

## The Sway of Early Marriage on the Girl Child Education among Some Ethnic Groups in Lagos State, Nigeria

Oluwaseyi Aina Gbolade Opesemowo<sup>\*a</sup> & Elizabeth Temitope Odumosu<sup>b</sup>

\* Corresponding author:

Email: [oopesemowo@uj.ac.za](mailto:oopesemowo@uj.ac.za)

a. Department of Science and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.


b. Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### Article Info

Received: June 5, 2023

Accepted: August 6, 2023

Published: September 9, 2023

 [10.46303/jcve.2023.18](https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2023.18)

### How to cite

Opesemowo, O. A. G., & Odumosu, E. T. (2023). The sway of early marriage on the girl child education among some ethnic groups in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 6(3), 26-41.

<https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2023.18>

### Copyright license

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

### ABSTRACT

The research braces that education is necessary for everyone, regardless of gender. The study aimed to ascertain the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups, determine the relative contribution of religious belief as a determinant of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups, and determine the relative contribution of cultural values as determinants of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design while the population comprised all the girls within the Agege area, Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample of 141 married girls was purposively selected based on those who married as teenagers. A questionnaire titled "Impact of Child Marriage on Girl-child Education" was deployed to gather the data. The data were analysed using Chi-square and ANOVA with the mean ( $\bar{x} = 2.48$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD = 0.69$ ) values of the participants. The result revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the religious belief ( $F(2, 138) = 7.80, p < 0.05$ ) of child marriage on girl-child education. Lastly, the findings showed a statistically significant relative contribution of cultural value ( $\chi^2 = 24.07; df = 4; p < 0.05$ ) as a determinant of child marriage in the girl-child education among ethnic groups in Lagos State. The study recommends, among other things, that the Lagos State Government, via health education practitioners should constantly enlighten the public about the jeopardies of encouraging early marriage among girl-child.

### KEYWORDS

Child marriage; girl-child; education; ethnic group.

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the state of being joined as a spouse in a legally recognised consensual and contractual relationship. In addition, this institution called "marriage" is meant to be celebrated as an accomplishment and a turning point in adult life worldwide. Sadly, many young girls are coerced into early marriage. Child marriage is any formal or informal rapport between children under 18 years old (UNICEF, 2007). It is perceived as a complex issue with several causes, such as poverty, gender disparity, religion, tradition, and customs; weak law-making and institutional structures; conflict; and a lack of educational opportunity (Mobolaji et al., 2020; Raj et al., 2019). The World Health Organisation (2019) stated that over 39,000 girls under the age of 18 marry every day worldwide, and 14.2 million girls marry yearly. Globally, over 700 million women marry before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2019). It has been reported that South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have the highest proportions of girl-child marriage (UNICEF, 2019). Early marriage infringes on the girl-child human rights, poses the danger of maternal sickness and death, and deprives her of academic growth (Fatusi, 2016; Nour, 2006; Santhya, 2011).

In the report of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2019), Nigeria has the concerted figure of child marriages in Africa and the third utmost rate in the world with an estimated figure of 3.5 million lugged into child marriage (UNICEF, 2019). The prevalence of Nigeria's child marriage varies significantly by geopolitical precinct, ranging from 39% to 67.6% in the Northern region and lower rates between 13.9% to 21.6% in the Southern part (UNICEF, 2019). In addition, Nigeria practices multi-religion with three dominant religious groups, including 53.5% Islam, 45.9% Christians, 6% Indigenous, and other religions (Central Intelligent Agency, 2020; Mobolaji et al., 2020). Invariably, Nigeria has six geopolitical zones (i.e., North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East, and South South Zones) that are characterised by an interplay of religion and cultural values which is correlated with the socio-cultural structure of gender norms and girl-child marriage practices (Wall, 1998). However, this is not restricted to one religion or ethnic group, while empirical evidence suggests that child marriage is predominant in Muslim societies (Ayiga & Rampagane, 2013). This is linked to the unadventurous Muslim belief that the Quran permits girls to marry at any age, and Prophet Muhammad's wife was nine years old when they married (Mobolaji et al., 2020). However, the Northern States have failed to enact Nigeria's Child Right Act to protect their ethno-religious position on child marriage. Other Muslims, conversely, argue that a girl-child should accomplish puberty and emotional maturity before marriage (Lai et al., 2018).

