

INCIDENCE AND CAUSES OF EARLY
MARRIAGE AMONG SCHOOL IN ADOLESCENTS
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BOSSO LOCAL
GOVERNMENT / REA OF NIGER STATE.
NIGERIA

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A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
NIGER STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
MINNA

SEPTEMBER, 2019

EDU
204

DEDICATION

I dedicated this project to the Almighty God who created all the creatures in the world and my lovely parents and my friends

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to appreciate the Almighty God who gave us the grace right from the beginning of our programmed till the end. We also use this medium to thank our wonderful parents, and our beloved brothers and sisters, for their prayers and support in all aspects through the completion of our programmed.

We also appreciate our supervisors in person Mal. Attahiru Ahmed whose through his guidance and support led to successful completion of this project.

Finally, we will also like to appreciate our wonderful group member, course mates, and friends of college of Education Minna who has contributed in so many ways to the completion of our project, may God bless you (Amen).

ABSTRACT

This study is set to examine the Incidence and Causes of Early Marriage among School Adolescents in some Selected Secondary Schools in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State and in carrying out this study; the researcher formulated some specific objectives and research questions to achieve the purpose of the study. Descriptive survey method was adopted for this study, and the researcher adopted random method of sampling in selecting the needed sample for the study, the sample consisted of 150 respondents randomly selected from the five (5) sampled schools in Bosso LGA. The researchers designed questionnaire (questions) to generate the needed data for the study. The data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using simple statistical method of frequency and mean. The findings of the study thereby revealed that parents have been found to play a key role in the practice of early marriage, this is due to the fact that most parents lack understanding on the importance of formal education for their children. And also that early marriage practices to younger girls have led to their denial of educational rights. The researcher therefore recommended that government should make education free and compulsory at the primary and secondary levels as a way of discouraging early marriage, law-enforcers in the study area, and the state at large, should work on the by laws that prohibit early marriages and education planners should include sex education in the school curriculum for proper orientation of the girl-child.

Table of Content	Pages
Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	vi
Table of Content	vii
 CHAPTER ONE	
 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	4
1.3 Objective of Study	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Research Hypotheses	6
1.6 Significance of the Study	6
1.7 Scope of the Study	7

1.8	Definition of Operational Terms	7
-----	---------------------------------	---

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Conceptual Framework	9
2.3	Theoretical Framework	27
2.3	Empirical Studies	31
2.4	Summary of Literature Reviewed	34

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	35
3.2	Research Design	35
3.3	Population and Sample	35
3.4	Sample and Sampling Techniques	35
3.5	Research Instrument	36
3.6	Validity of Instrument	36

3.7	Procedure for Data Collection	36
-----	-------------------------------	----

3.8	Method of Data Analysis	37
-----	-------------------------	----

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1	Introduction	38
-----	--------------	----

4.2	Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	38
-----	--	----

4.3	Presentation and Analysis of Data	39
-----	-----------------------------------	----

4.4	Test of Hypotheses	41
-----	--------------------	----

4.5	Discussion of Findings	44
-----	------------------------	----

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	45
-----	--------------	----

5.2	Summary	45
-----	---------	----

5.3	Conclusion	46
-----	------------	----

5.4	Recommendations	46
-----	-----------------	----

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies 47

REFERENCES 48

APPENDIX 52

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Marriage is a civil contract between husband and wife. Early marriage could best be attributed to religion of Islam because of its practice by the prophet of Islam peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. Islamically marriage is a civil contract teased on willingness of the both patties or of their parents, yet the rights and responsibilities consequent upon it are of such importance to the welfare of humanity, that a high degree of sanctity is attached to it. Child marriage is a public health issue as well as a human rights violation. Girls married early are more likely to experience violence, abuse and forced sexual relations. Child marriages jeopardize girls' rights, such as the right to education, because new brides are usually forced to drop out of school to bear children and to provide household labor (Ingrid, 2009). 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 (UNICEF, 2001).

According to the International Planned Parenthood Federation-IPPF (2008) about 14 million girls under the age of 18 marry each year in the world. One in every 5 girls in the developing world is married by the age of 18 and one

in nine girls marries before they reach the age of 15.

The incidence of child marriage has become a global phenomenon, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia (OECD, 2005). In Nigeria, several researches have been carried out on the incidence and causes of child marriages. In 1999 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), (Mensch, Bruce and Greene, 1998) it was reported that in 26.5 percent couples, there is an age difference of 15 or more years between husband and wife. Equally, it showed the median age of marriage in the South West and South East was 20.2 years whilst those of the North West was 14.6 years and slightly higher in the North East with 15.0 years. It concluded that there was a large zonal variation in the mean age of marriage with females in the North marrying on an average of about five years earlier than those in the South.

Every society and culture has some basic norms and beliefs that guide the people. In Nigeria for instance, specifically the Northern Nigeria (Hausa - Fulani dominated) allowed early marriage of the girl-child. Erulkar and Bello (2007) argued that the reason for acceptance of early marriages among Northern region is to preserve the value of virginity, fears about marital sexual activity, to reduce promiscuity of the girl-child, and other socio-cultural and religious norms. However, due to the ignorance and selfish nature, more often than not they forget the effect it has on the girl-

child as well as their community development. It is worrisome that the girl-child has no power to resist the offer. According to Bala, (2003) the effect of early marriage on the girl-child that affects her wellbeing and that of the society include education, lack of economic empowerment and lack of knowledge on reproductive health services which will enable them take informed decisions, enhance their ability to leverage resources and participate in community decision making. The factors usually put forward as reasons for the early marriage of girl-child are poverty, unwanted pregnancy, parental pressure, peer pressure and developmental stage among others.

