sex education teenagers receive filters through misinformed and/or unified peers. All these of course lead teenagers into early dating behaviour (which lead to premarital sex) and early use of alcohol or other drugs, including tobacco products, which could lead to pregnancy.

However, to be pregnant is a right that is supposed to be shared with one's life partners, unfortunately, due to various reasons, it has been abused by our teenagers today. Statistically, four in ten girls become pregnant before 20 years of age, and about 40% of teenage mothers are under 18 years of age (Awake, 2014). This is as a result of various factors, such as the effects of broken homes, ignorance of the conservancies of sexual activities, lack of self-respect on the part of some teenagers to experience sex, as well as their failure to take necessary precautions (for sample, having sexual intercourse without adequate contraception. This in turn has led to a high rate of school dropout, cycle of poverty, destitution, increased rate of abortion, emotional depression high level of delinquency, high mortality rate, reduced labour force as well as drop in the standard of living of the teenagers involved, their families and the society in general. It should be noted that both teenage mother and father may suffer economic hardship and fail to achieve their education and career goals. Those who could not complete their high school (secondary school) education often find themselves in a cycle of poverty out of which is hard to break.

According to Lynn (2011), it is as if those female students that fall victim of teenage pregnancy feel like they lose their previous lives when they give birth. Their new lives revolve entirely around their baby. The female students may fall into a depression while trying to handle the emotions pregnancy creates and all of the possibly negative feedback about the pregnancy from friends and family (Lynn, 2011). Caused by depression and isolation, teenage motherhood has been associated with problems such as low self-efficacy, poor knowledge of child development, increased stress, depression, insecurity and disorganized attachment patterns. When teen mothers receive encouragement from their social support systems to try new things, they will likely acquire a higher level of self-esteem and self-assurance.

Teenage pregnancy is a national problem that affects the community and society at large. According to Farber (2013) the individual and social costs of teenage pregnancy increasingly result from unmarried young women choosing to keep and raise their children, often with compromised means for supporting and nurturing them. Teenage mothers become economically dependent due to their failed educational attainment, subsequent high fertility rates and greater occurrences of single-parent

families. Not only is adolescent pregnancy economically costly, it poses various social consequences for teen mothers. Becoming an adolescent mother has been associated with lower educational attainment, which often leads to poverty and/or high school dropout. Pregnancy is one of the reasons commonly confessed by female secondary students for dropping out of secondary school. Pregnant secondary students are more likely to have lower career aspirations, attain less prestigious occupations, experience less satisfaction with career progress than their non-pregnant peers, and feel their future job choices are limited.

Teenage pregnancy rates vary from state to state, and they appear to be influenced by a couple of different factors. In general, states with the highest number of teens tend to have the highest number of teen pregnancies. Educational outcomes of both the teen parent and the child are also critically impacted by teenage pregnancy. Children born through teenage pregnancy are also more likely to have lower Mathematics and reading test scores, and are more likely to be retained in school (Pilar, 2011).

Reason Why Early Marriage Affects Students

The ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda serves to create progress that will improve lives across the world. But every year, 15 million girls are locked away from a better life. Child marriage is standing in the way of progress towards many of the 2030 Global Goals. For as long as child marriage continues to exist, so will poverty and instability, violence against women and girls, high global maternal mortality rates, and an ever-widening educational gap between the poorest and wealthiest nations (Ladan, 2012).

1. **Child Marriage Traps Girls and Their Families in a Cycle of Poverty**
   Women who are employed reinvest 90% of their earnings back into their families, lifting themselves, their children, their siblings and relatives out of poverty. But when a girl is married as a child, this can often mean the end of her education, and her ability to become financially independent. One girl's potential to lift an entire family, and even a community, out of poverty disappears. This is happening millions of times over. As the inter-generational cycle of poverty continues, youth unemployment and economic instability can lead to migration, conflict and violence
2. **Child Marriage is Linked to High Global Rates of Maternal Mortality**
   When girls become pregnant before their bodies are ready, they are at high risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, which endanger the life of both mother and child. Teenage birth rates are highest where child marriage is most prevalent. In fact, the risk of maternal mortality is highest for adolescent girls under 15 years old, and complications in pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death among adolescent girls in developing countries, leaving behind vulnerable orphaned children. As well as increased vulnerability to sexual and domestic violence, survivors of the trauma of premature childbirth are at risk of long term and debilitating health complications, such as obstetric fistula, compromising their ability to work or return to school, while further stretching under-resourced health systems.
3. **Child Brides are More Likely to Contract HIV/AIDS**
   Adolescent girls are disproportionately affected by HIV. Girls who are married as adolescents to men who have had many previous sexual partners are even more likely to contract HIV due to a lack of sexual and reproductive health information, and lack power to negotiate safe sex or refuse sex. Often they are subject to partner violence, which further increases their risk of contracting HIV. The tragedy of HIV/AIDS for girls comes full circle as AIDS is a leading cause of death amongst adults. Orphans and girls from child-headed households are at higher risk of early marriage as they struggle to support themselves. In these desperate situations, when a girl cannot afford food or shelter, let alone school fees, entering into an early marriage can sometimes be seen as the only way to survive.
4. **Child Marriage is a Major Barrier to Achieving Gender Equality**
   Girls who are married as children are more likely to experience domestic violence, and have a lower status in society, because too often child brides are denied their right to pursue education, employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. With every child bride we lose a future teacher, doctor, scientist, entrepreneur or political leader. The cost to all of us is

