Effect of Early Marriage on the Academic Performance of the Girl-Child in Katsina State: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract: **This research work explored the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of girl-child in Katsina state: Challenges and prospects. The population of the study comprised six Government Girls Secondary Schools in Katsina State. 377 respondents participated; 58-70 students were selected randomly from each six Girls Secondary in the state for this study based on their population size. A self-designed questionnaire titled as Questionnaire on Effect 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. It shed light its effects on girls' education and academic performance. The findings from respondents and extensive reading of materials related to early Marriage due to various factors including among others, the search for economic survival, protection of young girls, peer group and family pressure, controlling female behaviour and sexuality, wars and civil conflicts, socio-cultural and religious values. It is against this background, recommendations were suggested to deal with the problems, a number of strategies that will provide economic opportunities to young girls, promoting academic performance and education of girls in Katsina State and Nigeria in particular.**

Key Words: **Early Marriage, Academic Performance and Girl-Child.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

For ages, effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child has been a topic of debate especially in most Africa countries. In 2004, Children's National Day, the UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Nigeria, had presented of statistical result of schooling and non-schooling children in the contemporary society in Africa. Nigeria has the largest population with about 170 million people according to the 2006 NPC census. Of this number, 49% are female, 80.2 million girls and women, hence, this leads to the need for policy makers to pay attention to the situation of women in the country.

The research shows that over 7.2 million Nigerian children are out of school as they engage themselves in hawking or as maid to people or otherwise. According to UNICEF (2008), the major reasons why more girl children are found outside school in the North is that female children are given out on 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 Katsina State. Therefore, to ensure quality education for girls in the North in general and Katsina State in particular, it is generally agreed that: '' discrimination against the girl-child and the violation of the rights of girl-child, which often result to less access for girls to education, nutrition and physical and mental health care and in girls enjoy fewer of the rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation. Girl-child often faces social vices such as female infanticide, rape, incest, early marriage, forced marriage, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation''.

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

Therefore, abstract concept needs to be taught on implications associated with higher health risks for these girls. The implications of early marriage negatively affect her wellbeing and that of the society in respect to education as may the case of female secondary school students in Katsina State girls secondary schools.. The purpose is to eliminate child early and forced marriage so as to develop high quality levels of education and to make them not vulnerable in some areas of human development.

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) identified improving access to quality education for girls and women as 'the most urgent priority' (Kyari & Ayodele,2014

). More than one hundred countries re-affirmed this at the April, 2000 Dakar World Education Forum; ensuring that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls, have access to and complete primary education of good quality. It is against this background that the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, launched the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). It was generally agreed that:

'discrimination against the girl-child and the violation of the rights of the girl- child, which often result in less access for girls to education, nutrition and physical and mental health care and in girls enjoying fewer of the rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation and violence and harmful practices, such as female infanticide, rape, incest, early marriage, forced marriage, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation.'

The resolution also reiterates the commitments to undertake legal reforms to ensure the rights of girls, to provide for equal access to basic social services (such as education, nutrition, vaccination and health care, including sexual and reproductive health care), to enact and enforce legislation against all forms of violence and exploitation and to protect girls affected by armed conflict.

The term early marriage or child marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18years 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 girl is 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 Marriage, 1964; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. There are several causes of early marriage ranging from cultural and social pressure, persecution, forced migration and slavery, financial challenges, politics and financial relationship, religion and child marriage (Aduradola, 2013). Erulkar & Bello (2007) opined that the basis for acceptance of early marriage in the Northern parts of Nigeria in particular is to preserve the value of virginity, fears about pre-marital sexual activity, to reduce promiscuity of the girl-child and other socio-cultural and religious norms. However, because of little exposure of most parents and their short sightedness, they forget the effect it has on the girl-child as well as their education and community development. It is however unfortunate, disturbing and worrisome that the girl-child has no power to resist the pressure. Despite these, a number of

girls get married earlier than expected in Nigeria (UNICEF 2001), which shows that the problem still looms at large with a mean age of early marriage at 15.5 years.