All too often, the imposition of a marriage partner upon a child means that a girl or boy's childhood is cut short and their fundamental rights are compromised (UNICEF, 2005). Young girls are robbed of their youth and required to take on 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 life. Against this background, seeks to investigate the incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents in some selected secondary

schools in Bosso Local Government of Niger State.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Throughout the world, marriage is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult life. Sadly, the practice of early marriage gives no such cause for celebration. Poverty, cultural beliefs and societal conflicts have been the major factors leading to and resulting from girls marrying early (Brown, 2012). In Nigeria, 43% of girls are married off before their 18th birthday 17% are married before they turn 15. The prevalence of child marriage varies widely from one region to another, with figures as high as 76% in the North West region and as low as 10% in the South East (UNFPA, Nigeria: Child marriage country profile, 2012).

Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too young to make an informed decision. Premature or early 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 life. The literature identifies many interrelated factors almost similar worldwide with small variations between societies that interact to place a girl child at risk of early marriage (UNICEF 2001). Therefore, this study sought to find out reliable and more accurate information concerning incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents in some selected secondary schools in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

1.3 Objective of Study

The objective of this study is to investigate into the incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents in some selected secondary schools in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

Specifically, the sought to

- i. determine if there is any differences in the perception of married and unmarried teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State
- ii. identifies if there is any differences in the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieved the objectives set by the researcher, answers will be provided to the following research questions

- i. What are the differences in the perception of married and unmarried teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State?
- ii. What are the differences in the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Ho_i: There is no significance difference the perception of married and unmarried teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State

Ho_{ii}: There is no significance difference between the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will reinforce efforts to design appropriate interventions that will ultimately prevent early marriages among young girls and their impacts on education sector. It is equally important that a better understanding of risks, protective measures as well as social norms will inform girls and program designers to mitigate these risks and strengthen protective measures or create them where they do not exist. The study will provide insight for education practitioners as it will provide a more relevant framework in risk analysis for managing risks associated with the practice. The findings of this study are deemed useful for policy makers and other stakeholders in the Nigerian 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 the country. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to form the basis for individual and

institutional interventions and most importantly set the benchmark for a legal and social framework for the protection of children's rights. They will be used to guide the creation and evaluation of future strategies to be adopted by the government and other stakeholders, particularly in joining the campaign to end early marriages in Nigeria. They will also provide ground for other research to be conducted country wide. Most of these marriages are arranged without prior knowledge or consent of the bride. In most cases it is the girls who are subjected to early marriages.

The result of this study also help school counsellor to abreast of the situation concerning early marriage in schools and its causes, thereby be a light for them to devise strategies to handle the problems among students in his or her school which will help to improve school retention level.

1.7 Scope of the Study.

The geographical scope of the study covers five selected secondary schools in Bosso local government area of Niger State while the content of the study will deal with issue of early marriage in Bosso local government area, the causes of early marriage among school adolescents and possible measures to reduce the incidence of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state.

1.8 Definition of Operational Terms.

Causes: According to the Oxford dictionary (1994) cause is a thing that produces an effect.

Early marriage: Early marriage is a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2012:1).

Marriage: A legal union between a man and a woman.

Adolescent: Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It commences with physical changes at puberty. It terminates with assumption of adult roles and responsibilities (Greathead, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the reviewed of related literature on previous studies that has been conducted by other researchers in this regards. The chapter is sub-divided into the following headings: conceptual framework, theoretical framework, review of previous empirical studies and summary of literature reviewed.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Concept of Marriage

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both partners (Kottack, 2009). It is an important institution both for the individual and the society at large. For the individual, it is a significant and memorable event in one's life cycle as well as the most important foundation in the family formation process. It is also a rite of passage that marks the beginning of an individual's separation from the parental unit, even if generations continue to be socially and economically interdependent. For the society as a whole, it unites several individuals from different families and represents the creation of a production and consumption unit as well as one for the exchange of goods and services

(Quisumbing and Hallman, 2003).

In the traditional African setting, marriage was not an option, but an obligatory experience for all adults. The western concept of marriage is different in that the two people getting married choose their partners and decide when to get married. In this case, marriage is seen as a companion between two people to the exclusion of all others and procreation need not result from the union (Mbiti, 1990).

Purpose of Marriage

Beyond self-fulfillment, marriage is an important institution in almost all societies in the world (Brubaker & Kimberly, 1993). The meaning and purpose of marriage, and the manner in which spouses are selected, varies across cultures and has changed over time. Throughout history, and particularly preceding the Age of Romanticism, which reached its peak in the early to mid 1800's, the driving force behind marriage was economic survival, and people primarily married within their socio-economic class. Even after this period, marriages, particularly in many cultures, continued to be constructed around a person's socioeconomic status, with the intent of preserving financial stability and raising children within the community where the couple lived.

Prior to the early 1800's in western culture – similar to many contemporary non-Western cultures – arranged marriages were a popular

practice (Penn, 2011). Within cultures that practice arranged marriages, parents, extended family members or elders within the community seek to find suitable marriage partners for single folks who reach the appropriate age to begin the courting process.

