

# **INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON FEMALE BIOLOGY STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

By

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project is carried out by Muritala Mariam of the Department of Biology /Integrated Science, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin in partial fulfillment of the Award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE)

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to Almighty Allah for sparing my life till this day.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My profound gratitude, adoration be unto Allah the most compassionate, the merciful, the gracious, who creates us and also gave strength, wisdom, ability and also allows me to complete this course successful may His excellent name be praise forever.

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I also express my profound gratitude to my brothers and sisters for their support in terms of moral, finance, material, and prayers towards the success of my programme.

My appreciation straightly goes to my lovely parents for the immeasurable caring, loving and finances through the course of my NCE programmes may Almighty Allah let you reap the fruit of your labour Amen.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

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

According to UNICEF (2015), the major reasons why more girl children are found outside school in Kwara State 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 Kwara 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 brides, 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. In addition, 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 Kwara 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 Kwara State

Birth, marriage and death are the standard trio of key events in most people's live. But out of these three events; marriage is a matter of choice. The right to exercise that choice was identified as a principle of law starting from the Roman era and has been established in the international human right instruments. Yet, many girls forcefully get into marriage without any choice of exercising their right to choose. Others are simply too young to make a matured decision about their marriage partner or about the consequences of marriages itself. They may have given what passes for counsel in the eyes of the law, but in reality, consent to their binding union has been made by other on their behalf (Bunting, 2022).

The axiom is that once a girl is married she has automatically become a woman regardless her age. Early marriage, which is marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 is still widely practiced most especially in the Northern part of the country. There are various forms and causes of early marriage, but one issue is prominent, which is early marriage is a violation of human right. The right to free and full consent to marriage is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in other human right instruments (Shehu, 2023; Bunting, 2022).

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 girls in developing 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 those returns financially and socially (Shobba, 2019). On the contrary, 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. These conditions ultimately make married girls susceptible to poverty. These girls are required to do a disproportionate amount of chores, which Includes new roles and responsibilities as wives and mothers. The young bride's status in the family is frequently dependent on her, demonstrating their fertility often within the first year of her marriage. At this time, she is not psychologically, emotionally and physiologically prepared for these roles. Additionally, girls are made responsible for the care and welfare of future generations while still children themselves. Young mothers with no decision-making powers, restricted mobility and no economic resources are likely to transmit this vulnerability to their kids. Therefore, early marriage directly compounds to feminization of poverty and

intergenerational poverty.

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, 2022). Studies conducted by Goldien (2021) 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.

### **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, 2021). The influence of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Kwara 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, 2018). 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 personal growth. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the influence of early marriage on the educational attainment of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study include:

1. To examine the influence of early marriage on female academic performance of Biology students Kwara State College of Education.
2. To identify the possible reasons for early marriage on females in Kwara State College of Education.
3. To examine the educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

4. To examine the non-educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

### **Research Question**

In accordance with the research purpose, the four research questions of interest raised in the study

1. Does Early marriage has any influence on female academic performance of biology students in kwara state college of Education?
2. What are the possible reasons of early marriage on female academic performance of Biology students in Kwara State College of Education?
3. What are the educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance in Kwara State College of Education?
4. What are the non-educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance in Kwara State College of Education

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the research questions the following four research hypotheses were tested and formulated;

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant influence between early marriage and female academic performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no possible reasons between early marriage and female academic performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant influences between educational of early marriage on female academic performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

**H<sub>3</sub>:** there is no significant influence between non-education and female academics performance of biology students in Kwara State College of Education

## **Significance of the Study**

This study would be of immense benefits in the following :

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 women you educate a family, a nation, and this will help change their attitudes and ignorance towards girls education.

Government, both the Federal, State and Local levels will gain from this study by realizing from this study that funds, higher access education, poverty easing programmes should be made available for education at all levels.

Educational planners, the general public will gain from this study by learning that girls are in no way inferior to men, they also gain by learning how to educate, guide and counsel girls in carrier choices of educational courses.

## **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study focused on the influence of early marriage on female academic performance of biology students in Nigerian women who have experienced early marriage a case study of Kwara State College of Education.

The researcher encounters some constrain which limited the scope of the study;

**a) AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH MATERIAL:**The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study to Kwara State College of Education

**b) TIME:** The time frame allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study.

c) **Organizational privacy:** Limited Access to the selected auditing firm makes it difficult to get all the necessary and required information concerning the activities.

### **Definition of terms**

**Education:** Education is defined as the process of easing learning, or the learning of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits.

**Early Marriage:** Early marriage or child marriage is defined as the union between two people in which one or both parties are younger than 18 years of age.

**Academic Performance:** Academic performance is the outcome of education, the point to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are more important.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature**

The review of related literature would be discussed under the following sub-heading:

- Concept of Early Marriage
- Early Pregnancy and Students Academic performance
- Reason Why Early Marriage Affects Students
- Influence of Early Marriage on Women
- Causes of Early Marriages
- Early Marriage as a Developmental Challenge
- The Impact of Early Marriage on Education
- Empirical Study on Influence of Early Marriage on the Academic Performance of Female Biology Students in Kwara Kwara State: Challenges and Prospects
- Theoretical Frame work

### **Concept of Early Marriage**

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 Kwara 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 to girl-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 performance**

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 sperm 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 vaginal 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 unite 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. Moreover, 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, sexually 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 fears 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 shortcycle 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. Lowincome 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.