Although uncommon in most developed countries, early marriage is still prevalent in developing countries around the world. According to the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW, 2008), the practice is highest overall in West Africa and in south and central Asia. Thus, this undermines critical international efforts to fight poverty, HIV/AIDS and other development challenges making billions of dollars in development assistance less effective. The increase in number of early girl age at marriage may be due to low academic p performance among girls but requires a study to be conducted for empirical evidence. The world over, marriage is an institution and is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in the life of the adult. In practice, marriage is not restricted to adult; the girl-child may be forced into marriage without recourse to neither her consent nor the consequences of such forced union. When children are hurried through childhood, and rushed into taking on adult task (such as marriage at a very early age, the effects can be profound and long lasting challenges. Le fevre (2004) states that while more women are now marrying at later age; early marriage remains a norm in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Overall, 20-50 percent of women are married by the age of 18 in these regions. Bayisenge (2010) observed that African women in general marry at a much earlier age than their non- African counterparts, leading to early pregnancies. Besides having a negative impact on girls themselves, the practice of early marriage also has negative consequences on the children, families and society as a whole. UNICEF (2000) argues that it is not only girls that pay for early marriage but also the society as a whole. In addition, married girls have few social connections, restricted mobility, limited control over resources and little or no power in their new households and are thus especially vulnerable to domestic violence. In countries like Niger Republic, Chad, Mali, Guinea and Nigeria the rate of early marriages is (60 percent), South Asia (46 percent) and countries with the highest rates of early marriages in Europe include Georgia (17 percent), Turkey (14 percent) and Ukraine (10 percent (UNICEF, 2005). At least 10 percent of adolescents marry before the age of 18 in Britain and France as captured in UNICEF, (2005). The most affected are among the most vulnerable and powerless; they are young, rural, uneducated, poor and female and their voices are rarely heard. Thus, in spite of that section of Nigeria constitution, early marriage still poses a problem in most part of Nigeria, as in many other countries in Africa and beyond. It's practiced is justified in the name of tradition, culture and religion. That was why some people like the former governor of Zamfara State, Alh. Ahmed Sani Yerima Bakura and Mmerole Ogha the husband of Mgbeoye got married to a 13 and 19 years old girl respectively. Especially vulnerable are young girls in rural areas, poor, and deprived communities. In Nigeria in general and among Northerners (Hausa) in particular, early marriage dates back to the formation of the society itself. 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, 2002). Therefore the main purpose of the research is to investigate the effects of early marriage practices specifically on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State.

Statement of the problem

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 are compromised. Young girls are robbed of their youth and 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 that interact to place a girl child at risk of early marriage (UNICEF, 2001). 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 30. The maternal mortality rate can be up to five times higher for girls 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. The effects of girl-child marriage at an early age consequently will affect their educational practice. Studies on early marriage in Katsina State are well documented; mainly focusing on the challenges and prospects of early marriages, which including complicated childbirth, death of both newborn child and mother, becoming an economic burden to parents,, with frequent marital disputes, broken marriages, poverty for the couple or for one of the spouses in the marriage, loss of educational opportunities, poor family planning and risk abortions (CDS, 2008). Early marriage contributes to a series of negative consequences both for young girls and the society in which they live. For both girls and boys, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts; cutting off educational and employment opportunities and chances of personal growth. Therefore, this research work seeks to find out reliable and more accurate information concerning the effects of the practices of early marriage specifically on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects.

Research Questions

The main purpose of the research is to investigate the effects of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects.

1. Is there any significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State?
2. Is there any significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State?

Objectives of the Research

The general aim of the research is to examine early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State and its effects on their educational development. Thus, specific objectives are formulated to help in achieving the general objectives. These are:

1. To find out the significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.
2. To find out the significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

Hypothesis

The research hypotheses are statements that illustrate relationship between two or more variables in terms of effect. This provides the researcher with necessary guide in searching for solutions to the problem under study. The type of research hypotheses used was the null hypothesis.

- Ho1 There is no significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

- Ho2 There is no significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

Significance of the Study

The motivating factor which leads to this research work is to primarily study the effects of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State.

The findings of this research will reinforce efforts to design appropriate intervention that will ultimately prevent early marriages among young girls and their impact on education sector. It is equally important that a better understanding of risks, protective measures as well as social norms inform girls and programme designers to mitigate these risks and strengthen protective measures or create them where they do not exist. It is also possible that, it will prompt the responsible authorities to come up with appropriate strategies on how to manage these challenges faced by students especially girls. Moreover, the findings of this research are deemed useful for policy makers and other stakeholders in Katsina education

sector to evolve constructive measures for ensuring better conduct practices among the youths as well as mechanisms to improve the delivery of education in Nigeria. Therefore, the findings of this research are expected to form the basis for individual and institutional and most importantly set the benchmark for legal and social framework for the protection of children's rights.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The research covered the effects of early marriage on academic performance of the girl-child Katsina State: challenges and prospects. The scope is limited to the challenges and prospects of early marriage and its effects on academic performance of female students. This cannot be effectively discussed without considering the demographic factors of the educational zones in Katsina State. The study is limited to Government Girls Secondary School Students within the three (3) senatorial zones of Katsina State. Also, the research is restricted to senior secondary school students in Katsina State.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Child marriage is defined by the World Health Organization (2009) as the period 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 Katsina 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.