As Western culture continued to progress through the Age of Romanticism towards the end of the 18th century, and subsequently at an even faster rate within the Industrial Age, particularly since the beginning of the 20th century, the ideology of marriage began to change. A much greater focus on marriage for love, individual happiness, and self-fulfillment began to emerge. As a host of prevailing social, political and economic changes began to take place, the idea of entering into a marriage relationship primarily for financial security began to wane. Single individuals, now equipped with greater gender equality, particularly in the workplace, along with a more developed sense of "self," began to seek partners whom they truly felt a love connection with, and who, they believed, could further enhance their overall quality of life. Essentially, seeking a partner who was financially secure, became just one component when choosing a spouse, whereas choosing a partner who could potentially enhance a greater movement towards personal goals, happiness and self-fulfillment became the central theme. Deeply imbedded within the vows of marriage has always been the

promise that spouses would do their very best to remain committed to each other, no matter what circumstances or problems should befall them. Cherlin (2009) argued: When discussing material from the literature, always use the past tense that when couples enter into a marriage primarily for feelings of love and personal happiness, this can naturally create a strong and polarizing conflict with staying committed to a marriage partner, particularly when larger problems arise, or when one, or both partners no longer feel happy or a sense of self-fulfillment within the marriage.

Concept of Early Marriage

The term "early marriages" is used to refer to both formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl lives with a partner as if married 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." Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being a child and may take place with or without formal registration, and under civil, religious or customary laws.

Lack of an overarching definition of early marriage in international conventions 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 (UNIFPA, 2006). For example, some commentators suggest that a universal age of marriage is not appropriate, because societies have different understanding of what it means to be a child as well as different socio-economic and cultural realities.

Child marriage is the practice of marrying a young girl (generally defined as below the age of eighteen) to an adult. In most cases, it is always a young girl married to a matured man. It is a situation where female adolescents and teenagers are married to adult husbands. In these instances, sometimes, the men can be twice their ages and these females become child brides.

Adedokun, et. al., (2012) observed that child marriages are often arranged in two distinct ways, within a context of force and coercion, either by parents or other persons in positions of authority in the family arranging their young daughter's marriage to an adult, often a much older man or arranging the future marriage of two children. It is not uncommon to find girls of 7 -14 years already married off with the girls sent off to live with the families of the husbands.

Generally, prospective husbands are selected based on social, religious and monetary factors and age is not considered an important factor, as husbands are on the average 12 years older than the child brides in monogamous

unions and up to 15-20 years older in polygynous unions (Population Council, 2005) and in isolated cases, may be several decades older.

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

Prevalence of Early Marriages in Africa

According to UNICEF (2005), between 40 per cent and 49 per cent of girls younger than 19 years of age in Central and West Africa respectively are married compared to 27 per cent in East Africa and 20 percent in Northern and Southern Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of early marriages. 14.3 million Girls in the region become child brides (are married before they reach 18 years).

Among the countries where the rate of early marriages exceeds 70 per cent like Niger, Chad and Mali adolescent fertility and maternal mortality rates are also high. According to the population council (2008) the Francophone West African countries are among those with the most maternal deaths: the maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) is 1,000 in Guinea Bissau, 820 in Mali, and 830 in Niger, and child mortality rates are also alarming. Surveys carried out in some Sahelian countries offer alarming examples. In Nigeria, for example, according to the 1992 Health and Demographic Survey (DHS), 47% of women aged between 20 and 24 were married before the age of 15, and 87% before the age of 18 (Moloku,2000). There are countries with very high rates of early marriage, such as Niger (77 percent), Chad (71percent), and Mozambique (57 percent), but others such as Togo in West Africa have a more moderate rate of early marriage (31 percent), while South Africa has a fairly small percentage of young women who marry early (Mathur et al., 2003).

Causes of Early Marriage of Young and Adolescent Girls

The early marriage of young of and adolescent girls as persists across countries is caused by poverty, ignorance, social and cultural norms, societal conflicts and wars. As a result of poverty and economic need, some families take decision to marry off their daughters either to lessen their economic burden or as a way to get connected to richer family that may be of economic

benefit to them. In this case most of these young girls are implored, forced or deceived into marriage. In most communities where families could not afford or continue to provide for their children welfare consider the next option to give away their young daughters to another family in form of marriage. The family in-law or husband to the daughter is well accepted most especially for their wealth and riches as they are expected to provide for the daughter and the daughter's family.

Ignorance sometimes plays a major role as one of the causes of child marriage. In this situation, some parents feel that it is better and safer to give away their young daughter in marriage to avoid the shame of the daughter getting pregnant out of wedlock. Some societies believe that early marriage will protect young girls from sexual attacks and violence and see it as a way to protect their daughters (UNFPA, 2013).

Social and cultural norms are still one of the major barriers for the persisting early marriage of adolescent girls. In some case the culture and traditional beliefs demand that a daughter should be given out for a marriage under certain agreement with another family. Parents arrange these marriages and young girls have no choice. Also, social pressure within the community or families prevails and a girl child is married off because other young girls are getting married and a family will not allow their own child to be left out. Also, some society give preference to boy's education and girls are

discriminated and given the choice to marriage.

Many regions are experiencing conflicts and wars, and families are displaced while poverty increases leading to young daughters either married off at their adolescence or the young girls have the option to get married. In most conflict regions these young girls are either forced or abducted by terrorist who marries them. Nigeria for example, over the recent years of terrorist attack, has witnessed various abduction of girl child who have been married and held captive by the abductors, and others being sold away for marriage.

Socio-Cultural Framework: Customs and Traditions Related to Early Marriage

The socio-cultural framework can be explored in terms of 'customs' and 'traditions' as two common denominators for the causes of early marriage. 'Customs' and 'traditions' can be understood as 'man made doctrines, beliefs, practices, or stories that are passed from generation to generation, orally or by example' (Heinonen 2002). Customs surrounding marriage, including the desirable age and the way in which a spouse is selected, depend on a society's view of the family its role, structure, pattern of life and the individual and collective responsibilities of its members (UNICEF, 2001).