**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

Child marriage equals early marriage. This necessarily denies children of school age, their right to the education for their personal development, preparation for adulthood and influence ive contribution to the future well-being of their family and society. The interaction between the number of years of a girl's schooling and the postponement of marriage is firmly influence ed by demographic and fertility studies. On the average, women with seven or more years of education marry four years later and have 2.2 percent fewer children than those with no education. Meanwhile, it has been rightly discovered that there is a better tool for influence ive development than education of girls. It reduces infant mortality rate, promotes good health, improves nutrition, increases economic productivity, builds political participation and prepares the ground for educating the next generation.

UNICEF (2023) observed that the marriage of young person's less than 18 years is still widely practiced in many parts of the world but remains prevalent in countries of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Southern Asia and affects girls. It was figured that, if nothing changes, 100 million of young girls aged 15 years or less will be married within the present decade. Regional estimates of its occurrence for girls include 48 percent in Southern Asia, 42 percent in Africa and 29 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean with

wide differences across the countries. In the West African sub-region, the number of girls affected varies from 28 to 43 percent (Ghana, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Benin, and Nigeria) to 60 to 80 percent (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Chad and Niger).

Abdullah (2011) in a study observed that in Nigeria, the practice of child marriage is deeply established firmly in tradition culture and religion and the country has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with 42 percent of girls married before 18 years; and while this is found among different ethnic groups across the country, it is clearly noticed in the northern part of the country. While nationwide, 20 percent of girls are married by age 15, and 40 percent are married by age 18, child marriage is extremely encountered generally in some regions such as among the Muslim, Hausa- Fulani of the Northwest and North-East (of which Zaria is a part) where 48 percent of girls are married by age 15, and 78 percent are married by age 18. While average age at first marriage is 17 years nationwide, average age of marriage for girls is just over 11 years in Kebbi State and about 15 years in most other parts of northern Nigeria. Among the Yoruba's, made up of a mixture of Christians and Muslims in the South-West, child-marriages are no longer arranged and for the Igbo in the South-East that are mostly Christians, the practice has declined considerably and restricted to few communities and situations where pregnant teenagers are forcefully married off, to prevent family shame or restore honour.

### **Early Marriage as a Developmental Challenges**

Early marriage stands in direct conflict with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), (Mathur, 2023). It threatens the achievement of the first six goals respectively, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality,

improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (UN 2021).

When the relationship between age at marriage and development is examined, it becomes clear that later marriage is a precondition for the attainment of desired development related goals. These can include completion of school, acquisition of training for employment, and attainment of the skills and information related to the roles of citizen, family member, and consumer that are part of a successful adulthood, (Mathur, 2013 and UNICEF, 2013). In many countries child marriage is linked with poverty. This is because it affects particularly the poorest in the population, and helps to reinforce cycles of poverty. Early marriage is associated with high fertility. However, one reason for a poverty trap is a demographic trap, when impoverished families choose to have lots of children. According to Sachs (2005), high fertility rates in one generation, therefore, tend to lead to impoverished of the children and high fertility in the following generation as well. Women are at the heart of many societies. Regardless of whether they are working or not, mothers are very influential people in children's lives. According to DFID (2005), educating girls is one of the most important investments that a country can make in its own future. Education has a profound influence on girls and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. Having an education can make an enormous difference to woman's chances of finding well paid, raising a health family and preventing the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS. UNICEF (2022) argues that it is not only the girls that pay for early marriage but that society also pays. Population pressure, health care costs and lost opportunities of human development are just a few of the growing burdens that society shoulders because of early marriage. Girls' education is one of the means to address poverty and developmental problems. With education girls are given the chance to choose their own futures and not one chosen by their parents and guardians. Malhotra and Mathur (2020) argue that there is a close link between delayed marriage and adult earnings.

Women's economic future and their ability to participate in and contribute to the global economy are primarily dependent on a rise in educational attainment, but this is impossible when the girl married early. Women who marry at early age are likely to find the sole focus of their lives, at the expense of development in other areas such as formal education, and training for employment, work experience and personal growth. Early marriage can, therefore, be a significant barrier for communities seeking to raise education levels and break the cycle of poverty.

### **The Impact Of Early Marriage On Education**

Relatively few studies have tried to carefully measure the impact of child marriage on education. The main difficulty is that the decision by a girl (or her parents) to marry early is likely to be itself a function of the girl's education potential. For example, girls with lower education expectations because they may be weaker academically face smaller expected losses in future earnings and may have lower incentives to continue to study as compared to girls who are academically stronger. These girls may be more willing to marry early or their parents may be more prepared to have them marry early. Likewise, independently of their academic abilities, girls less interested in pursuing their education may also marry earlier and might have dropped out of school even in the absence of marriage. Because education and marriage decisions are jointly made, it becomes very difficult to assess the impact of child marriage on education skills.

Two approaches have been used in the literature to try to figure out the impact of early marriage on education. The research conducted by Nguyen and Wodon (2016) provides a summary of a number of studies in this area. The first approach consists in relying on the reasons mentioned by parents in reviews for why their children have dropped out of school. The share of drop-outs that appear to be due to child marriage or early pregnancies can then

be figured. Using data from the late 2020s for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo; Lloyd and Mensch (2018) found out that for girls aged 15 to 24, early marriage and pregnancies directly account for between 5% and 33% of drop-outs, depending on the country. Using similar data for Nigeria for 2006, Nguyen and Wodon (2022) find that child marriage (to a much lower extent pregnancies) account for 15% to 20% of drop-outs, which is of the same order of magnitude. In addition, Nguyen and Wodon (2022) also show that if early marriage and early pregnancies could be wiped out, this could possibly reduce the gender gap in education by about half.