Concept of Early Marriage

The term early marriage is used to refer to both formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl lives with a partner as if marriage before the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2005). For UNIFPA (2006) early marriage is also known as child marriage and is defined as any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. However, most of early marriages are arranged and based on the consent of parents and often fail to ensure the best interests of the girl child. Lack of an overarching definition of early marriage in international convention has generated some debate. Some scholars and activists argue that instead of looking for a universal age at which girls and boys should not marry, the focus should be put instead on eliminating the unwanted effects of early marriage. Bunting (1999) proposes that governments should be allowed to set the age of marriage below 18 years of age, but that the onus is on them to demonstrate that this lower age does not result in any discrimination or adverse consequences for women. 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, (1996). Poverty is one of the major factors underpinning early marriage. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic asset. Parents encourage marrying out their daughters while they are still children in hope that marriage will benefit them both economically and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family. In many contexts child marriage is legitimized by patriarchy and related family structures, which ensure that marriage transfers a father's role over his girl child to her future spouse. The marriage or betrothal of children in Katsina and other parts of Nigeria is valued as a means of consolidating powerful relations between families, for seal deals over land or other property, or even for settling disputes (UNIFPA, 2006). The strong religious message also enforces the view that marrying early is best as supported by the following views of religious scholars.

Value of Virginity and Protection of young girls from sexual pleasure and temptation

In Katsina State and parts of other northern state in particular, control may also include the practice of female genital mutilation to resist sexual pleasure and temptation. Some parents withdraw their girls from school as soon as they begin to menstruate; fearing that exposure to male pupils or teachers put them at sexual risk. These practices are all intended to shield the girl from male sexual attention, but in the eyes of concerned parents, marriage is seen to offer the ultimate protection measure (Bayisenge, 2010).

The researchers observed that early childbearing and motherhood, which is usually accompanied early marriages also is equally associated with lower levels of education and higher rates of poverty. Girls who are already in school are often forced to terminate their education when they marry early, limited mobility, household responsibilities, pregnancy and raising children and other social restrictions for married girls prevent them from taking advantage of education or work opportunities. In this regard, opportunities for young mothers to continue with their education or to work often are limited because they have little access to resources and are

responsible for childbearing and household tasks. Thus, early childbearing as well as early marriages tend to prevent further education and reinforce poverty. From the above discussion, marriage of a girl may be seen as a protective action, reducing her vulnerability to rape or kidnap. However, while recognizing that such reasons maybe derived from the need to protect girls, such marriages are still early and represent a grave denial of girls' sexual and reproductive rights as well as education. Besides having a negative impact on girls, themselves, the practice of early marriage also has negative consequences on their children, families and society as a whole. Kabeer (2005) makes clear that the widespread practice of child marriages makes it increasingly difficult for families to escape poverty in the developing world, thereby undermining critical international efforts to fight poverty, HIV/AIDS and other development challenges and making billions of dollars in development assistance less effect. Unfortunately, girls in Katsina face more challenges and barriers to education than boys. Despite the obvious benefits of education to national development in Nigeria, research findings indicate that girls' dropout rate from school is higher than that of boys. It has been established that Katsina girls for various reasons bordering on religious, cultural, socio-economic and related factors are not given a fair chance in the educational sector. Some parents, in an attempt to protect their teenage daughters, give them out to wealthy old friends. There are many barriers which stand the way of girls as they try to acquire education. Ogunwale, 2002 cited in Jimoh, 2003 asserts that in most traditional societies of the world, especially in the developing countries such as northern part of Nigeria women were seen as inferior and were treated with contempt and ignominy. On the contrary, much importance and emphasis are placed on the male child who is seen as the one to carry the family name. So they (men) receive preferential treatments of empowerment than the women. Suleiman (2008) asserts that in most cases, this problem of early marriage is caused by the anxiety about moral decadence as reflected in pre-marital sex and teenage pregnancy, the present economic recession that has made education expensive for poor parents, parental desire and urge for grand children, seeing their girls' marriage as a source of wealth thereby encouraging early marriage. These cases of early marriage block the chances of a girl who has been forced into marriage at early age of about 12 to be educated. Ohanado (2009) also asserts that culture is a major and most militating factor of the education of girls in Katsina State. Different elements are given from time to time to prevent girls from venturing on the part that can lead to her personal advancement. 'Some parents fear that if the girl-child is allowed to grow up to maturity she may become morally deficient. There is also the general anxiety that if girls are not married on time, they may slip into promiscuity and become sexually loose'. In many societies today, a girl that goes around with at least 2-3 men is called a prostitute; worst still a street dog but a man that goes out with more than 5 women is never a prostitute, he is just been a man (Sani, 2003). It is against background that Ohanado (2009) added that Katsina