Viewed from a socio-cultural perspective, the reasons for early marriage are varied and many. Some of the most common socio-cultural reasons for early marriage are: to forge alliances/ links between families and to ensure that the

girl is properly married while she is still a virgin and too young to act independently. In this context, early marriage may even occur where a family has made a pledge to give its daughter in marriage to a benefactor. Hence, the age of betrothal for girls in early arranged marriages might even be before birth takes place or after puberty (FMRWG, 2003 and Heinonen 2002). In early arranged marriage, like forced marriage, the element of the girl's consent is usually absent.

Economic Framework: The Links between Early Marriage and Poverty

From the economic point of view, young girls are often seen as an economic burden and married off. In this respect, early marriage for girls is viewed as a means of economic survival, i.e., if a girl is married early, the family has one mouth less to feed, and the hope is that the girl herself will be better off. In other words, parents may feel that marrying a daughter at a young age can help them economically (Heinonen, 2002). In this context, the link between early marriage and poverty is discussed in terms of ensuring a better future for girls, or of girls being financial burdens to their families. The latter is voiced in terms of "another mouth to feed", the aim is securing the survival of the family, depriving a girl of her education in order to give a better chance to her brothers, since her labor power and children will go to her husband's patrilineage anyway (Heinonen, 2002; UNICEF, 2001; FMRWG 2000). Conversely, the prohibitively high bride price demanded by parents in

some rural areas is encouraging poor young men to abduct and rape underage girls in order to secure a marriage (Teshome Segni, 2002).

A multitude of issues created by early marriage are increasingly associated with poverty and illiteracy. Recent studies show that poverty and illiteracy are the main causes for early marriage and its continuance. "Globally, early marriage and early childbearing have been more or less abandoned by the wealthiest section of society, even in poor and highly traditional countries. Virtually, everywhere, poor women in rural areas tend to marry younger than those in urban areas and educational levels also play a critical role" (UNICEF, 2001).

In the terminology adopted and popularized by the World Bank, "education was a form of 'human capital' capable of generating high returns for economic growth" (OXFAM, 2000). Here, according OXFAM, education matters because it is a fundamental human right, and because it is intrinsically important in its own right. It opens new horizons and raises the quality of life. However, education is also a means to achieving wider human development ends, including higher living standards, improved public health, and democratization. It is one of the most powerful catalysts for poverty reduction. Viewed from the opposite angle, educational deprivation is an equally powerful cause of poverty. "The intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and poverty admittedly involves many complex, deep-rooted issues for

which there is no simple solution" (OXFAM, 2000).

Impact of Early Marriage on Children and Society

Child marriage is an institution that infringes upon the rights and freedoms, and damages the health and autonomy, of young child. It should be considered illegal to marry off a child below the age of 18. If a husband consummates a marriage with a child, it should be considered rape.

Child brides are neither physically or emotionally ready to get married. Many of these young girls who have become young mothers experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth. The most common disorder as a result of pregnancy complications is the condition known as fistulas, a condition causing continuous leakage of urine from the bladder into the vagina and urinary incontinence. More so, these young brides have less access to reproductive education and health services or are denied the use of contraceptive and therefore could not control childbearing and they are more likely to die in childbirth than those who married between the ages of 20 – 24 (UNICEF, WHO). According to the UN, Pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide, accounting for 70,000 deaths each year (UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2009). Likewise Infants born to mothers under the age of 18 are 60% more likely to die in their first year than to mothers over the age of 19. The babies are more vulnerable to complications associated with premature labour common in

teenage pregnancy. If the babies survive, they are more likely to suffer from low birth weight, malnutrition, and late physical and cognitive development (UNICEF, 2009).

There is no doubt that these young wives cannot make decision in their marriage or engage in mutual negotiation with their adult husbands, and therefore they are subjected to emotional disturbances, sexual abuse and domestic violence (Population Council Report, 2003). Violence and abuse can lead to post-traumatic stress and depression, and as a result many have suffered psychosocial trauma and sometimes may attempt to commit suicide. Cases have also revealed serious refusal of the bride to continue with the marriage. There is a case in Nigeria of which a 14-year old child bride killed her 35-years old husband through food poisoning as a result of traumatic effect. The child bride alleged that it was a forced marriage to a man she did not love and didn't want to have relationship with (Vanguard Newspaper Nigeria, 2014). Meanwhile the child bride lack the resources or legal and social support to leave an abusive marriage.

Child early marriage affects the girls' school enrolment. Many of these young brides could not continue their education when got married. In some instances, child brides are often pulled out of school and denied further education and so can lack the skills to help lift their families out of poverty. Moreover, their children are also more likely to be illiterate which affects the

attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The child brides are often isolated from their peers and therefore it widens gender inequality, and in situations where child marriage often results in separation from family and friends and lack of freedom to participate in community activities, it can have major consequences on girls' mental and physical well-being (UNICEF, 2011).

Types of Marriage

Before marriage can occur in most societies, certain conditions must be met, such as consent and approved of the a spouse's families, payment of the bride price, witnesses from members of the community and other custom or religious rites.

The following are common types of marriages in our societies:-

Monogamy: is a marriage between one man and one woman. Obiadi (1999) observed that, this is the marriage of a man or a woman to one opposite sex at a time. This is common in the European societies and among Christians and elites in Nigeria.

Polygamy: is a marriage between a man and none more than one women. According to Attah (2000) polygamy is where a man marries more than one wife. Polyandry is where a woman marries several men. This has two subdivisions. But the first one polygamy is mostly practice by Muslims and some traditional believers like Tiv people of Benue, Nigeria.

Levitate: Raddeliffe (2000) observed that this occurs when a man marries the

widow of his dead elder brother, without contacting new marriage. The children of the deceased remain as part of the family and the children born in the new relationship belong to the late brother.