Education is a critical component used to address the problem of child marriage. Education is a process that encourages societal sustainability while welcoming changes in all facets of daily life. Furthermore, researchers have argued that knowledge can only be attained through teaching and learning, which can positively impact a person's life. Al-Shuaibi (2014) outlined the prominence of education, affirming that education empowers people to think, feel, and behave in ways that promote personal success and happiness, as well as delight in

their municipalities. Al-Shuaibi (2014) further noted that education helps people develop their personalities, ideas, and social abilities and prepares individuals for life events. With an emphasis that everyone has a right to be educated "from cradle to death," he did not exclude anybody (Onyemah & Omoponle, 2022).

### **THEORETICAL APPROACH**

A report from World Health Organization (2019) revealed that child marriage is a harmful exercise that denies the girl-child the right to make vital judgments about their sexual health and well-being. Likewise, child marriage rips a girl out of school, placing her in a terrible situation with a higher chance of assault, abuse, illness, or death. Onuoha (2021) claims child marriage occurs when parents send their female children away when they are still young so that the bride's money may be utilised to pay for the male children's education. Whereas, Save the Children (2020) points out that child marriage is a defilement of children's rights, a severe form of child abuse, and a violation of human rights laws. It is an act of prejudice to deny a girl the opportunity to choose a partner and enter marriage without their free will and complete approval. It also robs girls of their childhood, well-being, and potential, exposing victims to physical, emotional, and medical dire consequences. Furthermore, child marriage breaches the human rights of a female child and has a detrimental impact on development, gender inequality, and individual, communal, and societal health and well-being (McCleary-Sills et al., 2015). In addition, the United Nations (1989) cited in Oguejioffor (2020) mentioned that child marriage could cut a girl-child life short, increasing the likelihood of poverty being passed down from one generation to the next. This means that child marriage can be seen as an obstacle to the growth and development of a girl. Child marriage is another form of child abuse because it deprives these children of a better future and gives them more responsibilities than they can handle. At the same time, it affects girls' reproductive systems (Lemmon & Elharake, 2014).

Ajayi (2018) argued that child marriage had become a societal problem in African countries, leading to school dropouts, illegitimate abortions, child abandonment, an increasing number of adolescent prostitutes, the early splintering of marriages, and a mounting rate of HIV/AIDS, particularly among girl-child. Bezie and Addisu (2019) affirmed that the practice of early marriage is an archaic practice that affects the physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and educational aspects of individuals engaged in it. Additionally, it negatively affects a person's health, child nutrition, adolescent pregnancies, access to education, and even dropping out of school. Amzat and Razum (2014) affirmed that early and imposed marriage had been widely reported as a significant delinquency liable for susceptibility of ferocity, discrimination, and abuse, which prevents victims from productive participation in the economic, political, and social spheres. Child marriage compromises the ability of adolescent girls to be economically liberated.

Oguejioffor (2020) conducted a study on the impact of early marriage on girl-child education in senior secondary school education in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. They reported that early marriage thwarts their educational ambition. Mughal and Awan (2020) found that early marriage is a significant socio-cultural custom that compelled early marriage on school girls, with 94% of respondents regretting their early marriages, 92% saying they had adverse effects on their lives due to early marriage, 90% of the school girls were married due to poverty, and 24% were married because they were pregnant. The report suggests that the government and policymakers should encourage continuing girl-child education up to the secondary school level. Early child marriage has serious consequences for girls in Nigeria, including psychological and mental stress, lack of personal development, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Studies have shown that girls are bedevilled with copious difficulties such as cultural, gender bias, poverty, ignorance, and location of schools at a distance, discrimination of girl-child in the curricular offering, early and forced marriages, rape, and teenage pregnancy. Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2018) has found that poverty is one of the many factors girls are not attending school, which affects the education and childhood of a girl. Education is a way of income and becoming economically solid and independent, which could limit the practice of child marriage.