State culture believes that women should be home makers. He further stated that the more educated a woman is, the more likely she will not respect her husband. This prevents some parents from facing the task of educating their female children. But Hussein (1992) asserts:

> *The allegation that modern education misleads the girls is ridiculous and baseless. Experience shows that well educated girls recognize their priorities and cannot be misled as easily as an ignorant illiterate girl. They understand and realize their duties as a wife, mother and daughter and execute them earnestly.*

Therefore some men in Katsina State fear that, if they marry an educated girl, their homes may be neglected as their office hours would live no time for them to take care of their children and do other house chores. Abdulkadir (1999) in his paper presented at FEAP workshop asserts that 'the religion of Islam has provided that every member of the family should be educated and acquire a means of meeting his /her material requirement and fulfill his obligations in the family regardless of sex. Lemu & Haren (1978) quoted the Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W) to have said:

> '*The search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim (male or female). And in every Muslim seek knowledge from cradle to the grave'.*

They further buttressed this point that 'knowledge' for a Muslim is both divided into sacred and secular, and the implication for these saying of the Prophet, in modern times, is that every Muslim boy or girl men or women should pursue his or her education as far as it is possible. Bearing in mind the word of Allah in the Quran: 'only those of his servants who are learned truly fear God' (Chapter, 35 verse: 28).

Consequences of Early Marriage

It is observed that relationship between age of marriage, level of education, poverty and health, less educated girls tend to marry earlier and tend also to have poor health. The following consequences tend to flow from early marriage.

Health and Related Outcomes

Early childbearing and unwanted pregnancies: Young girls who get married will mostly 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 and this may affect their academic performance.

On the 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 25 years. Pregnant adolescents face more health problems than older women particularly single girls who often receive less prenatal care (WHO, 2009).

Reinforcement of Gender Stereotypes and Roles

The lack of other opportunities and the powerlessness that often accompanies early marriage combine to perpetuate the gender roles of girls and women and reinforces cultural traditions that support early marriage as a desirable practice.

Theoretical Framework

From different view of theories, it is observed that the economic theories and models which seems to dominate explanations of demographic situations, insufficient in explaining the effect of early marriage trends and differences across generations and society. Thus, the sociological theory of multiphase change and response propounded by Davis (1963) is selected to this research work. The theory was developed from earlier analytical framework proposed in 1956 by Davis and Brake that identified eleven intermediate variables which they grouped under three board categories. These are the intercourse, conception and gestation variables. The intercourse variables are primary and the age of entry into marriage union becomes very important as this holds important effects for other sets of variables.

The theory recognizes the role of age in marriage in determining the level of development towards academic performance and fertility in the society. The theory therefore, holds that change in economic, social status and from single to married will bring change in her educational system that may likely affect academic performance. It also suggested that people from different socio-cultural backgrounds and religion will differ in their disposition towards social change and attitudes to early marriage. For instance, some cultures, religion or groups might view early marriage union as bad while others recommend it, and vice versa. Applying this theory will help to understand the challenges and prospects of the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of girl-child in Katsina State of Nigeria.

III. DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY

The research employed descriptive survey design as its research methodology. Best and Khan (2013) opined that, the descriptive survey involves clearly defined problems and objectives. The researchers used questionnaires for the collection of data from the entire population based on appropriate sampling techniques. The method is concerned with the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of describing, evaluating or comparing current or prevailing circumstances, events or occurrences. This assisted the researchers to record, analyze and interpret the existing conditions of the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of girl-child in Katsina State: Challenges and prospects in the three (3) senatorial zones of the State. The use of descriptive design survey enabled the research to make generalization on the findings.

Population of the Study

Population refers to the larger group from which the sample is taken. According to Ladan (2012), population means all cases, objects or individuals that fit a certain specification that the researcher intends to cover. Katsina State has 34 local government areas which were divided into three (3) senatorial zones. The schools are Government Girls College, Katsina with 2,660 students, Government Girls Secondary School, Jibia with 2686 students, Government Girls Secondary School, Malumfashi with 2616 students, Government Girls Secondary School, Funtua 3166 students, Government Girls Secondary School, Mashi with 3250 students, Government Girls Secondary School, Daura with 3070 students. The population of Government Girls Secondary Schools in the three (3) senatorial zones in the state is six (6) schools selected with total number of 17,488 students for the research work. From the population describes above, the sample size and sample respondents of schools and students are selected using appropriate sampling techniques. The population is homogeneous as they almost belong to the sample age group, culture, religion and tribe. Although, the population involves only female, the average age group of students is fourteen (14) years.