Sorarate: is a situation where a man marries the sister of his dead wife thereby making her substitute to her dead sister.

Widow inheritance: According to Akinbode (2006) this is where a male kinsman marries his dead brother's or father's widow and become her legal husband. This is common among African societies.

Problems Associated with Early Marriage

Psychosocial Disadvantage

The loss of adolescence, the forced sexual relations, and the denial of freedom and personal development attendant to early marriage have profound psychosocial and emotional consequences. The impact can be subtle and insidious and the damage hard to assess. It includes such tangible factors as the effect of a girl's loss of mobility and her confinement to the home and to household roles (UNICEF, 2001).

Most girls who are unhappy in an imposed marriage are very isolated. They have nobody to talk to as they are surrounded by people who endorse their situation. In Ethiopia, Inter-African

Committee researchers were struck by the lack of interest from elders in the traumas suffered by young girls as a result of early marriage, premature sex

and child bearing. These traumas were regarded as an 'unavoidable part of life' (Berhane-Selassie, 2003). Girls who run home to their parents may be beaten and sent back to their husbands. Thus, distress is generally endured in silence.

Lack of good adolescent Health and Reproduction

The notion of good reproductive health covers all aspects of the reproduction process – including a satisfying and safe experience of sexual relations, capability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if and when to bear a child (ICPD, 2004). The right not to engage in sexual relations and the right to exercise control over reproduction may both be violated by early marriage (ICPD, 2004).

Lack of Sound Sexual Relations

In the case of girls married before puberty, the normal understanding between families is that there will be no sexual intercourse until first menstruation. However, the protection may fail where the husband is much older than the girl. Cases of forced intercourse by much older, and physically fully developed husbands with wives as young as eight have been reported in West Africa (Shireen, 2000). For the vast majority of under-educated rural adolescent girls in the developing world, marriage remains the likely context for sexual intercourse (Mensch et al., 2008). Pain and trauma are enhanced where girls have undergone some form of Female

Genital Circumcision (FGC), especially where this has been undertaken recently, and especially in the case of infibulation which is designed to make penetration difficult. Problems may be exacerbated after child birth. In many societies, and in many millions of individual cases, women have no choice but to resume sexual relations within two or three days of childbirth, even if there has been vaginal cutting during delivery, and regardless of the pain it causes (Adamson, 2006).

Denial of Education

Early marriage inevitably denies children of school age their right to the education they need for their personal development, their preparation for adulthood, and their effective contribution to the future well-being of their family and society. Indeed, married girls who would like to continue schooling may be both practically and legally excluded from doing so. According to Muhammad (2000), girls are withdrawn from school for early marriage in certain parts of the world. This situation is rampant in Bangladesh where a girl will be withdrawn from school for early marriage if a good marriage prospect arises. Even though the attitude towards educating girls is changing, many parents still hold the view that investment in the girl is a wasted resource when she is simply going to be married and work in another household. The cost of investment in education reinforces the impetus towards girl's withdrawal from school (UNICEF, 2001).

The Role of Counsellor in Reducing Early Marriage

- i. The counsellor should provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- ii. The counsellor should end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
- iii. The counsellor should prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.
- iv. The counsellor should encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- v. The counsellor should help in the establishment of a marriage resource center to provide information on marriage and mentors to couples.
- vi. The counsellor should enhance a public education campaign on the importance of marriage.
- vii. The counsellor should set up an outreach program to change the attitudes of youth about marriage.
- viii. The counsellor should make an effort to promote Community Marriage Policies and develop community-based marriage-strengthening programs with pastors and Imams.

- ix. The counsellor should make seminar on regular statewide marriage conferences.
- x. The counsellor should enhance training for state workers, such as agricultural extension service workers and public health nurses, to help them teach marriage skills courses at the community level.
- xi. The counsellor should improved data-gathering system to document marriages and divorces in the state, federal level through government interference.
- xii. The counsellor should document on partnerships with faith-based and charity groups on programs that strength families.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory

Albert Bandura in his theory of social learning identified that there are two ways children learn their gender roles, they receive rewards or punishments for specific gender role behavior or they watch and imitate the behavior of others, thus, socialization of children is one the major causes of gender differences between boys and girls, they are greatly influenced by behavior of their parents, media and schools which transmit children the information of gender role stereotypes.

According to study conducted Ikamari (2005), later marriage allows girls to complete their education , develop career opportunities and create

employment opportunities which may in turn motivate girls to limit family size or wider child spacing.

According to study conducted by Palamuleni (2011) in Malawi which was Published on international journal of sociology and anthropology July 2011, there is a close link between delayed marriage and education, this implies that women's ability to participation and contribution to the national economy are dependent on educational achievement. It is important to underline that these norms and attitudes do not give consideration the timing of the marriage and the impact that this marriage may have on education of young married girls, the centrality of the early marriage lies on the timing issue. More schooling and education necessitate late marriage but the problem is traditional societies value more marriage than education at early stages of schooling. This burden of marriage interrupts the schooling of married young boys and girls which ultimately result to drop out of school, unemployment and more often family break downs.

This theory is relevant to the study because in our Africa society boys and girls are not rewarded in the same way within household structure, parents behave in way that shows boys and girls have different roles as boys are not allowed to cook foods or wash clothes , parents teach their children from the beginning that some roles are specific for girls , some others for boys , for example, most parents invest more in the education of boys than girls

assuming that investing in girls education is no worthy as girls will ultimately be housewives for children rearing and cooking foods.

Abdullahi (2001) noted that in the past and even today, whatever the circumstances is, marriage on societal level is perceived as relationship between two families that is between two clans and only as the personal level is considered a relationship between husband and wife.