Rumble et al. (2018) contend that cultural practices and religious beliefs have contributed to the practice of child marriage for several generations. Culture is a means of expressing a shared sense of identity, values, and traditions. Conversely, religion is a system of symbols that establishes powerful, pervasive, and enduring attitudes and motivations in people. Child marriage is sometimes driven by religious and cultural beliefs, which govern communal practices (Omobowale et al, 2023; Stark, 2018). For instance, the fear of premarital sex and pregnancy outside of wedlock makes parents regard marriage as a viable choice for their young daughters to avoid humiliation (Le Roux & Palm, 2018; Msuya, 2020). As a result, sex and pregnancy before marriage are religious taboos and culturally unacceptable. In addition, underage marriages have become acceptable to protect girls and their family's honour (Nour, 2006; Gwature, 2018). More precisely, child marriage is sometimes justified by the religious prohibition of premarital sex and births outside of marriage without adequately considering the grave repercussions of such a choice. Therefore, the time of adolescent girls' marriage is highly influenced by their religious views (Amzat, 2019). On the other hand, culture is described as people's store of knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, arts, customs, and norms (Steinhaus, 2019; Slaughter, 2015). It expresses a shared sense of identity, values, and traditions (Bicchieri, 2014).

Conclusively, studies have been carried out on the impact of child marriage on girls' educations. For example, Mughal and Awan (2020) investigated the impacts of early marriage on girls' education; the study's cardinal hypothesis was that early marriage was one of the vital socio-cultural conventions that duty-bound the early marriage of schoolgirls. Furthermore, Oguejioffor (2020) conducted a study on the impact of early marriage on girl-child education in

senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki Local Government Area. The study also delved into how early marriage affects a girl's academic aspirations. However, little or no study has been carried out on the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to bridge this gap and provide positive recommendations. However, the focus of this study is to investigate the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among ethnic groups in Lagos state, Nigeria viz-a-viz to examine the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among ethnic groups in Lagos state; determine the relative contribution of religious belief as determinants of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state, and ascertain the relative contribution of cultural values as determinants of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state.

### **Research Question**

The following questions were raised to guide this study

- How does child marriage impact girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state?
- What are the relative contributions of religious belief of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state?
- Do cultural values correlate with child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state?

### **Research Hypothesis**

- There is no significant impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state;
- There is no significant relative contribution of religious belief of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state.
- There are no significant cultural values as a correlate of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos state.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants and procedures**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which Fraenkel and Wallen (2021) opined that it tends to describe the state of affairs using a survey and deals with numerical values. The sample size for this study was 141 married females in Lagos state, and a purposive sampling technique was used to select 141 married females in the Agege area of Lagos State within the study period. Purposive sampling was utilised to select participants who married for one reason or another when they were young (i.e., below 18 years). However, the least age of the participants ranges between ten to twelve years old, and 2.48 is the average age of the participant. The researchers seek permission from the respondents before distributing the instrument.

### Description of the Validation and Reliability Procedure

Face and content validity was conducted to ensure the instrument measures what it ostensibly designed to measure. To this end, three experts scrutinised the items to ensure that the items drafted were appropriate and suitable to measure the variable. The content validity ratio was 0.90, the instrument's reliability was established using the test-retest method, and the questionnaires were trial-tested on 20 respondents. Results were analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation and the coefficient of correlation and were found to be 0.78.

### Scoring and Categorisation of the Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, which was self-developed by the researchers titled "Impact of Child Marriage on Girl-child Education Questionnaire." Section A of the questionnaire focused on the demographic variables of the respondents and contained six variables: gender, age, ethnic group, religious background, and primary and secondary school attainment. Section B of the questionnaire contained 11 items related to research question one, and Section C contained ten items relating to research question two. Section D of the questionnaire had ten items that focused on research question three. The scale was presented in 4 Likert formats Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers went to the field with a research assistant, a final year student from Ajayi Crowther University in Oyo State, Nigeria, to administer questionnaires to participants. The assistant was trained on how to administer and retrieve the questionnaires. Data collection took two days, and data analysis was done using mean, standard deviation, chi-square, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the social science and statistical package (SPSS) version 25. Before beginning the analysis, the data were screened to see if there were any outliers or missing data, but none were found. Table 1 presents the demographic data of the participants in the study using frequency count and percentage.

**Table 1.**

#### *Demographic data of the Participants*

Demographic data		Frequency	Percent
Age	10-12 Years	16	11.3
	13-15 Years	42	29.8
	16-17 Years	83	58.9
	Total	141	100.0
Ethnicity	Igbo	29	20.6
	Yoruba	71	50.4
	Hausa/Fulani	41	29.1
	Total	141	100.0

Table 1 reveals the demographic data (such as age and ethnic groups) of the participants. In terms of the age of the respondents, it showed that 16 (11.3%), 42 (29.8%),

and 83 (58.9%) are between the ages of 10 -12 years, 13-15 years, and 16-17 years, respectively. It could be deduced that most participants married early, between 16 - 17 years. In addition, Table 1 established that 29 (20.6%) of the respondents were from the Igbo extraction, 71 (50.4%) of the respondents were Yorubas, and the remaining 41 (29.1%) were Hausa/Fulani tribe in Nigeria.