tremendous, and we pay the price in the form of inefficient accumulation of capital and slower economic growth, amounting to trillions of dollars for developing countries by 2030.

5. **Child Marriage Locks Away Women's Enormous Potential To Help Solve Global Problems**

The potential of so many girls to change the course of our planet's future remains our world's greatest untapped resource. For example, women in rural areas are often in charge of agricultural operations, and so they are best placed to implement sustainable agricultural, energy and environmental initiatives in their communities, which can help to address poverty and hunger, and in turn health and education, as well as increase resilience to climate change. A recent study suggests that a clear link has been established between girls' education and the mitigation of climate change, one reason being that educated women have smaller, healthier families, and in turn educate their children, leading to a virtuous cycle of development.

Influence of Early Marriage on Women

The influence of early marriage for society and children Early marriages are still one of the most disturbing and painful problems in Nigerian society. Even today in some regions, especially in poor areas some families force their children, especially daughters to get married. Here we have some more details of the situation with the causes and effects of early marriage in the country. First of all, it should be said that marriage of a person under 18 years old is considered illegal according to the Child's Rights Act. Let's look at the effects of early marriage in more details. See also:

Every year, 15 million girls are locked away from a better life. The ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda serves to create progress that will improve lives across the world. But every year, 15 million girls are locked away from a better life. Child marriage is standing in the way of progress towards many of the 2030 Global Goals. For as long as child marriage continues to exist, so will poverty and instability, violence against women and girls, high global maternal mortality rates, and an ever-widening educational gap between the poorest and wealthiest nations.

Child Marriage Traps Girls and Their Families in a Cycle of Poverty: Women who are employed reinvest 90% of their earnings back into their families, lifting themselves, their children, their siblings and relatives out of poverty. But when a girl is married as a child, this can often mean the end of her education, and her ability to become financially independent. One girl's potential to lift an entire family, and even a community, out of poverty disappears (Awan, 2014). This is happening millions of times over. As the inter-generational cycle of poverty continues, youth unemployment and economic instability can lead to migration, conflict and violence.

Early Marriage and its Devastating Effects

Taking a child for early marriage when she is still young may lead to lack of health, lack of care, unwanted pregnancies and she might be overburdened with domestic work.

Lack of Health: When a girl is taken for early marriage, she may not know how to keep her children, herself and not even the home clean and healthy. You may find the mother busy with cooking and the children are disposing waste which may cause sickness and diseases later on, for example cholera, diarrhea and typhoid because of dirty water.

Lack of Care: When you take your child for early marriage, she may be irresponsible. She may not be able to handle her home or even to speak to the people of the community. It will be a problem because she is fearing due to the lack of care.

Unwanted Pregnancies: When you take your child for early marriage, she will become pregnant and may give birth through surgery or she may die in the process of giving birth which is not good. Some parents are taking their child for early marriage for reducing poverty at home and in the community, but you won't reduce unwanted pregnancies by doing so.

Overburdened with Domestic Work: Overburdening children with domestic work are not good because it may later on affect the children or the child and they will feel some pain on the body such as chest pain and back pain. Carrying heavy things might harm their bodies. Educational attainment is defined as the highest grade completed within the most advanced level attended in the educational system of the country where the education was received. Some countries may also find it useful to present data on educational attainment in terms of the highest grade attended (Aghi, 2013).