Parents and families play important role to marry young boys and girls of their relatives not only for economic incentives but also for protecting their dignity and to prevent young girls get pregnancy which is unlawful in both Muslin religion and Africa tradition, when two young people from two different families and clans are married, the ties and relationships between two families become strong, mutually respected and safeguarded.

Giyan (2009) argued that some religious practices, such as Islam encourage early marriage and parents absorb this for fear of their daughters being pregnant out of wedlock and the only available option could be marriage at an early age. Early marriage has been defended in Nigeria as clearly permissible by the Islamic religion, but with the cautionary measure that such Marriages can only be consummated when the bride is mature enough. He concluded that most times these decisions are often made without the consent of the child and with no recourse to the consequences of the actions.

Radical Feminist Theory

This study is also guided by radical feminist theory, which emerged in the 18th century. Radical feminist theory analyzes patriarchy as the primary cause of women's oppression (Pilcher and Imelda, 2008). One of the proponents of this theory is Susan Brownmiller who argues that women are subordinated and exploited by men because of patriarchy. The feminists further assert that women can only be liberated through debates of overhauling patriarchal structures (Pilcher and Imelda, 2008).

In the patriarchal nature of African culture, value is placed on the boy-child's education than that of the girl-child. Girls are subordinated and undervalued such that they do not have educational opportunities equal to boys. In homes where there is poverty with few financial resources, girls will be forced to drop out of school prematurely in favour of the boys. This is because some parents believe that boys are more intelligent, that they perform better in school and that they are a better educational investment than girls (Odaga and Heneveld, 2005).

This theory is relevant to this study in the sense that it helped the researcher to analyze the aspects of the Bosso culture, for example, their beliefs and practices that explained early marriage. Patriarchy hinders women and girls from being involved in development activities in the society. Culture is a product of patriarchy and in patriarchal societies, it is the men who become rulers over their wives and this means women do not make decisions in both public and private

spheres.

Empirical Studies

A study conducted by Levine, Lloyd, Greene, & Grown, (2009) revealed that the prevalence of child marriage varies starkly within regions and countries. In Africa, for example, countries with very high rates of early marriage, such as Niger (77 %), Chad (71%), and Mali (65%), exist alongside others with relatively low rates, such as Togo (31%) and South Africa (8%). Similarly, in South Asia the rate is very high in Bangladesh (65%), moderately high in India (48%), and very low in Sri Lanka (14%). In Ethiopia, most child marriages occur in the North, where the proportion of young women married by age 18 (around 75%) exceeds the national rate (49%).

Forward (2008) observed that child marriage is predominantly practiced in the rural and poor communities where young girls are regarded as economic burden and quickly married off to alleviate household expenses. Oftentimes, in these communities, educational and economic opportunities available to girls are few and they are often married off quickly to protect them and the economic wellbeing of the family. The continuing economic hardship in many developing countries is encouraging a rise in early and child-marriage, even among populations that do not normally practice it, as child marriage is often regarded as a family-building strategy, an economic strategy and the

resulting transaction important for the financial and social survival of the child and her family. Where poverty is acute, also, parents may regard young girls as economic burden and their marriage to much older rich men becomes very attractive and beneficial to the girl and her family. He concluded that a daughter may be treated as a commodity that the family has to be traded and sometimes girls are used as currency to settle debts or stabilize relationships between families.

Lloyd (2005) asserts that in many parts of Africa, Nigeria inclusive, the bride price or wealth, paid in exchange for the bride's labour and fertility is an important resource for greater wealth and survival of the family and therefore may induce early arrangements of marriage by parents. Existing notions of morality and honour are important influences on decisions of parents to marry off daughters very early to ensure that a girl's virginity is preserved at marriage, as culturally expected in order to purchase the highly valued virtue for the girl and honour for her family. In the absence of viable options, early marriage is seen as a way of protecting girls from unwanted pregnancies. When such marriages are to older men, they are also considered as necessary guardians against possible immoral and inappropriate behavior on the part of the young wives.

Giyani (2009) argued that some religious practices, such as Islam encourage early marriage and parents imbibe this for fear of their daughters being

pregnant out of wedlock and the only available option could be marriage at an early age. Early marriage has been defended in Nigeria as clearly permissible by the Islamic religion, but with the cautionary measure that such marriages can only be consummated when the bride is mature enough. He concluded that most times these decisions are often made without the consent of the child and with no recourse to the consequences of the actions. Nwokolo (2012) investigated the capacity building strategies for counseling against early marriage of the Girl-child in Ogidi Education zone of Anambra state. Three research questions were used and descriptive survey design was adopted. The population for the study is all the parents who are members of the parents' teachers' association of all the schools in Ogidi education zone and all the eleven counselors in the chosen zone. A sample of 660 respondents was chosen through random sampling and all the 11 counselors were chosen because the population size is small. On the whole 671 respondents were used for the study. Instrument used was questionnaire and mean rating was used as the statistical tool. The results showed that all but one of the items are the capacity building strategies as agreed by the respondents. This implies that unless the parents work together with the counselors, counseling might not contribute much in the fight against early marriage of the Girl-child.

Early marriage has been the subject of a growing number of studies,

research projects and intervention programs in Africa. Some part of Africa and Northern Nigerian women marry at a much earlier age than other part of the world, leading to early pregnancies. Surveys carried out in some Sahelian countries by Locoh (2000) had alarming examples.

2.4 **Summary of Literature Reviewed**

This Chapter reviews related literature and empirical studies that have direct bearing on this study. The review began by an attempt to review the conceptual framework which include the concept of marriage, purpose of marriage, concept of early marriage, prevalence of early marriage in Africa, causes of early marriage of young and adolescent girls, impact of early marriage on children and society, types of marriage, problems associated with early marriage and role of counsellor in reducing early marriage.