## RESULTS

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State.

To test hypothesis one, the respondents' scores on the impact of child marriage were computed and grouped into three categories that are low, moderate, and high impact levels. Before the categorisation, the mean and standard deviation values ( $\bar{x} = 22.84$ ;  $SD = 8.92$ ), minimum (10), and maximum values (40) were computed. The standard deviation less mean through standard deviation plus mean was grouped as moderate (13.92 – 31.76) impact level. The minimum value through 0.01 less the lower class interval of the moderate level was grouped as low (10 – 13.91) impact level, and 0.01 plus the upper-class interval of the moderate impact level through maximum score was categorised as high (31.77 - 40) impact level. The result can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Impact of Child Marriage on Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	Impact Level			$\chi^2$	df	Sig.	P
	Low	Moderate	High				
Igbo	11 (7.8%)	12 (8.5%)	6 (4.3%)				
Yoruba	20 (14.2%)	43 (30.5%)	8 (5.7%)				
Hausa/Fulani	2 (1.4%)	30 (21.3%)	9 (6.4%)	14.41	4	0.106	> 0.05
Total	33 (23.4%)	85 (60.3%)	23 (16.3%)				

Table 2 reveals the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. It demonstrated that 11 (7.8%), 12 (8.5%), and 6 (4.3%) of the respondents indicated low, moderate, and high impact levels of child marriage are from the Igbo extraction. Also, the Yoruba ethnic group indicated that 20 (14.2%), 43 (30.5%), and 8 (5.7%) showed low, moderate, and high impact levels. In comparison, 2 (1.4%), 30 (21.3%), and 9 (6.4%) showed low, moderate, and high impact levels from the Hausa/Fulani extraction of the ethnic groups. Statistically, Table 1 exhibited that there was no statistically significant impact of child marriage ( $\chi^2 = 14.41$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. In conclusion, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the religious belief of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State.

**Table 3.***Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Religious Belief*

Religious Beliefs	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)
Christianity	29	21.52	8.57
Islamic	71	25.54	6.32
Others	41	27.71	4.88
Total	141	25.34	6.80

Table 3 revealed the descriptive statistics of the religion practised by the participants. It disclosed the mean and standard deviation of each religious belief of the sample for the study. It further revealed that respondents who practice Christianity (N = 29,  $\bar{x}$  = 21.52, SD = 8.57), Islamic (N = 71,  $\bar{x}$  = 25.54, SD = 6.32), and other religious belief (N = 41,  $\bar{x}$  = 27.71, SD = 4.88). Conclusively, it showed that among the religious beliefs practised by the respondents who practised Islam had the highest mean value compared to other religious beliefs sampled for the study. Table 3 gave the background for Table 4 which displayed the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table used to test the statistical significance of religious belief of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State.

**Table 4.***Analysis of variance (ANOVA)*

Religious belief	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	P
Between Groups	656.268	2	328.134			
Within Groups	5807.391	138	42.083	7.80	0.001	< 0.05
Total	6463.660	140				

Table 4 presented the ANOVA result of religious belief in child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. It also showed there was a statistically significant difference ( $F_{(2, 138)} = 7.80, p < 0.05$ ) in the religious belief of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State, as presented by the one-way ANOVA. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. A Turkey post hoc test was shown in Table 5 to reveal where the statistically significant difference lies among the religious groups.

Table 5 presented the Turkey post hoc test, which bared no statistically significant difference between Islamic and Islamic religious beliefs among ethnic groups ( $p = 0.214$ ). In addition, there was no statistically significant difference between others and Islamic religious beliefs among the ethnic groups ( $p = 0.206$ ). Nevertheless, there was a statistically distinct difference between Christianity and Islamic beliefs and vice visa among the ethnic groups.