The second approach relies on regression techniques with implemental variables to explain the decision to marry, but not education outcomes conditional on the decision to marry. Field and Ambrus, (2023) use variation in the timing of puberty as the implemental variable for the age at first marriage, given that in different cultural and religious traditions, including in Bangladesh, girls are not allowed to marry before reaching puberty. They find that each additional year of delay in the age of marriage increases schooling by 0.22 years and the likelihood of literacy of 5.6 percentage points. Nguyen and Wodon (2022) use the past incidence of child marriage in the area where a girl lives as instruments, and also finds that in Africa each year of early marriage reduces the probability of literacy by 5.6 percentage points, and the probability of secondary school completion by 6.5 points, with the influence on the probability of having at least some secondary education being a little bit larger. Finally, using data from India and considering a measure of the fulfillment of the right to education recently adopted there, with 100 percent meaning that a girl has achieved at least nine years of schooling. Nguyen and Wodon (2020) says that each year of early marriage reduces the fulfillment of the right to education measure by about 3.2 percentage points.

It is worth emphasizing that apart from the violation of human rights that child marriage

often means, and apart from the negative impact of child marriage on health and the risk of disempowerment for the girls who marry early, the fact that child marriage has a large impact on education skill, it is expected to make programs and policies to reduce child marriage cost influence iverfor promoting growth and poverty reduction. That is, given that the returns to secondary schooling tend to be large, the positive economic impact of a decrease in child marriage on growth and poverty reduction through education skill is likely to be large.

### **Key Issues Surrounding Early Marriage (Consequences)**

They tend to be a relationship between age of marriage, level of education, poverty, and health: poorer, less educated girls tend to marry earlier and tend also to have poorer health. The following consequences tend to flow from early marriage

#### **Health and Related Outcomes**

**Early child bearing and unwanted pregnancies:** young girls who get married will most likely be forced into having sexual intercourse with their, usually much older, husbands. This has severe negative health consequences as the girl is often not psychologically, physically and sexually mature. Early marriage is associated with early child bearing. Young married girls are under tremendous pressure to prove their fertility in the first year of marriage. Girls, who marry young, inevitably have children early, and have many children, because their knowledge of contraception is poor and their power to negotiate its use is weak.

Domestic violence and sexual abuse:

As young girls are often married to men who are much older than themselves, the age difference tends to reinforce the powerlessness of the girl, who is thus at greater risk of abuse and less likely to assert herself. Young married girls are more likely to be beaten or threatened and more likely to believe that a husband might sometimes be justified in beating

his wife. Women who believe that are more likely to have been married before age 18 than those who believe that there is never justification. Child brides are often more susceptible to domestic violence. (USAID Gender Assessment, 2023-2024). In Egypt, data indicates that 29% of married adolescents were beaten by their spouses—or their spouses and others. Of these, 41% were beaten when they were pregnant. (Population Council, 2000 cited by ICRW, 2019).

#### High maternal mortality and morbidity:

The world health organization estimates that the risk of death following pregnancy is twice as great for women between 15 and 19 years than for those between the ages of 20 and 24. The maternal mortality rate can be up to five times higher for girls aged between 10 and 14 than for women of about twenty years of age. Pregnant adolescents face far more health problems than older women, particularly single girls who often receive less prenatal care (WHO report, 2014). Adolescents are far more susceptible to suffering from anemia than adults, which greatly increase the risk and complications linked to pregnancy. They are equally more at risk of malnutrition, high blood pressure linked to pregnancy and eclampsia than women who are over 20, (Women's International Network 2000 and IHEU 2006).

#### Increased Risk of Contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS

Fear of HIV infection, for example, has encouraged men in some African countries to seek young virgin – and therefore uninfected –partners. On top of pregnancy-related complications, young married girls are also at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Young married girls are even at higher risk because their older husbands may already be infected in previous sexual relationships. Furthermore, the age difference between the girl and the husband and her low economic status make it almost impossible for the girl to negotiate safe sex or demand fidelity. Early marriage usually means

that young girls enter marriage without adequate information about critical sexual intercourse, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and childbirth.

### Lack of Power

It is hypothesized that women who are married as children have less decision making power than women whose marriage is delayed until adulthood. They don't have ability to make decision on their own health care, contraception, household budget, daily household purchases, visit to family and friends etc, (UNICEF, 1996). They have little power in relation to their husbands and in-laws.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **The Socio-Cultural Framework: Customs and Tradition Related To Early Marriage**

The socio-cultural framework can be explored in terms of customs and traditions as two common denominators for the causes of early marriage. Customs and traditions can be understood as man-made doctrines, beliefs, practices, or stories that are passed from generation to generation, orally or by example (Heinonen2022). Customs surrounding marriage, including the desirable age and the way in which a spouse is selected, depend on a society's view of the family its role, structure, pattern of life and the individual and collective responsibilities of its members (UNICEF 2021). Early marriage and other traditional practices such as female genital mutilation<sup>15</sup> are part of a complex social relationship related to family formation and sustainability of ethnic groups. Studies on marriage abound but often fail to incorporate early marriage in a holistic picture of the place of marriage in family formation, community building, the role and process of early marriage and its relations to other traditional practices (NCTPE 2017). Viewed from a socio-cultural perspective, the reasons for early marriage are varied and many. Some of the most common socio-cultural reasons for early marriage are: to forge alliances/ links between families and to ensure that