Table 1: Distribution of Government Girls Secondary Schools and the Selected Students in Katsina State

Senatorial Zones	No. of Schools	Number of Students Selected
GGC-KATSINA	1	2660
GGSS-JIBIYA	1	2686
GGSS-MALUNFASHI	1	2616
GGSS-FUNTUA	1	3166
GGSS-MASHI	1	3250
GGSS-DAURA	1	3070

Source: Katsina State Ministry of Education, Katsina, Department of Planning, Research, Statistics and Development Partners (2016/2017).

Total summary:

No. of Senatorial Zones =   3

No. of Schools   =   6

No. of Students Selected =   17,488

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample is a representative figure(s) from the entire population while sample size according to Ladan (2012), is a portion of the population that is selected for the research work. In the same vein, Ladan (2012) defines sampling as a process in which a representative part of the population drawn using some appropriate sample technique to ensure adequate representative. The essence of sampling is to give the researcher the picture of the population as it is not possible to use an entire population. As a result of this, in order to get a representative sample of possible to use an entire population sample of respondents for the study, stratified sampling

method is adopted based on senatorial zones. The justification for using stratified sampling method in a study is to remove various forms of bias or prejudices and to ensure an independent chance of being selected. The total population of female students stands at (17,488) used for the research as indicated in the table 3.1. The justification for using S.S.III students is that they are on their way out of secondary education system that may be get married or proceed to higher institution. The sample size is obtained through the use Krejcie & Morgan, (1971) instrument for the study. Therefore, the sample size of the population given is 377 students for the research. There are three (3) senatorial zones in the state from which two (2) Government Girls Secondary Schools are selected based on simple random technique which is adopted to select Government Girls Secondary Schools. While the selection of schools in the sampled senatorial zones, is based on simple random technique and purposive selection because schools were chosen from urban rural settings. The population of the schools selected was six (6) Government Girls Secondary Schools randomly are pick from each senatorial zones of the state. This is represented in table 3.2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size of Schools, Students for the Research

S/No	Name of schools	Pop. of female Students	Total	Sample size
1	GGC-KATSINA	2660	2660	58
2	GGSS-JIBIYA	2686	2686	58
3	GGSS-MALUNFASHI	2616	2616	57
4	GGSS-FUNTUA	3166	3166	68
5	GGSS-MASHI	3250	3250	70
6	GGSS-DAURA	3070	3070	66
Total	6	17,488	17,488	377

Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection in this research include the following:

Questionnaire on Effect of Early Marriage and Academic Performance (QEEMAP)

The self-designed questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Effect of Early Marriage and Academic Performance' is developed after an intensive review on the concept of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects. The inventory forms the foundation base for generating items used in the instrument for this study. The initial draft of the instrument had responses as Yes or No. After the trial test, the responses were changed to the present modified Likert attitudinal scales. The instrument used in this research contains questions and alternative answers where the students select the most appropriate answers to the questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on effect of early marriage and academic performance'. The questionnaires for the students comprise two sections. Section

A elicits demographic information of the students while section B contains twenty (10) questions to elicit information on the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State. The questionnaire will be distributed to the respondents with the help of research assistants to ensure coverage in distribution and collection. The test instrument is scored with Likert scale of four responses on the bases of Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It is a four point modified Likert attitudinal scales format ranging from 1-4 point.

Validity of Questionnaire on Effect of Early Marriage and Academic Performance (QEEMAP)

The questionnaire was given to professionals, test constructors, some lecturers in Federal College of Education, Umaru Musa Yardua University Katsina and Federal University Dutsi- Ma for thorough scrutiny, clarity, precision, observation and corrections in order to minimize errors in interpretation. After making series of corrections, the content of the instrument was ascertained valid and found to be capable for measuring the effect of early marriage and students' academic performance.

Reliability of Questionnaire on Effect of Early Marriage and Academic Performance (QEEMAP)

The researcher pre-tested twenty (20) questionnaires at an interval of two (2) weeks at some selected secondary schools in Kafur, Batsari and Mani Local Government Areas of Katsina State which are different from the schools used for the research. A test re-tests method for determining test reliability was employed to compare and determine consistency and it yields a high reliability index of 0.512 and was considered appropriate in this research.

Pre-test

A pre-test study was conducted at Kafur, Batsari and Mani Local Government Areas respectively with 10 questionnaires on a test re-tests reliability exercise. 15 questionnaires were first administered and another 10 instruments were re-tested at an interval of six weeks to the samples.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher travelled to the schools in the three (3) senatorial zones that were selected for the research study: Katsina, Jibia, Malumfashi, Funtua, Mashi and Daura in the state to administer the instrument to the respondents by direct delivery. In the process of data collection, the researcher employed the services of some research assistants from the schools to help in the process of administering the instruments. Each respondent was given a copy of the questionnaire for completion under the guidance of the researcher and his assistant who helped the respondents to fill in them and return back immediately.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the responses were coded and analyzed to answer the research questions using the inferential statistics of chi-square, for relationship, t-test for difference while frequency and percentage were used as the descriptive statistics to uphold or reject the hypothesis advanced for the research of an alpha of 0.05% level of significance. The analysis of the data generated from the respondents through questionnaire and testing of the hypotheses was done using statistical package for social science (SPSS).