**Table 5.***Turkey Post Hoc Test Multiple Comparisons*

Dependent Variable:		95% Confidence Interval				
Turkey HSD						
(I) Religion	(J) Religion	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Christianity	Islamic	-4.018*	1.430	.016	-7.41	-.63
	Others	-6.190*	1.574	.000	-9.92	-2.46
Islamic	Christianity	4.018*	1.430	.016	.63	7.41
	Others	-2.172	1.272	.214	-5.19	.84
Others	Christianity	6.190*	1.574	.000	2.46	9.92
	Islamic	2.172	1.272	.206	-.84	5.19

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant relative contribution of cultural values as correlates of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. To test hypothesis three, participants' scores on the relative contribution of cultural values in the questionnaire were computed and clustered into three categories that are low, moderate, and high impact levels. Before the categorisation, the mean and standard deviation values ( $\bar{x}$  = 23.55; SD = 6.95), minimum (9), and maximum values (36) were determined. The standard deviation low means through standard deviation plus mean was grouped as moderate (16.60 – 30.50) relative contribution of cultural values. The minimum value through 0.01 less the lower class interval of the moderate level was grouped as low (9.00 – 16.59) relative contribution of cultural values, and 0.01 plus the upper-class interval of the moderate impact level through maximum score was considered as high (30.51 – 36.00) relative contribution of cultural values. The result can be seen in Table 6 below.

**Table 6.***Relative Contribution of Cultural Values as Determinants of Child Marriage*

Ethnicity	Relative Contribution of Cultural Values			$\chi^2$	df	Sig.	P
	Low	Moderate	High				
Igbo	12 (8.5%)	13 (9.2%)	4 (2.8%)	24.07	4	0.03	< 0.05
Yoruba	8 (5.7%)	53 (37.6%)	10 (7.1%)				
Hausa/Fulani	1 (0.7%)	29 (20.6%)	11 (7.8%)				
Total	21 (14.9%)	95 (67.4%)	25 (17.7%)				

Table 6 presents the relative contribution of cultural value as determinants of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. It revealed that 14.9% of ethnic groups believed that cultural values played a relatively minor role in

determining child marriage in girl education. In comparison, the majority (67.4%) of the ethnic groups think that the relative contribution of cultural values was moderate, and 17.7% of the ethnic groups concurred that there was a high relative contribution of cultural values as a determinant of child marriage on the girl education among ethnic groups in Lagos State. Also, the table demonstrated that there was a statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 24.07$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) relative contribution of cultural value as a correlate of child marriage on the girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### DISCUSSION

Analysing the hypotheses raised for the study gave rise to some mesmerising findings worthy of consideration and deliberation based on some relevant literature that confirmed or contradicted the findings. Results of the first objective revealed no statistically significant impact of child marriage on girl-child education among the ethnic groups in Lagos State. This was corroborated in the study by Kobani and Nkpolu (2014), cited in Ballara (2002), which mentioned that girl-child education could not be overemphasised. This was validated in the study of Opesemowo et al. (2018) and Raj et al. (2019), whose findings divulge that communities noted social norms that dejected girls from attending school. Outdated gender customs in the community reinforce these norms, including philosophies that females cannot learn compared to their boys' counterparts and that educated girls who delay marriage are more likely to disobey their parents and resist marriage. Furthermore, many expressed concern that girls who sustained their education and delayed marriage would be more likely to date or engage in premarital sex, bringing disrepute to the household and municipality (Klasen & Lamanna, 2021). According to Lee-Rife et al. (2022), such norms sway not only how girls are treated and supported in school but also their value in the marriage arcade, with many claiming that educated women are less likely to be involved in marriage or have fewer possibilities for a decent match.

Results of the second objective demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the religious belief of child marriage on girl-child education. This was corroborated in the study by Mobolaji et al. (2020) that religious beliefs significantly influence gender-related behaviours and practices. Religion and cultural morals interact in Nigeria's geopolitical regions; religion may be associated with the socio-cultural setting of gender customs and girl-child marriage practices (Braumah, 2014; Wall, 1998). Although this is not restricted to one religious group, Ayiga and Rampagane (2013) and Lai et al. (2018), evidence suggests that child marriage is more prevalent among Muslim societies. In Northern Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani adhere strictly to the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammed, who married his wife when she was age nine. Therefore, Islam is so important in the life of most Northern Nigerians; Hausa-Fulani culture and traditions are entwined with the Islamic religion. As a result of Islam's influence and Muhammed's marriage to Aisha, as described in Hadiths, it is not strange that Muslims in Northern Nigeria support and embrace child marriage (Braumah, 2014).