Educational attainment is a commonly used proxy for the stock of human capital – say, the skills available in the population and the labour force. As globalisation and technology continue to re-shape

the needs of labour markets worldwide, the demand for individuals with a broader knowledge base and more specialised skills, e.g. advanced analytical capacities, and complex communication skills, continues to rise. As a result, more individuals are pursuing higher levels of education now than in previous generations, leading to significant shifts in attainment levels over time within countries.

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed by a person, shown as a percentage of all persons in that age group. Below upper secondary education includes early childhood education, primary education or lower secondary education. Programmes at the lower secondary education level are designed to lay the foundation across a wide range of subjects (Okeke, 2014). Programmes at the upper secondary level are more specialised and offer students more choices and diverse pathways for completing their secondary education. Tertiary education includes short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral or equivalent levels.

Causes of Early Marriages

Poverty: Poor sides of rural areas are the places when early marriages happen most often. Low-income families often force daughters to get married. In most cases, such marriages occur against the will of their daughters. In some cases, the husband even pays parents for such a wife. Girls get married, and boys are involved in child labor - this is a common scenario for children in poorest families. Read more:

Gender Inequity: In rural areas, there are still beliefs that a birth of a daughter is not so good for a family and she can only be used as a future bride, at the same time the birth of a son considers as good luck. Traditions and beliefs made some people follow old religious traditions, and according to some of these traditions, children should marry in early age.

Insecure Situation: The rate of female harassment is still high, that is why families worry about their daughters. In this situation, a family wants to give daughter protection; parents believe that it would be much safer for a young girl to be under the protection of an older husband.

Lack of Education: This is a reason why people don't know about negative consequences of early marriage. There are possible solutions for the situation: Raising awareness among parents about the issue and possible negative effect of early marriage Regulation of early marriage at the legislative level, fighting poverty in the country. It is terrible that in 21st century there are still cases of early marriages. This situation is especially harmful for girls who suffer from such form of marriage, and beliefs that their only purpose is to serve husband. The effects of early marriages in most cases negative that is why the government and society should pay more attention to this problem.

Statement of the Problem

The present state of the nation (Nigeria) demands that youths should be educated before embarking on a journey of marriages. Consequently, determined the involvement of parents in such marriage since education is a major instrument for the development of any nation. Early marriage puts the youth at a disadvantage by the loss of educational opportunities. The level of the development for any nation is measured by the level of the educational attainment of the people in the area. Throughout the world, marriage is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult life. Generally, the practice of early marriage gives so much cause for celebration. All too often, the imposition of a marriage partner upon a child means that a girls or boy's childhood is cut short and their fundamental rights compromised. Young girls are robbed of their youth and are required to take over roles for which they are not psychologically or physically prepared. Many have no choice about the timing of marriage or their partner. Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too young to make an informed decision. Premature marriage deprives them of the opportunity for personal development as well as their rights to full reproductive health and wellbeing, education and participation in civic variations between societies, which interact to place a girl child at risk of early marriage (UNICEF, 2001).

The influence of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are well documented; mainly focusing on the challenges and prospects of early marriages, which including complicated childbirth, death of both newborn child and mother, becoming an economic burden to parents,, with frequent marital disputes, broken marriages, poverty for the couple or for one of the spouses in the marriage, loss of educational opportunities, poor family planning and risk abortions (CDS, 2008). Early marriage contributes to a series of negative consequences both for young girls and the society in which they live. For both girls

and boys, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts, cutting off educational and employment opportunities and chances of personalgrowth. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the influence of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. To determine the influence of pregnancy, resulting from early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. To determine the influence of overburdened with domestic work, resulting from early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. To determine the influence of poverty resulting from early marriage on academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the conduct of the study:

1. To what extent does pregnancy, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does overburden with domestic work, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does poverty resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The researcher formulates the following null hypotheses that will guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent pregnancy, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent overburdened with domestic work, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent poverty resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is the descriptive survey design. This design gives a clear picture of early marriage and students' academic attainment among adolescent in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This design is suitable for this work because, it serves as a basis for the researcher in assessing the situation as a prerequisite for drawing conclusion. The population of this study consists of all the female teachers and students in all the public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas of Rivers State with a total population size of Ten Thousand Five Hundred and Seventeen (10,517) female teachers and students. We have 1,200 female teachers and 9,317 female students in the study area. The sample size of study was 400 teachers and students. We have 120 female teachers and 280 female students. This figure was generated using Taro Yamane's formula developed by Avwokeni (2017). The researcher used the stratified random sampling techniques. However, the strata were formed based on all the female teachers and students. The instrument that was used for data collection in the study is a self-structured questionnaire titled: "Influence of Early Marriage on the Educational Attainment Questionnaire" (IEMEAQ), which is sub-divided into two parts. The first part request for the demographic information about the respondents, while the second part consists of respondents' responses on the subject matter. It was patterned on a modified 4 – point likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE) – 4 points, High Extent (HE) – 3 points, Low Extent (LE) – 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1 point. Face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained through critical