the girl is properly married while she is still a virgin and too young to act independently. In this context, early marriage may even occur where a family has made a pledge to give its daughter in marriage to a benefactor. Hence, the age of betrothal for girls in early arranged marriages might even be before birth takes place or after puberty (FMRWG 2020, 2019, 2018; Heinonen 2017). Here it should be noted that, in early arranged marriage, like forced marriage, the element of the girl's consent is usually absent the themes of female purity and danger permeate entrenched beliefs for maintaining the status quo. In societies where the honor of the family depends upon the honor of its women, there is a strong link between early marriage and the social goal of maintaining the reputation of daughters. Consequently, virginity becomes a necessary preliminary as well as an absolute prerequisite to marriage. This is because once a girl has lost her virginity, and/or given birth out of wedlock, she is considered a woman, even if she is only 12 years old or younger (Heinonen 2002). The socio-cultural justifications of parents for early marriage can be summed as: fear of being dishonored as a result of delayed marriage and/or loss of virginity, to prevent abduction, to secure a proper marriage for daughters, and to forge links between families. More specifically, traditional justifications for early marriage may include: 1) Respect for traditions that dictate that girls should marry early; 2) The honoring of pledges to a family or a benefactor; 3) The strengthening of community ties; and Girls given a substitute to the husband of a deceased sister (FMRWG 2000; Heinonen 2002). However, this does not tell us why particularly girls are married off early, rather than boys. The underlying reason behind early marriage is discrimination against girls and women from the time they are born and throughout their life cycle (FMRWG 2000, 2001, 2003). Hence, the themes of female purity and danger permeate entrenched beliefs for maintaining the status quo (Heinonen 2002). In the final analysis, social norms and gender-related inequalities reinforce poverty in girls who marry early. In this regard, the underlying reason behind gender-specific socio-cultural

justifications for early marriage can be further explored in the light of the economic framework or the economics of early marriage.

## **THE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK: THE LINKS BETWEEN EARLY**

### **MARRIAGE AND POVERTY**

From the economic point of view, young girls are often seen as an economic burden and married off. In this respect, early marriage for girls is viewed as a means of economic survival, i.e., if a girl is married early, the family has one mouth less to feed, and the hope is that the girl herself will be better off. In other words, parents may feel that marrying a daughter at a young age can help them economically (Heinonen 2002). In this context, the link between early marriage and poverty is discussed in terms of ensuring a better future for girls, or of girls being financial burdens to their families. The latter is voiced in terms of —another mouth to feed, the aim is securing the survival of the family, depriving a girl of her education in order to give a better chance to her brothers, since her labor power and children will go to her husband's patrilineage anyway (Heinonen 2023; UNICEF 2011a). Conversely, the prohibitively high bride price demanded by parents in some rural areas of Ethiopia is encouraging poor young men to abduct and rape underage girls in order to secure a marriage (Teshome Segni 2022). A multitude of issues created by early marriage are increasingly associated with poverty and illiteracy. Recent studies show that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes for early marriage and its continuance. —Globally, early marriage and early childbearing have been more or less abandoned by the wealthiest section of society, even in poor and highly traditional countries. Virtually, everywhere, poor women in rural areas tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role (UNICEF 2001a:5). FMRWG (2003:11) further notes that, poverty is a major cause, as well as a consequence, of early marriage for many young girls under the age of 18.

In many traditional settings, poor families use the early marriage of daughters as a strategy for reducing their own economic vulnerability, shifting the economic burden related to a daughter's care to the husband's family. Unfortunately, while this strategy may in some instances place the girl in a better-off family environment, in many cases, the negative influences reinforce her vulnerability, and that of her children, to poverty in her marital home. —The younger the age at the time of marriage, the lower the probability that girls will have acquired critical skills and developed their personal capacity to manage adverse situations that may affect their overall welfare and economic well-being (FMRWG 2003). The foregoing discussions about the links between early marriage and poverty imply that the tradition of early marriage is part of a circle of poverty in its broader sense. In this connection, FMRWG(2003:14-15) clearly states that:- There are over 1 billion people living below the poverty line (on less than a dollar a day). The majority of who are females and mainly live in rural areas of developing countries. This form of poverty is characterized by a lack of human capital such as livelihood, skills, education, interpersonal skills, good health (including sexual and reproductive health) and well-being. Additionally the majority of poor people lack social assets and social networks (Diop et al 2002). Married adolescent girls, especially those from rural settings, are at most risk of being poor and will therefore manifest most of these characteristics of poverty. There is little information on the determinants of early marriage. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that the majority of married girls in rural communities tend to have mothers who are married early. Marriage becomes the only option available to such girls. Poorer mothers are more likely to transmit intergenerational poverty to their children. Children born to young mothers will be disproportionately affected by the inter-generational transmission of poverty via nutrition which often begins in the womb of the malnourished mother (Harper et al 2003:3, 27). Such children become stunted and underweight in early life and also experience slow-cognitive development. This may lead

to learning difficulties-and adversely affect their development of life skills-which will also, in turn, limit their productivity and earning opportunities, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty into the next generation. This could be financial, material or environmental, or simply about acquisition of social values, knowledge or status. Young girls who have married early will therefore have fewer opportunities to acquire vital capabilities that can be used when they are in vulnerable situation. Based on the above-mentioned statements, FMRWG (2003) strongly argues that poverty is gendered and affects men and women differently; strategies that target poverty do not address the multi- dimensional nature of poverty and fail to focus on the most vulnerable. Existing gender discrimination and socially prescribed roles for wives put undue pressure on young wives to meet these demanding responsibilities. Social issues around the transmission of poverty and the vicious circle of early marriage have not been adequately researched. However, available evidence indicates that social norms regarding access to and control over productive resources and assets within the household are biased against girls and can be exacerbated in situations where girls are married early and have very little decision-making power. In addition, social pressures to bear many children results in the girls' pre-occupation with childcare and their social isolation, while their lack of access to opportunities and resources is a hindrance to improve their vulnerability to social poverty. In general, concerning the inter-generational cycle of early marriage and poverty, Tan (2024) further argues that once married, young girls will no longer be able to stay in school. They tend to be socially isolated, sequestered at home to raise another generation of children where daughters are again deprived of opportunities to break out the intergenerational cycles of early marriage and poverty. Ultimately, it is the society, which pays for this. The young brides, as well as their children, face greater risks for illness and death. The young brides also represent-wasted human capital, reduced to becoming baby-makers (Tan 2004). This remark will be further explored in the light of the human development framework.