The girl child education is a vital fundamental human right and a strong catalyst for positive and economic transformation. However, cultural norms and practices continue to substantially impact girls' access to and involvement in education in many parts of the world. The influence of culture on girl child education is a complicated and multifaceted subject involving deeply ingrained ideas, traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and economic factors. Understanding the cultural barriers that prevent girls from completing their education is critical for developing successful strategies and interventions to promote gender equality in educational opportunities. The final result of the research suggested that there was a statistically significant relative contribution of cultural value as a determinant of child marriage on the girl-child education among ethnic groups in Lagos State. This is in tandem with the assertion of Rumble et al. (2018) that cultural practices have influenced the continual practice of child marriage in girl-child education for many generations. Also, Ombati and Ombati (2012) and Boudet (2013) supported this result in their study, revealing that gender inequities in educational access, retention, and quality exist across cultures and nations. Cultural norms frequently mandate specific roles and expectations for girls and boys, resulting in unequal educational possibilities. African tradition often favours males' education over girls' education, reinforcing gender stereotypes and maintaining gender-based discrimination. These cultural practices lead to females' low enrolment rates, high dropout rates, early marriage, and limited professional opportunities, impeding their full potential and growth. Again, the findings support the conclusions of Pusztai et al. (2022), who expected that a positive financial status would drive parents or guardians to discourage child marriage since they could cater for the child's necessities.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this research, it is clear that early marriage among ethnic groups in Lagos State has led to female children being denied access to formal education in the twenty-first century. In other words, only a few are privileged to receive formal education from the ethnic groups. At the same time, many were denied the chance to receive a well-designed education that could empower them to advance, increase their skills, and reach their full potential. The research has shown that numerous essential factors have contributed to this unpleasant situation of early marriage to a girl-child, which includes religious and cultural beliefs, poverty, poor parental behaviour, and gender inequality, to name a few. Finally, every girl in Nigeria has a right to a decent upbringing free from physical, emotional, and mental abuse and the freedom to pursue her interests without being abruptly cut short by child marriage. Based on the study's conclusion that child marriage's unfavourable effects can never be excused, Nigeria must put an end to this practice by 2030 if it hopes to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Contribution to knowledge

In this study, the novel finding was that girls who get married early are more likely to have children at a young age, contributing to poverty increments and constraining future opportunities. Again, married girls tend to drop out of school, lack employable skills, and have higher earning potential, which can positively sway household income and economic growth. In addition, students will better understand the value of education in the life of a girl-child and their worth to society at large. It will further help parents understand the benefit of educating a girl-child and that educating a girl-child is never a waste of resources. It will also be evident and serve as an eye-opener for the government to understand the value of access to education and poverty alleviation programs. Finally, it will help educators, educational planners, and the general public understand that girls are in no way inferior to men.

### Limitation

Lagos is a cross-metropolitan state in Nigeria, home to practically all ethnic groups. Nigeria has more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. However, this study focused on the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria: Igbos, Hausa/Fulanis, and Yoruba. Other ethnic groups in Nigeria can be studied further.

### REFERENCES

- Ajayi, V. O. (2019). Effects of predict-explain-observe-explain and Vee heuristic strategies on students' achievement, metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy belief in organic chemistry in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Metacognitive Awareness and Self-Efficacy Belief in Organic Chemistry in Ekiti State, Nigeria (December 17, 2019)*.
- Al-Shuaibi, A. (2014). *The Importance of Education*. Retrieved at Research Gate [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260075970\\_The\\_Importance\\_of\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260075970_The_Importance_of_Education)
- Amzat, J. (2019). Plucking the flower just too early: some community perspectives on age at marriage among adolescent girls in a Nigerian State. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 17(1), 1-16. [https://doi.org/10.36108/NJSA/9102/71\(0110\)](https://doi.org/10.36108/NJSA/9102/71(0110))
- Amzat, J., & Razum, O. (2015). Medical Sociology in Africa. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 37(4), 642-644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12291>
- Ayiga, N., & Rampagane, V. (2013). Determinants of age at first marriage in sub-Saharan Africa: A comparative study of Uganda and South Africa. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 28(1), 9-34. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/determinants-age-at-first-marriage-sub-saharan/docview/1416267004/se-2?accountid=13425>
- Ballara, M. (2002). *Girls and Women Literacy*. London, Zed Books Limited.
- Bezie, M., & Addisu, D. (2019). Determinants of early marriage among married women in Injibara town, north West Ethiopia: community-based cross-sectional study. *BMC Women's Health*, 19(1), 134. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-019-0832-0>