evaluation by two experts in the Department of Educational Foundations. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency, mean score and standard deviation, for the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for answering the research question was based on real limits. Where any mean from 2.50 and above was accepted, while the mean below 2.49 was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question One: *To what extent does pregnancy, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the Extent Pregnancy, Resulting from Early Marriage Influence Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students

S/ No	Item	Female Teacher (N_1 = 120)			Female Students (N_1 = 280)		
		Mean	**SD**		**Mean**	**SD**	
1.	Early marriage endangers the little girls hence their reproductive system of the girls is not really for intimate activities.	3.20	0.89	HE	3.14	0.89	HE
2.	Early marriage influences the girls because their reproductive system is not ready for child-birth.	3.12	0.88	HE	3.04	0.87	HE
3.	Early marriage makes the girls to suffer from numerous health issues	3.17	0.89	HE	3.19	0.89	HE
4.	Pregnancy at early age is very harmful to the health of the girls.	3.01	0.87	HE	2.99	0.86	HE
5.	Early marriage has negative influence on the academic attainment of the students.	3.11	0.88	HE	2.87	0.85	HE
	Grand Total	**3.12**	**0.88**		**3.05**	**0.87**	

Source: Field Data 2023.

The analysis in Table 1 above showed that the respondents accepted the view, that early marriage endangers the little girls hence their reproductive system of the girls is not really for intimate activities. The study still revealed that the respondents agreed on the fact that early marriage influence s the girls because their reproductive system is not ready for child-birth. It was also observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the point that, early marriage makes the girls to suffer from numerous health issues. The study indicated that the respondents agreed on the view that pregnancy at early age is very harmful to the health of the girls. The analysis still showed that the respondents accepted the point that early marriage has negative influence on the academic attainment of the students.

Research Question Two: *To what extent does overburdened with domestic work, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the Extent Overburdened with Domestic Work, Resulting from Early Marriage Influence Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students

S/No	Item	Female Teacher (N_1 = 120)			Female Students (N_1 = 280)		
		Mean	**SD**	**Remark**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
6.	Much work load of married women influences their educational attainment in secondary school.	3.01	0.87	HE	2.99	0.86	HE
7.	Financial burden students or married women academic attainment.	3.11	0.82	HE	2.87	0.85	HE
8.	Cumulative Stress on married students as a result of early marriage influences their academic attainment.	3.20	0.89	HE	3.19	0.89	HE
9.	Family stress has negative influences on the students' academic attainment	3.04	0.87	HE	3.02	0.87	HE
10.	Married women perform poorly when their work load is high.	3.01	0.87	HE	2.99	0.86	HE
	Grand Score	**3.07**	**0.88**		**3.01**	**0.87**	

Source: Field Data 2023.

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that the respondents accepted the point that much work load of married women influences their educational attainment in secondary school. The study still indicated that the respondents agreed on the view that, financial burden students or married women academic attainment. It was also observed in the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that cumulative Stress on married students, as a result of early marriage influences their academic attainment. The study showed that the respondents agreed on the point that, family stress has negative influence on the students' academic attainment. The analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the fact that married women perform poorly when their work load is high.

Research Question Three: *To what extent does poverty resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on The Extent Poverty Resulting from Early Marriage Influences Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students

S/No	Item	Female Teacher (N_1 = 120)			Female Students (N_1 = 280)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Majority of the early married women are not employed thereby influencing their academies because of financial constrain.	3.01	0.87	HE	2.99	0.86	HE
12	Early marriage to a large extent leads to the end of the woman or female education.	3.11	0.82	HE	2.87	0.85	HE
13.	Early marriage makes women to lack the ability to become financially independents	3.20	0.89	HE	3.19	0.89	HE
14.	Parents of a married girl leave the financial responsibility of the girl to her husband even when the husband may not be financially strong.	3.04	0.87	HE	3.02	0.87	HE
15.	Poverty as an influence of early marriage has negative influence on the educational attainment of the people.	3.01	0.87	HE	2.99	0.86	HE
	Grand Score	**3.07**	**0.88**		**3.01**	**0.87**	

Source: Field Data 2023.