This Chapter equally reviewed the theoretical framework that is related to the study and also the empirical studies.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, population, samples and sampling techniques, research instrument, validity of the instrument, procedure for data collection and the method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The research design that will be adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. Osuala (2001) lamented that sample survey attempt to determine best way it could be improved among; sociological and psychological variables among sociological and psychological variables. Specifically survey method was employed to find out the opinion of people towards an issue or events that is of interest for generality of the populace. Towards this end questionnaire will designed to seek people opinion on problems of early marriage and divorce in our society.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of this research covered all secondary school student in .Bosso Local Government area of Niger State.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

As Daramola, (2005) asserts that "it is a selected group which is a fair representation of the entire population of interests. In view of time constrain it was not easy to administer questionnaires to the large population of students,

hence random sampling techniques will be used. The researchers sampled one hundred and fifty (150) students from five (5) different secondary across Bosso local government area of Niger State. The sample secondary schools are;

- i. Government Day Secondary School, Maitumbi
- ii. Maryam Babangida Science College, Bosso
- iii. Amy Day Secondary School, Minna
- iv. Government Girls Secondary Schools, Bosso Road
- v. Government Day Secondary School, Minna

3.5 Research Instrument

The instrument used to collect data for this study was self-designed questionnaires. The questionnaires were in two sections. The first section dealt with demographic data of the respondents while the second part collected information on the incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents.

3.6 Validity of Instrument

The instrument used for data collection which is questionnaires will be validated by the project supervisor.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher administered the questionnaires form on the respondents. Each respondent in the secondary schools selected was given the

questionnaire to complete and return immediately after responding. This will be done to ensure that all questionnaires were returned to prevent or reduce loss.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered was treated descriptively as the research method used was the descriptive survey. The data that were collected were analyzed and used in answering research questions. Simple percentages, frequencies and mean were used to analyze all data.

Likert scale was chosen because it offers an interesting possibility for the students to give their opinion as the research demanded. It is also possible to report percentage responses by combining the two outside categories, from the categories of the scale e.g Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). This was based on a four (4) likert scale of strongly agree (4), Agree (3), strongly disagree (2), and Agree (1). The decision rule for interpretation of the result of the data analysis was a mean score of 2.5 and above was considered agreed and below 2.5 disagreed.

The formula for calculating the mean score is;

$$x = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

x = Mean score

fx = Sum of frequency response

N = Number of respondents

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings. The chapter starts by outlining the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	65	43.3%
Female	85	56.7%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table presents the analysis of respondents' gender status. The analysis indicated that 43.3% of the sampled respondents were male while 56.7% of them were females. Thereby indicated that females are more in the study area.

Religion Status of the Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Islam	91	60.7%
Christianity	59	39.3%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The result in the above table shows that 60.7% of the sampled respondents were of Islamic faith while 39.3% of them were of Christianity faith.

Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	55	
Single	71	36.7%
Divorce	24	47.3%
Total	150	16%
		100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The result of the analysis in the above table indicated that 36.7% of the sampled respondents were married, 47.3% of them were single while 16% of them are divorced.

4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the differences in the perception of married and unmarried students' on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State?

S/NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	The Child Right Act is not influencing girl child education	49	77	20	4	3.1
2	Lack of information about the problem of early marriage	54	69	19	8	3.1
3	Parents do not value education	41	69	22	18	2.9
4	Tradition beliefs, culture and practices e.g. initiation ceremonies	52	68	19	11	3.1
5	Lack of knowledge on the impacts of child Marriage	49	72	20	9	3.1
6	Corruption on part of the legal bodies e.g. Police	60	69	19	2	3.3

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table above shows the result of respondents' perception towards the causes of

early marriage. The analysis revealed that the respondents agreed to all the statement such as; The Child Right Act is not influencing girl child education, lack of information about the problem of early marriage, parents do not value education, tradition beliefs, culture and practices e.g. initiation ceremonies, lack of knowledge on the impacts of child marriage and corruption on part of the legal bodies were perceived as the major caused of early marriage in Bosso Local Government Area with mean scores of 3.1, 3.1, 2.9, 3.1, 3.1 and 3.3 respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the differences in the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state?

S/NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Economic situation is contributing to girl child marriage	72	53	19	6	3.3
2	My mates were married	2	19	50	79	1.6
3	Forced by parents to marry	51	79	12	8	3.2
4	Early dropping out of school	70	59	14	7	3.3
5	To give the girl dignity in the among her mate	49	75	20	6	3.1
6	To prevent girls from having illegitimate pregnancies	55	71	20	4	3.1
7	To safeguard girls' virginity	60	69	19	2	3.3
8	To respect religious teachings	41	69	22	18	2.9
9	To extend kinship ties	57	69	14	10	3.2
10	To honour family social rank	49	72	20	9	3.1

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The above table presents the perception of female and male Muslims and Christian students concerning the causes of early marriage in Bosso LGA.

The analysis shows that they engaged in early marriage due to; economic situation is contributing to girl child marriage, forced by parents to marry, early dropping out of school, to give the girl dignity in the among her mate, to prevent girls from having illegitimate pregnancies, to safeguard girls' virginity, to respect religious teachings, to extend kinship ties and to honour family social rank with mean scores ranging between 2.9 – 3.3 while they reject the opinion of going into early marriage because their mates were married.