- Bicchieri, C., & Mercier, H. (2014). Norms and Beliefs: How Change Occurs. In M. Xenitidou & B. Edmonds (Eds.), *The Complexity of Social Norms* (pp. 37-54). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05308-0\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05308-0_3)
- Braimah, T. S. (2014). Child marriage in Northern Nigeria : Section 61 of Part I of the 1999 Constitution and the protection of children against child marriage. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 14(2), 474-488. <https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC165012>
- Boudet, A. M. M. (2013). *On norms and agency: Conversations about gender equality with women and men in 20 countries*. World Bank Publications.
- Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]. Demographics of Nigeria. The World Fact Book. Accessed March 6, 2020 at [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print\\_ni.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_ni.html)
- Fatusi, A. O. (2016). Young people's sexual and reproductive health interventions in developing countries: Making the investments count. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 59(3), S1-S3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.06.016>
- Federal Ministry of Education (2019). *Education for Change: A Ministerial Strategic Plan 2018-2020*. Abuja. Available <<https://education.gov.ng/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/>
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (Vol. 7). McGraw-hill New York.
- Gwature, O. G. (2018). *The causes of child marriage and its effects on the girl-child in rural areas of Zimbabwe: Case study of Bindura Rural District BUSE*].
- Hale, H. E. (2004). Explaining Ethnicity. *Comparative Political Studies*, 37(4), 458-485
- Human Right Watch, HRW. (2018). Saudi Arabia: Detained Women Reported Tortured. Human Right Watch (HRW). <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/11/20/saudi-arabia-detained-women-reported-tortured>.
- Klasen, S., & Lamanna, F. (2021). The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education and Employment on Economic Growth: New Evidence for a Panel of Countries. *Feminist Economics*, 15(3), 91-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700902893106>
- Kobani, D., & Nkpolu, O. (2014). The impact of girl-child education on community development: A study of Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. *Research on Human and Social Sciences*, 4(12), 122-128.
- Kumar, S., & Naik, G. A. (2020). Ethnicity and its issues and perspectives: A Critical Study. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, 7(7), 6132-6136.
- Lai, V., Sheriff, S. M., Jodi, S. A. M., & Bandy, A. S. (2018). *Child Marriage: Its Relationship with Religion, Culture and Patriarchy*. Sisters in Islam (SIS) and Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), 2018. <https://www.arrow.org.my/wpcontent/uploads/2018/03/National-Report-Child-Marriage.pdf>

- Lee-Rife, S., Malhotra, A., Warner, A., & Glinski, A. M. (2022). What works to prevent child marriage: A review of the evidence. *Studies in Family Planning*, 43(4), 287-303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2012.00327.x>
- Lemmon, G. T., & ElHarake, L. S. (2014). *Child brides, global consequences: how to end child marriage*. Council on Foreign Relations.
- Le Roux, E., & Palm, S. (2018). What lies beneath? Tackling the roots of religious resistance to ending child marriage. Girls Not Brides, Stellenbosch University. [www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/what-lies-beneath-tackling-the-roots-of-religious-resistance-to-ending-child-marriage-2](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/what-lies-beneath-tackling-the-roots-of-religious-resistance-to-ending-child-marriage-2).
- McCleary-Sills, J., Hanmer, L., Parsons, J., & Klugman, J. (2015). Child Marriage: A Critical Barrier to Girls' Schooling and Gender Equality in Education. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 13, 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2015.1075755>
- Mobolaji, J. W., Fatusi, A. O., & Adedini, S. A. (2020). Ethnicity, religious affiliation and girl-child marriage: a cross-sectional study of nationally representative sample of female adolescents in Nigeria. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 583. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08714-5>
- Msuya, N. (2020). Child marriage: An obstacle to socio-economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal for juridical science*, 45(2), 43-73.
- Mughal, S., & Awan, A. G. (2020). Effects of early marriages on girls, education. *Global Journal of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6, 876-893.
- Nour, N. M. (2006). Health consequences of child marriage in Africa. *Emerg Infect Dis*, 12(11), 1644-1649. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1211.060510>
- Oguejioffer, C. N. (2020). Early marriage and its impact on girls' education in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State. *UNIZIK Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 1, 16-35.
- Okpan, S. O., & Otega, O. (2020). Ethnicity, ethnic identity and the crisis of national development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Health and Social Inquiry*, 5(1). Retrieved from <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/IJHSI/article/view/1063>
- Ombati, V., & Ombati, M. (2012). Gender inequality in education in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 3(4), 114-136.
- Omobowale, O., Omigbodun, O., Egbokhare, O., & Koski, A. (2023). A protocol for a controlled, pre-post intervention study to change attitudes toward child marriage in Southwestern Nigeria using targeted radio programming. *Plos one*, 18(5), e0285902. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0285902>
- Onuoha, O. P. (2021). Masculinity care and paternity in shonelyn's the secret lives of baba Segi's wives. *Alkebulan: A Journal of West and East African Studies*, 1(1), 69-77.
- Onyemah, T. N., & Omoponle, A. H. (2022). Child abuse and family background as predictors of poor academic performance among adolescents in special schools of Ibadan-Nigeria. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 6(1), 106-119.