## **CHILD / EARLY OR FORCED MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA**

The term early marriage or child marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18 years old in accordance to Article on the Convention on the Rights of the child. UNICEF (2005) describes it as both formal marriage and informal unions in which a girl lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18. It can also be defined as any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years before the girls physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing. Child marriage is viewed as a violation of human rights and is prohibited by a number of international conventions and other instruments, namely: Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1964; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 2020; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2019.

## **EARLY MARRIAGE: A GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND A VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGERIA**

Child marriage represents one of the greatest development challenges of our time. It has considerable implications for the social development of child brides, in terms of low levels of education, poor health and lack of agency and personal autonomy. It is a practice that robs children of their childhood, imperils their health, and destroys their hopes. 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, health complications (such as vesico-vaginal fistulae, a higher likelihood of acquiring HIV/AIDS, and higher levels of infant mortality with early pregnancies), and higher risks of violence. In the home as well as social exclusion. Violence occurs when the child refuses sex; she is violently assaulted sexually and ends up being pregnant at a very early age. Many of these girls experience

obstructive labour and consequently develop fistula and are abandoned by both husbands and parents to their fate (Childs Right Information Network, 2011). In Nigeria, like other African countries (Demographic Health Survey, 2003:6), where the age of marriage is low; the incidence of child marriages might have heavy implications that could affect the healthcare and treatment of women in the country. The incidence is much higher in the northern region of Nigeria where prenatal care and free will for young married women are lower than in other regions of the country (Bello and Annabel, 2021). Nigeria ranked 19th among top 20 countries with highest rates of child marriage. Using data from the late 2020s for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo, Lloyd and Mensch (2018) find that for girls aged 15 to 24, child marriage and pregnancies directly account for between 5% and 33% of drop-outs, depending on the country. Using similar data for Nigeria for 2006, Nguyen and Wodon (2022) find that child marriage (and to a much lower extent pregnancies) account for 15% to 20% of drop-outs, which is of the same order of magnitude. In addition, Nguyen and Wodon (2022) also show that if child marriage and early pregnancies could be eliminated, this could potentially reduce the gender gap in education by about half. The causes and influences of child marriage are intrinsically linked. Driven by a growing recognition of human and economic costs – as well as an international consensus regarding the impacts of early marriage on girls' human rights countries around the world have moved, albeit unevenly, to legalise the practice. However, as Brown (2022) notes, due to uneven enforcement even strong legislation has often delivered weak results'. Early marriage is an issue that cannot be solved in isolation because it results from a complexity of social, cultural and economic dimensions and widespread gender discrimination. Repeated studies have shown the importance of education in eliminating child marriage (Lloyd and Mensch 2023; Okereke, Uwakwe and Nwamuo, 2023). These studies found that the more education a girl receives, the less likely she is to be married early. Improving access to education and

eliminating gender gaps in education are important strategies for ending the practice of early marriage. Government should exercise the political will to implement relevant laws and conceptions, including the right of the child as bona-fide citizen of the country. Reforms must take cognizance of the power of traditionally structured family. But parents, family heads, traditional rulers and other stakeholders must realize there is need for change of attitudes towards the phenomenon of child marriage. Awareness should be created that it is not a fight against religious beliefs; it is to save the lives of child brides from all the attendant consequences. The Northern Nigeria states must adopt the Child Rights Act, which was passed into law in 2003 and adopted by 23 states, without any modifications as depicted in the Jigawa Child Rights Law (despite having a Sharia civil law in place) and the Borno proposed bill (Osakinle, Ibimiluyi and Okunade, 2015). Ending child marriage will help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by allowing girls and women to participate more fully in society. Empowered and educated girls are better able to nourish and care for their children, leading to healthier, smaller families.

## **Empirical Study on Influence of Early Marriage on the Academic Performance of Female Biology**

### **Students in Kwara Kwara State: Challenges and Prospects**

The researcher worked on the exploration of the influence of early marriage on the academic performance of female biology Students in Kwara state. The researcher shed light its influences on female education and academic performance and also the Challenges and prospects. Descriptive type of quantitative research method was used in the study, A self-designed questionnaire titled as Questionnaire on Influence of Early Marriage and Academic Performance (QEEMAP) with  $r=0.74$  Cronbach alpha was used to gathered data on the study. Data collected were analyzed using chi-square, t-test and frequency count and percentage

scores. The analysis of the researchers resulted in a number of findings consistent with the objectives of the study. It was confirmed that none of the respondents was male that is; 100 percent of the respondents were female. The results showed that; female students' education in Kwara is affected by the early marriage but the extent of association is not strong enough. the researchers' further suggested that;

(1) There should be avenue for proper orientation on some major factors that Northern people (e.g. Kwara State) might see as those that militate against girl-child education; the factors like culture, socio-economic status, religious practices etc.

(2) Young girls or females should be encouraged so that there will be brighter prospects in the future for more females to be educated in Katsina State.

(3) If there will be early marriage at all, the female students should try as much as possible to finish their secondary school first and then have the mind of proceeding after a while (Mustapha , Aliyuand Ahmad 2021).

The researchers ventured on the analysis of the prevalence and perceived consequences of early marriage on school enrollment completion and academic performance of female students in senior secondary schools in the North-East Geo-political zone, Nigeria. The objective of the study determined the major influence s of early marriage on female youth educational development. Ex-post facto design was used for the study; the data collected through questionnaire were analyzed with the statistical package for social science (SPSS) using t-test of inferential statistics. The major finding revealed that, there was significant different in enrolment completion and academic performance of early marriage students and those married at a later age. It was further recommended that, there is need for a reform in laws discouraging early/force marriage in the country. Also guidance and counseling should be introduced in all schools, and parents should delay marriage of their daughters

until at a later age.(Mohammed and Mus‘ab.2023).