The analysis in Table 3 revealed that the respondents accepted the point that majority of the early married women are not employed thereby influencing their academics because of financial constrain. The study still indicated that the respondents agreed on the view that when a girl is married as a child, it can lead to the end of her education. It was also observed in the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that early marriage makes women to lack the ability to become financially independents. The study showed that the respondents agreed on the point that parents of a married girl leave the financial responsibility for their husband even when the man may not be financially strong. The analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the fact that poverty as an influence of early marriage has negative effect on the educational attainment.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent pregnancy, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Pregnancy, Resulting from Early Marriage Influence Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students

Status	N	Mean $\bar{X}$	Standard Deviation	Df.	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Female Teachers	120	3.12	0.88				
				398	1.39	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	280	3.05	0.87				

The analysis on Table 4 showed that the z-cal of 1.39 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is less than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 1 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents on the extent early pregnancy influences academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent overburdened with domestic work, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Female Teachers and Students on the Extent Overburdened with Domestic Work, Resulting from Early Marriage Influence Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Status	N	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Female Teachers	120	3.07	0.88				
				398	1.29	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	280	3.01	0.87				

The analysis on Table 5 revealed that the z-cal of 1.29 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 2 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent overburdened with domestic work over-load influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female teachers and students on the extent poverty resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Z-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Extent Early Marriage Influence Academic Achievement of Female Adolescent Students in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Female Teachers	120	3.07	0.86				
				398	1.29	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	280	3.01	0.87				

The analysis on Table 6 revealed that the z-cal of 1.29 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 3 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents on the extent early marriage influences academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding was discussed based on the objectives of the study:

The finding of the study on research question one: to what extent pregnancy, resulting from early marriage influences academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State showed that early pregnancy influences academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding was in line with Awan (2014) who observed that early marriage endangers the little girls, hence the reproductive system of the girls is not really for intimate activities. The study still revealed that the respondents agreed on the fact that early marriage influences the girls, because their reproductive system is not ready for child-birth. It was also observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the point that early marriage makes the girls to suffer from numerous health issues. The study indicated that the respondents agreed on the view that pregnancy at early age is very harmful to the health of the girls. The analysis still showed that the respondents accepted the point that early marriage has negative influence on the academic attainment of the students.

The finding of the study on research question two: to what extent overburdened with domestic work, resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State revealed that, overburdened with domestic work over-load influenced academic achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding was in line with Lynn, (2011) who reviewed that much work load of married women influences their educational attainment in secondary school. It was also observed in the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that cumulative Stress on married students, as a result of early marriage influences their academic attainment. The study showed that the respondents agreed on the point that family stress has negative influence on the students' academic attainment. The analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the fact that married women perform poorly when their work load is high.

The finding of the study on research question three: to what extent poverty resulting from early marriage influence academic achievement of female adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State indicated that poverty as one of the influence of early marriage influence the educational attainment of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding was in line with Okeke (2014) who reviewed that majority of the early married women are not employed thereby influencing their academics because of financial constrain. The study still indicated that the respondents, agreed on the view that when a girl is married as a child, it can lead to the end of her education. It was also observed in the analysis that the respondents accepted the fact that early marriage makes women to lack the ability to become financially independents. The study showed that the respondents agreed on the point that parents of a married girl leave the financial responsibility for their husband even when the man may not be financially strong. The analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the fact that poverty as an influence of early marriage has negative influence on the educational attainment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that poverty, rate of maternal mortality and early pregnancy influenced the educational achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study also deduced that early marriage represents one of the greatest challenges of girl-child education in our time. It has considerable implications for social development of child prides, in terms of low levels of education, poor health and lack of personal autonomy. It constitutes a violation of the rights of the girls who are forced to marry early and it profoundly affects their life through substantially lower education prospects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proffered based on the findings of this study.

1. It is recommended that government should organize awareness and orientation campaign on how to alleviate poverty through empowerment hence it is an influence of early marriage.
2. It is recommended that school management organize enlightenment campaign for the female students on how rate of maternal mortality influence the educational achievement of female adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

3. It is recommended that government should design a programme that would help teachers and students on how to prevent early pregnancy because of its influence on the educational achievement of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

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