IV. ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

This section deals with analyses and interpretations of collected data in the research on the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects.

<u>Decision Rule of Chi-square and T- Test</u>: If Probability Value denoted as (sig. or p-value) less than level of significance (α), the null hypothesis H_0 will be rejected and test will be significant but if otherwise, vice versa.

Personal Characteristics of Respondents

This aspect deals with the descriptive part of the analysis in relation to the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

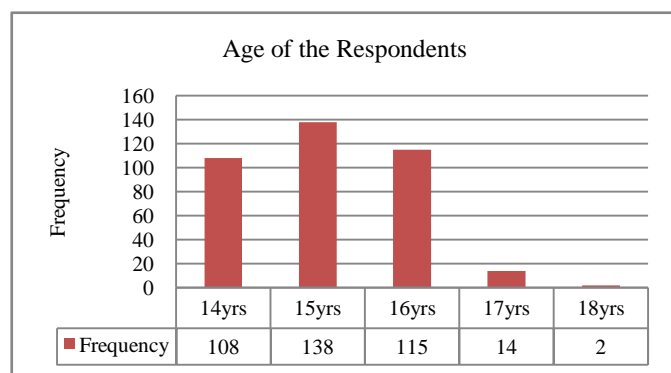| Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean±S.D
14yrs	108	28.6	
15yrs	138	36.6	
16yrs	115	30.5	15.11±0.88
17yrs	14	3.7	
18yrs	2	0.5	
Total	377	100	

Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents

It is indicated from the table and figure above that more than one-third of the respondents fall within the age of 15years of age with 138(36.6%), followed by 16years of age with 115(30.5%), followed by 14 years with 108(28.6%), followed by 14(3.7%) of them that claimed 17yrs and then the only 2(0.5%) that were 18years of age with the overall mean age (Average) of 15 and 0.88 value of Standard Deviation.

Effect of Early Marriage on the Academic Performance of the Girl-Child

This section deals with the descriptive and inferential parts of the analysis in relation to the research questions and the test of hypothesis.

Research Questions

Three research questions are treated under this research, which are: Is there any significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State? Is there any significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State? And is there any significant difference of early marriage on academic performance of students based on gender?

Table 4: Research Questions of Early Marriage on Female Students' Academic Performance

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Early marriages contribute to the neglect of girl-child education in Katsina State.	37(9.8)	36(9.5)	127(33.7)	177(46.9)
Culture, socio-economic status, religious practices are the major factors militating against girl-child education in Katsina State.	171(45.4)	76(20.2)	53(14.1)	77(20.4)
Are there brighter prospects in the future for more girls to be educated in Katsina state?	67(17.8)	88(23.3)	66(17.5)	156(41.4)
Early marriage of girl-child in Katsina State contributes negatively to family and societal problems in Katsina State.	42(11.1)	122(32.4)	101(26.8)	112(29.7)
In your own opinion, early marriage of girl-child is responsible for the high rate of divorce in Katsina State.	105(27.9)	88(23.3)	98(26)	86(22.8)
As a result of my early marriage, it affects my academic performance	13(3.4)	97(25.7)	151(40.1)	116(30.8)
Most people that involved in early marriage came out with 'D, E, and F' grades.	4(1.1)	92(24.4)	153(40.6)	128(34)

Women in higher position in Katsina State and Nigeria at large are graduates not dropout from secondary schools.	10(2.7)	81(21.5)	146(38.7)	140(37.1)
WAEC and other related examinations failure in Katsina are related to early marriage.	8(2.1)	64(17)	159(42.2)	146(38.7)
Early marriage affects female education.	7(1.9)	73(19.4)	148(39.3)	149(39.5)