The axiom is that once a girl is married she has automatically become a woman regardless her age. Early marriage, which is marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 is still widely practiced most especially in the Northern part of the country. There are various forms and causes of early marriage, but one issue is prominent, which is early marriage is a violation of human right. The right to free and full consent to marriage is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in other human right instruments (Shehu, 2023; Bunting, 2022).

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 girls in developing 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 those returns financially and socially (Shobba, 2019). On the contrary, 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. These conditions ultimately make married girls susceptible to poverty. These girls are required to do a disproportionate amount of chores, which Includes new roles and responsibilities as wives and mothers. The young bride’s status in the family is frequently dependent on her, demonstrating their fertility often within the first year of her marriage. At this time, she is not psychologically, emotionally and physiologically prepared for these roles. Additionally, girls are made responsible for the care and welfare of future generations while still children themselves. Young mothers with no decision-making powers, restricted mobility and no economic resources are likely to transmit this vulnerability to their

kids. Therefore, early marriage directly compounds to feminization of poverty and intergenerational poverty.

According to UNICEF (2015), the major reasons why more girl children are found outside school in Kwara State 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 Kwara 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. In addition, 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 Kwara 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 Kwara State

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **Research Design**

The researcher used descriptive research survey design in building up this project work the choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to the influence of early marriage on female academic performance

#### **Population of the Study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items, things the researcher is interested in getting information on the influence of early marriage on female academic performance. The population of the study would consist of 100 female married students and staff (undergraduate/postgraduate) in Kwara State College of Education.

#### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher purposively selected a sample size of 100 respondents. Therefore, the sample size for the study was 100 respondents.

#### **Data Collection**

Data will be collected through questionnaire which the researcher would be administered face to face to the respondents, 100 copies of questionnaire would be distributed to the respondents.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The major research instrument used is the questionnaires. Data will be collected through questionnaire which the researcher would be administered face to face to the respondents, 100 copies of questionnaire would be distributed to the respondents.

The questionnaires contained structured questions which were divided into sections A and B.

### **Validation of the Research Instrument**

The questionnaire that would be used for this study shall thoroughly scrutinize by the supervisor for clarity, precision, and comprehension.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Simple tables, frequency and percentage would be adopted in the presentation and analysis of the data generated for the study. These statistical tools were used because they were suitable means of breaking down and analysing the generated data

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS PRESENTATION

This chapter presents the results of the field study; it shows the descriptive information of the respondents, the results of each of the research questions.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS

**Table I:Demographic Information of the Respondents**

Factor	Group	Frequency	Percentage
LEVEL	100	21	21
	200	23	23
	300	25	25
	400	31	31
	Total	100	100
AGE	15-23yrs	25	25
	24-30yrs	56	56
	31-35yrs	19	19
	36-40yrs	0	0
	41YRS+	0	0
	Total	100	100
YEARS IN MARRIAGE	1-3yrs	59	59
	4-6yrs	45	45
	7-9yrs	6	6
	10yrs+	0	0
	Total	100	100

Source:Fieldsurvey,2025

Based on the result on table 4.1 above, it can be observed that about 21 percent of the respondents are in 100level, 23 percent of the respondents are in 200level, 25 percent of the

respondents are in 300level and 31 percent of the respondents are in 400level. The implication of this is that, 300level student have highest respondent.

The age distribution of the respondents can be deduced that about 25 percent of the respondents are between the ages of 15-23years, 56 percent of the respondents are in between the ages of 24 and 30 years, 19 percent fall into the category of 31-35 years, while 0 percent of the respondents are 36-40 and 41 year above. The implication of this is that, more respondents fall into the age bracket of 24-30 years.

The years in marriage of the respondents shows that 59 percent of the respondents have been in marriage between 1-3years, 45 percent of the respondents have been in marriage between 4-6years and 6 percent of the respondents have been in marriage between 7-9years. It follows that more respondents who have been married for 1 to 3 years have the highest proportion of respondents.

#### **ANALYSES OF THE RESPONDENTS BASED ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Table II: Analysis Of Possible Reasons For Early Marriage Kwara State College of Education.**

		RQ1				Total
		SD	D	A	SA	
Negativeuses	item1	9	20	41	30	100
	item2	48	38	11	3	100
	item3	39	46	13	2	100
	item4	42	46	6	6	100
	item5	3	20	36	41	100
	item6	38	32	15	15	100
	item7	35	45	14	6	100
	item8	78	21	1	0	100

item9	2	12	38	48	100
item10	9	20	41	30	100
item11	4	15	35	46	100
item12	9	13	43	35	100
item13	41	46	11	2	100
item14	7	22	41	30	100
Total	364	396	346	294	1400

Source:Fieldsurvey,2025

From table II, 71 respondents (71.0%) agree that poverty is the reason for their early marriage while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagree that poverty is the reason for their early marriage, 14 respondents (14.0%) agree that limited education is the reason for their early marriage while 86 respondents (86.0%) disagree that limited education is the reason for their early marriage, 15 respondents (15.0%) agree that limited job opportunities is the reason for their early marriage while 85 respondents (85.0%) disagree that limited job opportunities is the reason for their early marriage, 12 respondents (12.0%) agree that custom and traditions is the reason for their early marriage while 88 respondents (88.0%) disagree that custom and traditions is the reason for their early marriage, 77 respondents (77.0%) agree that unwanted pregnancy is the reason for their early marriage while 23 respondents (23.0%) disagree that unwanted pregnancy is the reason for their early marriage, 30 respondents (30.0%) agree that religious injunctions is the reason for their early marriage while 70 respondents (7.0%) disagree that religious injunctions is the reason for their early marriage, 10 respondents (10.0%) agree that prestige is the reason for their early marriage while 90 respondents (90.0%) disagree that prestige is the reason for their early marriage, one respondent (1.0%) agrees that collection of dowry from rich families is the reason for their early marriage while 99 respondents (99.0%) disagree that collection of dowry from rich families is the reason for their early marriage, 86 respondents (86.0%) agree that to avoid shame and disgrace is the reason for their early marriage while 14 respondents (14.0%) disagree that to avoid shame