4.4 Test of Hypotheses

H_0 : There is no significance difference the perception of married and unmarried teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State

Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis Technique

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
126	150	-24	576	3.84
123	150	-27	729	4.86
110	150	-40	1600	10.67
120	150	-30	900	6.00
121	150	-29	841	5.61
129	150	-21	441	2.94
				33.92

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2018

$$d.f = (r-1)(c-1) = (7-1)(2-1)$$

$$= 6 \times 1 = 6$$

The hypothesis formulated is tested by means of the Chi-square.

The chi-square analysis is 33.92 which shows that the chi square calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated at 0.05. As a decision rule, if the computed value of Chi-square is less than the critical value of X^2 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. The reverse is however the case if the computed value of X^2 is greater than the critical value at the chosen level of significance.

Decision Rule

Conclusion: since the computed value of chi - square (33.92) is greater than the critical value of 7.98, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) "There is no significance difference the perception of married and unmarried teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State" is rejected.

H_{0i} : There is no significance difference between the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state

Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis Technique

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
125	150	-25	625	4.17
21	150	-129	16641	110.94
130	150	-20	400	2.67
129	150	-21	441	2.94
124	150	-26	676	4.51
126	150	-24	576	3.84
129	150	-21	441	2.94
119	150	-31	961	6.41
126	150	-24	576	3.84
121	150	-29	841	5.61
				147.87

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2018

$$d.f = (r-1)(c-1) = (10-1)(2-1)$$

$$= 9 \times 1 = 9$$

The hypothesis formulated is tested by means of the Chi-square.

The chi-square analysis is 147.87 which shows that the chi square calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated at 0.05. As a decision rule, if the computed value of Chi-square is less than the critical value of X^2 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. The reverse is however the case if the computed value of X^2 is greater than the critical value at the chosen level of significance.

Decision Rule

Conclusion: since the computed value of chi - square (147.87) is greater than the critical value of 13.89, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) "There is no significance difference between the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state" is rejected.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that early marriage is a result of Child Right Act is not influencing girl child education, lack of information about the problem of early marriage, parents do not value education, tradition beliefs, culture and practices e.g. initiation ceremonies, lack of knowledge on the impacts of child marriage and corruption on part of the legal bodies. The findings is support with Lung Vu (2009) who fund out that education, place of residence, wealth, current age, region, and ethnicity are significantly related to age at first marriage in Vietnam while Agaba et al (2011) indicates that educational attainment, religion, district of residence, and birth cohort are strong socio-economic determinants of first marriage in Western Uganda. In the same vein, This finding is also supported by Manda and Meyer (2005) who find that women with higher levels of educational attainment are far more likely to enter marriage at later age than those without any or with little education, given of different model to approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study that investigated the incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

5.2 Summary

This research aimed at investigating the incidence and causes of early marriage among school adolescents in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. The main focus was to established relationship between early marriage and the possible causes.

This study was divided into five chapters. In chapter one, the introductory background to the study was discussed. Chapter two attempted an appreciable review of related literatures on the current research problem

Chapter three presented the research methodology which consists of research design, populations and samples, research instrument, validity, data collection procedure and the method adopted for analyzing the data while chapter four discussed findings in relation to the research questions of the study.

Summary of the Findings

- i. *There is significance difference in the perception of married and unmarried*

teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State

- ii. There is significance difference between the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that the practice of early marriages is a real problem in Bosso Local Government Area. Parents have been found to play a key role in the practice. This is due to the fact that most parents lack understanding of the importance of formal education for their children. Among other effects, early marriage practices to younger girls have led to their denial of educational rights. There is a high need for raising awareness to community members on the importance of education to girls so as to discourage early marriage prevalence. In view of the above, it is important that different stakeholders should work together in making sure that this practice is ended.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher recommends the following;

- i. Government should make education free and compulsory at the primary and secondary levels as a way of discouraging early marriage.

- ii. The law-enforcers in the study area, and the state at large, should work on the by laws that prohibit early marriages.
- iii. Education planners should include sex education in the school curriculum for proper orientation of the girl-child. The current curriculum was found to be too light to make students adequately understand sexuality.
- iv. Parents need to be counseled more on these detrimental effects on their female children.
- v. More efforts should be made by the authority in enforcing the rights of the girl child and in improving the girl child education.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

- i. Further studies need to be conducted in order to ascertain challenges that hinder efforts to fight against early marriage practices.
- ii. More research should be carried out on young girls who are out of school because this study did not include this category which may be experiencing a different challenge from those in school.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON INCIDENCE AND CAUSES OF EARLY MARRIAGE AMONG
SECTION A

Instruction: please tick [✓] as appropriate box for each of the items below

SECTION A: Personal Data

Sex

a) Male [] b) female []

Religion: Islam [], Christianity [], Others []

Marital Status: Married [], Single [], Divorce []

SECTION B

Kindly ticks (✓) as the statement below are applicable to you, using the provided key below.

SA: Strongly Agreed

A: Agreed

D: Disagreed

SD: Strongly disagreed.

Research Question 1: What are the differences in the perception of married and unmarried

teachers on causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger State?

S/NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	The Child Right Act is not influencing girl child education				
2	Lack of information about the problem of early marriage				
3	Parents do not value education				
4	Tradition beliefs, culture and practices e.g. initiation ceremonies				
5	Lack of knowledge on the impacts of child Marriage				
6	Corruption on part of the legal bodies e.g. Police				

Research Question 2: What are the differences in the perception of male and female, Muslims and Christians on the causes of early marriage in Bosso local government area of Niger state?

S/NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Economic situation is contributing to girl child marriage				
2	My mates were married				
3	Forced by parents to marry				
4	Early dropping out of school				
5	To prevent girls from having illegitimate pregnancies				
7	To safeguard girls' virginity				
8	To respect religious teachings				
9	To extend kinship ties				
10	To honour family social rank				