The above table shows the respondents' opinion based on the effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State: challenges and prospects. Item 1 revealed that 37(9.8%) respondents were strongly disagreed and 36(9.5%) respondents disagreed to that early marriages contribute to the neglect of girl-child education in Katsina State while majority 127(33.7%) and 177(46.9%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement. Item 2 shows that majority 171(45.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Culture, socio-economic status, religious practices are the major factors militating against girl-child education in Katsina State, 76(20.2%) of them disagreed, 53(14.1%) agreed and 77(20.4%) strongly agreed. Item 3 establishes whether there will be brighter prospects in the future for more girls to be educated in Katsina State in which 67(17.8%) strongly disagreed, 88(23.3%) disagreed, 66(17.5%) agreed and 156(41.4) strongly agreed. Item 4 indicates the respondents' responses on early marriage of girl-child in Katsina State contributes negatively to family and societal problems in Katsina State whereby 42(11.1%) strongly disagreed, 122(32.4%) disagreed, 101(26.8%) agreed and 112(29.7%) strongly agreed. Item 5 expresses that 105(27.9%) respondents strongly disagreed to the fact that early marriage of girl-child is responsible for the high rate of divorce in Katsina State, 88(23.3%) respondents disagreed, 98(26%) respondents agreed and 86(22.8%) respondents strongly agreed. In terms of respondents' opinion on effect of early marriage on academic performance, minority strongly disagreed while majority strongly agreed. It can also be established from item 7 that most people that involved in early marriage came out with 'D, E, and F' grades with 4(1.1%) strong disagreed, 92(24.4%) disagreed, 153(40.6%) agreed and 128(34%) strong agreed. 10(2.7%) and 81(21.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed to the fact that women in higher position in Katsina State and Nigeria at large are graduates not dropout from secondary schools respectively while 146(38.7%) agreed and 140(37.1%) strongly agreed. Item 9 affirms the failure of WAEC and other related examination due to early marriage, 8(2.1%) strongly disagreed, 64(17%) disagreed, 159(42.2%) agreed and 146(38.7%) strongly agreed. Lastly, early marriage affects female education with majority of respondents that agreed 148(39.3%) and strongly agreed 149(39.5%) while minority of them disagreed 73(19.4%) and 7(1.9%) strongly agreed.
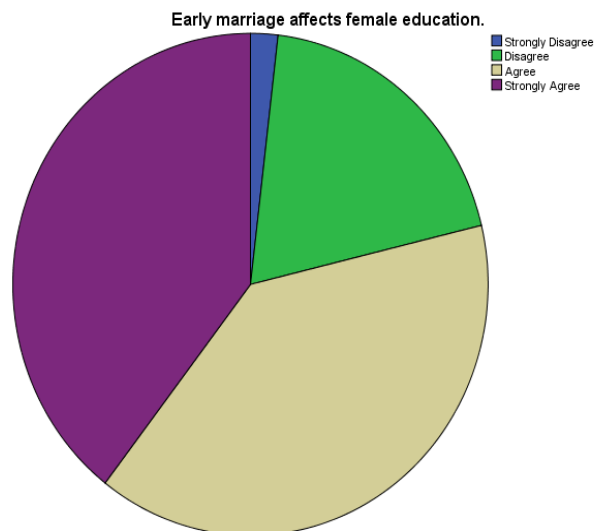

Figure 2: Agreements' Distribution of Early Marriage and Female Education

Testing of the Hypotheses

This section deals with the main objective of this research as earlier stated, to know the significant effects of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina.

Significant Effect of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Students

H_0: There is no significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

H_1: There is significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

Table 5: Analysis of Effect of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Students

Academic Performance	N	$\overline{X}$	S. D	χ^2-value	df	r-value	P-value	Decision
Effects of Early Marriage	377	13.2865	5.4299	154.809	15	0.13	0.000	H_0 Rejected

It can be affirmed from the table above that the p-value is lesser than the level of significance (α) i.e. $0.000 < 0.05$ which shows the significance of the first hypothesis set above. Therefore, the null hypothesis is said to be rejected by concluding that there is significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State at 5% level of significance. Hence, the test was significant with the correlation coefficient which gives weak positive value of 0.13 as the degree of relationship. The result shows that the female students' education in Katsina is affected by the early marriage but the extent of association is not strong enough which implies that the issue(s) or problem(s) can be figured out.

Relationship of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Students

H_0: There is no significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

H_1: There is significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State.

Table 6: Analysis of Relationship of Early Marriage on Academic Performance of Female Students

Academic Performance	N	$\overline{X}$	S. D	χ^2 - value	df	r-value	P-value	Decision
Relationship of Early Marriage	377	15.4987	4.03623	148.019	15	0.225	0.000	H_0 Rejected

It is indicated from the above table that the p-value is lesser than the level of significance (α) i.e. 0.000 < 0.05 which shows the significance of the second hypothesis set above; there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis leading to the conclusion of significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State at 5% level of significance with the weak positive correlation coefficient value of 0.225 as the extent of relationship. Hence, the test is significant. The result implies that standard relationship exists between early marriage and female students' education in Katsina; it might be intentional or non-intentional.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the hypotheses tested and analysed, the study discussed the result of the findings as follows: the first hypothesis which state there was no significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State. The research supported the findings of UNICEF (2008); says the major reasons why more girl child are found outside school in the North was because female children are given out on marriage at an early stage. This result also established that there is significant effect of early marriage on academic performance of female students in Katsina State at 5% level of significance.