and disgrace is the reasons for their early marriage, 71respondents (71.0%) agrees that to avoid unnecessary sexual harassment is the reasons for their early marriage. while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagrees that to avoid unnecessary sexual harassment is the reasons for their early marriage, 81 respondents(81.0%) agrees that parental pressure to prevent social and sexual relations outside marriage is the reasons for their early marriage while 19 respondents (19.0%) disagrees that parental pressure to prevent social and sexual relations outside marriage is the reasons for their early marriage, 78 respondents (78.0%) agrees that financial challenges is the reasons for their early marriage while 22 respondents (22.0%) disagrees that financial challenges is the reasons for their early marriage, 13 respondents (13.0%) agrees that gender discrimination is the reasons for their early marriage while 87 respondents (87.0%) disagrees that gender discrimination is the reasons for their early marriage and 71respondents (71.0%) agrees that there are other reasons for their early marriage while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagrees that there are other reasons for their early marriage. This implies that they are different causes of early marriage in Kwara State College of Education?

**Table III: Analysis Of Educational Influence s Of Early Marriage On Female Academic Performance In Kwara State College of Education**

		RQ2				Total
		SD	D	A	SA	
Negative uses	item1	10	10	33	47	100
	item2	11	23	28	38	100
	item3	8	23	40	29	100
	item4	16	25	28	31	100
	item5	3	20	36	41	100
	item6	9	20	41	30	100
	item7	71	21	7	1	100
	item8	10	12	37	41	100
	item9	7	22	39	32	100
	item10	11	24	31	34	100

Total	156	200	320	324	1000
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Source: Field survey, 2025

From table III, 80 respondents (80.0%) agree that lack of concentration in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 20 respondents (20.0%) disagree that lack of concentration in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 66 respondents (66.0%) agree that irregular attendance in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 34 respondents (34.0%) disagree that irregular attendance in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 69 respondents (69.0%) agree that limited time to read and study is educational influence so for early marriage on female academic performance while 31

respondents (31.0%) disagree that limited time to read and study is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 59 respondents (59.0%) agree that lack of interest in academics is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 41 respondents (41.0%) disagree that lack of interest in academics is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 77 respondents (77.0%) agree that low scores in tests and examinations is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 23 respondents (23.0%) disagree that low scores in tests and examinations is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 71 respondents (71.0%) agree that lack of adequate educational resources is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagree that lack of adequate educational resources is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 8 respondents (8.0%) agree that termination of education is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic

performance while 92 respondents (92.0%) disagrees that termination of education is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 78 respondents (78.0%) agrees that plenty academic work that needs to be completed is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 22 respondents (22.0%) disagrees that plenty academic work that needs to be completed is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 71 respondents (71.0%) agrees that difficulty to understand what is being taught in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagrees that difficulty to understand what is being taught in class is educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance and 65 respondents (65.0%) agrees that little or no time to revise for tests and examinations is educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance while 45 respondents (45.0%) disagrees that little or no time to revise for tests and examinations is educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance, This implies that there are various educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance, these influences has negative impact on their academic performance.

**Table IV: Analysis Of Non-Educational Influences Of Early Marriage On Female Academic Performance In Kwara State College of Education**

		RQ3				Total
		SD	D	A	SA	
Negativeuses	item1	6	8	49	37	100
	item2	3	11	38	48	100
	item3	3	9	40	48	100
	item4	6	6	42	46	100
	item5	1	2	61	36	100
	item6	13	20	36	31	100

item7	15	14	39	32	100
item8	10	12	41	37	100
item9	4	11	39	46	100
item10	3	13	40	44	100
Total	64	106	425	405	1000

Source:Field survey,2021

From table IV, 86 respondents (86.0%) agrees that increased stress is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 14 respondents (14.0%) disagrees that increased stress is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 86 respondents (86.0%) agrees that increased frustration is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 14 respondents (14.0%) disagrees that increased frustration is non-educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance, 88 respondents (88.0%) agrees that increased depression is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 12 respondents (12.0%) disagrees that increased depression is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 88 respondents (88.0%) agrees that widened burden of responsibility is non- educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance while 12 respondents (12.0%) disagrees that widened burden of responsibility is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 97 respondents (97.0%) agrees that poor time management is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 3 respondents (3.0%) disagrees that poor time management is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 01 respondents (97.0%) agrees that is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 3 respondents (.0%) disagrees that is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 67 respondents (67.0%) agrees that inferiority-complex is non-

educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 33 respondents (33.0%) disagrees that inferiority-complex is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 71respondents (71.0%) agrees that lack of time to care for one's family is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 29 respondents (29.0%) disagrees that lack of time to care for one's family is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 78respondents (78.0%) agrees that lack of support from one's family is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 22 respondents (22.0%)disagrees that lack of support from one's family is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, 85 respondents (85.0%) agrees that low level of self-concept is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 15 respondents (15.0%) disagrees that low level of self-concept is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance and 84 respondents (84.0%) agrees that emotional imbalance is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance while 16 respondents (16.0%) disagrees that emotional imbalance is non- educational influence s of early marriage on female academic performance, This implies that there are various non-educational influences of early marriage on female academic performance, these influences has negative impact on their Academic performance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter's primary focus is to provide a summary of the findings, and make conclusions as well as recommendations on the study. It is divided into four sections and organized on the following basis: Summary of the study findings, conclusions, recommendations; and, suggested areas for further research.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study examined the influence s of early marriage on the academic achievement of married female students in Nigerian universities. More specifically, the study sought to assess the educational and non-educational influence s of early marriage on the academic achievement of married female students in Nigerian universities using a case study of Kwara State College of Education.