- Opesemowo, O. A., Afolabi, E. R. I., Awopeju, O. A., & Oluwatimilehin, T. R. (2018). Development of a scale for measuring students' testwiseness in senior secondary school examination in Nigerian. *International Journal of Research*, 5(19), 464-474.
- Pusztai, G., Fényes, H., & Engler, Á. (2022). The Effect of Socioeconomic Status and Religiosity on Hungarian Young Adults' Marriage Behavior. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research (JSSER)*, 13(4), 78-96. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100945>
- Slaughter, A. M. (2015). *Unfinished business: Women and men work for the family*. Simon and Schuster.
- Raj, A., Salazar, M., Jackson, E. C., Wyss, N., McClendon, K. A., Khanna, A., Belayneh, Y., & McDougal, L. (2019). Students and brides: a qualitative analysis of the relationship between girls' education and early marriage in Ethiopia and India. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-6340-6>
- Rumble, L., Peterman, A., Irdiana, N., Triyana, M., & Minnick, E. (2018). An empirical exploration of female child marriage determinants in Indonesia. *BMC public health*, 18(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5313-0>
- Santhya, K. G. (2011). Early marriage and sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities of young women: a synthesis of recent evidence from developing countries. *Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 23(5), 334-339. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GCO.0b013e32834a93d2>
- Save the Children (2020). *Stop the war on children: A report*. Available at <http://www.stopwaronchildren.org>
- Stark, L. (2018). Poverty, consent, and choice in early marriage: ethnographic perspectives from urban Tanzania. *Marriage & Family Review*, 54(6), 565-581.
- States of the Nigerian girl report (2021). *An inclusive diagnosis of children marriage in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://resourcescentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/> on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
- Steinhaus, M. E., Salzmann, S. N., Lovecchio, F., Shifflett, G. D., Yang, J., Kueper, J., Sama, A. A., Girardi, F. P., Cammisa, F. P., & Hughes, A. P. (2019). Risk Factors for Positive Cultures in Presumed Aseptic Revision Spine Surgery. *Spine*, 44(3), 177-184. <https://doi.org/10.1097/brs.0000000000002792>
- Umeh, S. O., Umeh, S. I., Ojilere, A., & Samson-Umeh, A. D. C. (2021). Female genital mutilation: A socio-cultural myth on the rights of Nigerian women. *African Customary and Religious Law Review*, 2, 89-98.
- UNICEF (2007). *Child Marriage and the Law*. UNICEF Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement Section, Division of Policy and Practice: New York
- UNICEF (2019). *Ending Child Marriage: progress and prospects*. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-child-marriage-progress-and-prospects>. Accessed 16 Sept 2019
- UNICEF (2019). *Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects*. Accessed June 1, 2019 at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-marriage-latest-trends-and/future-prospects/>.

- UNICEF (2019). A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa. Accessed September 17, 2019 at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-profile-of-child-marriage-in-africa/>.
- UNICEF (2019). Multiple indicator cluster survey 2016–17 (MICS). UNICEF Nigeria. Accessed September 17, 2019 at <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/reports/multiple/indicator-cluster-survey-2016-17-mics>
- United Nations (2015) Transforming our world by 2030: A new agenda for global action Zero. Draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda. New York: United Nations.
- Usman M. and Musa A. (2021). The consequences of early marriage on girl-child education in Geidam, Yobe State. Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 9 (6), 19-24
- Wall, L. L. (1998). Dead Mothers and Injured Wives: The Social Context of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria. *Studies in Family Planning*, 29(4), 341-359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/172248>
- W.H.O. (2019). Child marriages: 39 000 every day. [https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/child\\_marriage\\_20130307/en/](https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/child_marriage_20130307/en/)