In the second and third hypotheses, this study found significant relationship of early marriage on academic performance of female students and significant difference of early marriage on academic performance of students based on gender in Katsina State at 5% level of significance. The findings from these two hypotheses were in consonance with the findings made by the conducted research of Davies, (1963) on theoretical study of early marriage which recognizes the role of age in marriage in determining the level development towards academic performance and fertility in the society. Additionally, it is consistent with findings made by previous researchers named Nguyen & Wodon (2012), who also affirm that if child marriage and early pregnancies could be eliminated, this could potentially reduce the gender gap in education.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis resulted in a number of findings consistent with the objectives of the study. It is confirmed that none of the respondents was male that is; 100 percent of the respondents were female and that one-third of the respondents fall within the age 15years of age with 138(36.6%), followed by 16years of age with 115(30.5%), follow by 14years with 108(28.6%), followed by 14(3.7%) of them that claimed 17yrs and then the only 2(0.5%) that were 18years of age with the overall mean age (Average) of 15 and 0.88 value of Standard Deviation.

The results of the hypotheses tested showed that; female students' education in Katsina is affected by the early marriage but the extent of association is not strong enough which implies that the issue(s) or problem(s) can be figured out with (p=0.000 and r=0.13) from the first hypothesis, standard relationship exists between early marriage and female students' education in Katsina, it might be intentional or non-intentional with (p=0.000 and r=0.225) while significant difference of early marriage on academic performance of students based on gender at 5% level of significance is established as well with (p=0.01 and r=0.335) which shows that respondents with definitely have different opinion with the same sex possessed.

These findings are rigid and reliable in correspondence to the scholars' findings mentioned earlier.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of this research and with the conclusion derived from the statistical analysis of the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects, the researchers suggested the following recommendations:

- There should be avenue for proper orientation on some major factors that Northern people (e.g. Katsina) might see as those that militate against girl-child education; the factors like culture, socio-economic status, religious practices etc.
- 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.
- 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.
- As it is known to everybody that education is the best legacy regardless of any profession, parents or guardians should orientate their children on the importance of education in the nearest future.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Students

This is a questionnaire on the effect of early marriage on the academic performance of the girl-child in Katsina State: challenges and prospects. You are therefore requested to contribute to the success of this study by giving honest responses to the statement. Answer all the questions truthfully and all the information you provide will be treated with confidentiality. Thanks for your maximum cooperation.

Section A: Personal Information

A. Name (Optional)--
B. Age---
C. Level of Students--- S.S.III

Section B: Questionnaire for Students

Please circle how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. Early marriages contribute to the neglect of girl-child education in Katsina State.
2. Culture, socio-economic status, religious practices are the major factors militating against girl-child education in Katsina State.
3. Are there brighter prospects in the future for more girls to be educated in Katsina state?
4. Early marriage of girl-child in Katsina State contributes negatively to family and societal problems in Katsina State.
5. In your own opinion, early marriage of girl-child is responsible for the high rate of divorce in Katsina State.
6. As a result of my early marriage, it affects my academic performance.
7. Most people that involved in early marriage came out with 'D, E, and F' grades.
8. Women in higher position in Katsina State and Nigeria at large are graduates not dropout from secondary schools.
9. WAEC and other related examinations failure in Katsina are related to early marriage.
10. Early marriage affects female education.

Appendix B

RELIABILITY TEST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The main questions that defined the objectives of the study were of four agreements, which are Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree. For reliability of the pilot survey using PPMCC (Product Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient), the agreements were chosen based on the average of the highest frequency with 20 samples each for pre-test and post-test.

S/N	Pre-Test (X)	Post-Test (Y)
1	11	8
2	9	10
3	15	14
4	6	9
5	17	18
6	14	19
7	13	20
8	9	18
9	11	20
10	12	18

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre-Test	11.7000	3.23351	10
Post-Test	15.4000	4.74225	10

Correlations (PPMC)

		Pre-Test	Post-Test
Pre-Test	Pearson Correlation	1	.509
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.133
	N	10	10
Post-Test	Pearson Correlation	.509	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.133	
	N	10	10

Comment:

Strong Positive relationship value of 0.509 $\approx$ 0.51 because it lies between 0.5 and 1.0; therefore, the reliability is confirmed.

Keys

X - Pre-test Questionnaire

Y - Post-test Questionnaire

Appendix C

Pictures of Female Students

Picture One

Picture Two

Picture Three

Picture Four

Picture Five

Picture Six