The objectives of the study were to:

14. To identify the possible reasons for early marriage in Kwara State College of Education.
15. To examine the educational influence s of early marriage on female Biology students' academic performance in Kwara State College of Education.
- 16.** To examine the non-educational influences of early marriage on female Biology students' academic performance in Kwara State College of Education.

The study adopted the simple random technique to select 100 students across different academic levels and departments. A well-constructed questionnaire was developed to supply

information on the subject matter and the data collected were subjected to the statistical method of descriptive statistics. In furtherance, the simple percentage was employed to test the stated hypothesis. Findings from the study revealed the following

1. Poverty, unwanted pregnancy, avoidance of shame and disgrace, to avoid unnecessary sexual harassment, parental pressure to avoid sexual relations outside marriage and others are the main reasons for early marriage in Nigeria.
2. Early marriage has significant educational influence s on respondents' academic achievement in terms of lack of concentration in class, poor class attendance, paucity of time to read and study, poor performance in tests and examinations and difficulties to comprehend what is taught in class amongst others.
3. Early marriage also has significant non-educational influence s on respondents' academic achievement in terms of increased stress, increased frustration, emotional imbalance, widened burden of responsibilities, and low self-concept amongst others.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that earlymarriage has significant influence on academic performance of female students in tertiary institution in Kwara State College of Education, Nigeria. Schooling for married females can indeed be very tedious and challenging. The challenge that is most common among married undergraduate female students is managing multiple roles and that the major cause of it is role contagion. From the study, it can be concluded that combining work commitment, family responsibilities and school obligations leads to stress among the married undergraduate female students and this has the greatest influence on them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising out of the study findings and conclusions drawn, the study recommends the following:

1. The married undergraduate female students should learn to delegate roles to others around them. Delegation reduced role strain by passing some role demands to someone else. Childcare, for example, could be delegated to a spouse, family member such as parents, or care provider.
2. Undergraduates should try as much as possible to finish their studies before getting married especially the female counterparts because a woman tends to be saddled with many responsibilities in marriage and women often are the primary caregivers in the home, thus they have higher demands from the family role.
3. There is the need on the part of the Ministry of education to establish a counseling unit with the responsibility of educating and enlightening the married female students on issues that may retard their marriages and academic performance, such as marital conflicts, absenteeism, and lateness to school.
4. The Nigerian Government should encourage female education through scholarship awards at all levels of educational enterprise in order to enable the female students cope with the financial obligations in education, and therebybe forced from socio-economic temptations which will distract their attention from education.

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## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**KWARA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ILORIN**

**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY**

**TOPIC: INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON FEMALE BIOLOGY  
STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

Dear Sir/Ma,

This questionnaire is an purposely to know the influence of early marriage on female biology Students academic performance in Kwara State College of Education.

Kindly respond to the questions appropriately. All information supplied will betreated confidentially.

Please kindly tick (√)as considered appropriate.

### **SECTION A: Personal Data of Respondent**

1. Level:

(a.)100 [ ] (b.) 200 [ ] (c.) 300 [ ]

2. YearsinMarriage:

(a.)1-3years [ ] (b.) 4-6years [ ] (c.) 7-9years [ ] (d.) Above 10years [ ]

3. Age: (a.) Below 25years [ ] (c.) 26-40years [ ] (c.) Above 40years [ ]

### **SECTION B: Reasons for Early Marriage**

(Please tick one out of the four boxes provided for each items, where SA = Strongly

Agree; A= Agree; D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree)

S/N	Reasons	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Poverty				
2.	Limited education				
3.	Limited job opportunities				
4.	Customand traditions				
5.	Unwanted pregnancy				
6.	Religious injunctions				
7.	For prestige				
8.	To collect dowry from rich families				
9.	To avoid shame and disgrace				
10.	To avoid unnecessary sexual harassment.				
11.	Parental pressure to prevent social and sexual relations Outside marriage				
12.	Financial challenges				
13.	Gender discrimination				
14.	Other reasons				

## **SECTIONC: EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON FEMALE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

(Pleasetickoneoutofthefourboxesprovidedforeachitems,whereSA=StronglyAgree;

A=Agree; D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree)

S/N	Educational Influence s	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Lack of concentration in class.				
2.	Irregular attendance in class.				
3.	Limited time to read and study.				
4.	Lack of interest in academics.				
5.	Low scores intestsandexaminations.				
6.	Lackofadequateeducationalresources.				
7.	Terminationof education.				
8.	Plentyacademicworkthat needsto becompleted.				
9.	Difficultyto understandwhat isbeingtaughtin class.				
10.	Littleornotimetorevise forttestsandexaminations.				

**SECTION D: NON-EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON FEMALE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

(Please tick one out of the four boxes provided for each item, where SA=Strongly Agree;

A=Agree; D=Disagree and SD=Strong Disagree)

S/N	Non-Educational Influence s	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Increased stress				
2.	Increased frustration				
3.	Increased depression				
4.	Widened burden of responsibility				
5.	Poor time management				
6.	Inferiority-complex				
7.	Lack of time to care for one's family.				
8.	Lack of support from one's family.				
9.	Low level of self-concept.				
10.	Emotional imbalance				