

INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC WORKS ON FEMALE STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UPPER-BASIC SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

By

AMALI, I.O.O. Ph.D.,

BELLO, M.B. Ph.D.

muhinat4islam@yahoo.com

&

ADEOYE, G.O.

Department of Social Sciences Education,

Faculty of Education,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

In Nigeria, domestic works are socially accepted to be part of daily activities that are engaged by female children. This study therefore examined the influence of domestic work on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. This study made use of descriptive research design. The population for this study were all upper-basic female students from public schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. 900 upper basic female students were sampled for this study using a multi-stage sampling technique. Researchers' developed questionnaire with a reliability coefficient 0.63 was used to obtain data on the types and extent of students' engagement in domestic works while a pro forma was used to obtain students' academic performance in upper-basic schools. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that female students are daily engaged in different types of domestic works such as running errands, washing of cloths, sweeping, fetching of water, washing of plates and caring for babies/children, etc. all which interfere with their academic studies and thereby resulting in less academic performance among female students in Kwara State. It is therefore recommended that government and Ministry of Education in collaboration with the school authorities should organise education campaigns to sensitize parents on the need to lessen girls' involvement in domestic works in such a way that it would not affect girls' academic performance.

Keywords: Female Students, Domestic works, Academic Performance

Introduction

Education is an important instrument of change that brings about individual and national development in modern society through the provision of appropriate human resources that helps to spur productivity, eliminate poverty, disease and ignorance. Given the fact that education is a mechanism for transmitting knowledge and skills for individuals to become a useful person in the society, it is generally acknowledged that education is of great importance to any society as it promotes not only the productivity and efficiency of both men and women but also increases the potentials of the individual among the marginalized group within and outside the society in general. Emmanuel (2015) stated that education is a tool that provides equal opportunity to both males and females. Thus, it will do no good to take any group of a society or to deny any group of the society the opportunities to educational achievement. The upper basic school

students referred to in this study are students of junior schools in classes 1 to 3, who because of the level of their age are usually used for domestic chores in most homes in Kwara state and Nigeria.

However, in Africa, there is gender disparity in all aspects in the provision of education (UNESCO, 2004). Even though many countries have made progress towards achieving gender equality in education, yet in Africa, girls continue to face many obstacles that impede their part to education (Hyde, 2001). He stated further that the reasons for this include discrimination on the basis of sex, attitudes of parents, cultural belief system on girls' equal right to education. The cultural expectation is that girls are being prepared for roles as homemakers and mothers, and their early involvement in domestic works are seen as part of their preparation for the adult role (Asaad, Deborah & Nadia, 2010). Domestic work is often accepted in the societies where it exists, and it is often viewed as a safe form of employment (Hesketh, Gamlin, Ong, & Camacho, 2012). Sultana(2010) referred domestic works as gendered roles. According to Emmanuel (2015), gendered roles are those works that have been socially constructed and culturally accepted as belonging to females and males, which can sometime be termed as feminine and masculine activities

In Nigeria, major domestic works are usually performed by female members of the family, while those related to outdoors are performed by male members of the family. While this separation of activity may seem fair, in actual fact, household activities are unscheduled and therefore, more time consuming and tiring than those performed outside the house (Emmanuel, 2015). Idagboyi (2010) argued that domestic works have been made compulsory duties for female children such as cleaning utensils, cooking, minding children, fetching water, running errands among others, all in the name of assisting their parents. However in this study, these have been identified as such workloads that interfere with girls' education and thereby affecting their academic performance in schools.

At the other hand, domestic works among female children may be prone to exploitation and abuse due to the invisibility and inaccessibility of the work setting. To this effect, (International Labour Organisation, 2011) identified a number of threats to which child domestic workers are particularly vulnerable. Some of the most common risks children face in domestic services include, long and tiring working days; carrying heavy loads; handling dangerous items, such as knives, axes and hot pans; insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation, and exposure to humiliating, inhuman or degrading treatment, including physical and verbal violence, and sexual abuse. Patrick (2014) associated these hazards with the denial of fundamental rights of the children such as access to education and health care, the right to rest, leisure, play and recreation and the right to be cared for and to have regular contact with their peers.

In developing countries, particularly in Nigeria, domestic works have been identified as one of the major factor denying girls to have full access to education. Domestic works have been seen as impediments to female students' concentration in academic works especially in Nigerian upper basic schools. In Nigeria, the categories of girls that are mostly engaged in major and heavy domestic works fall within the age bracket of students in upper basic schools. This has been a driving factor arousing the interests of many educators and researchers in looking into ways in which domestic works influence girls' academic performance.

Given a number of studies that have been conducted on factors responsible for a fall in girls' academic performance such as Asaad, Deborah & Nadia, (2010); Mauan (2013); Mwaura, (2014) etc., Karani (2006) and Auma (2014) attributed poor performance of girls in upper basic secondary schools especially in rural areas to a greater demand imposed on girls to assist with household chores which depress girls' performance in schools. According to Nyanza Education women's Initiative (NEWI) (2010), most rural families still give preference to boys when it comes to education. After school, the girl had to perform domestic duties at home, leaving them with no time to do their homework or to read

privately. In a study conducted by Nasania (2004) it was revealed that girls performed poorer when compared to boys in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) in Tanzania. Croll (2006) stated that girls undertaking heavy domestic chores perform less in school activities. Thus, this study attempted to look into the influence of domestic works on female students' academic performance in upper-basic schools in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, there is still persist female students' involvement in domestic works which are traditionally understood to be part of daily activities. These include heavy domestic chores, where children go to bed lately having very short sleeping hours at night and leading to students' lateness to schools, causing inattention or lack of concentration in the classroom and having less or no time for school assignment and leading to low students' commitment and performance in school works. Thus, this study was set out to examine the influence of domestic works on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of domestic works on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State. Specifically, this study was set out to look into the types of domestic works and the extent of upper-basic female students' engagement in the activities in relation to their academic performance in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research question were raised to guide this study

- i. What are the types of domestic works that upper-basic female students engaged in, in Kwara State?
- ii. To what extent do upper-basic female students engaged in domestic works in Kwara State?
- iii. What is the academic performance of students in upper-basic schools in Kwara State?
- iv. Is there influence of domestic work on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis below was postulated for this study

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of domestic work on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State

Methodology

This study made use of descriptive research design. The population for this study were all upper-basic female students from public schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. 900 upper basic female students were sampled for this study using a multi-stage sampling technique. At the 1st stage, stratified sampling technique was used to select 3 Local Government Areas from each of the Senatorial Districts in Kwara State to make a total of 9 Local Government Areas. At the 2nd stage, 2 upper-basic public schools were disproportionately selected from each of the chosen Local Government Areas to make a total of 18 schools that were used for this study. At the 3rd stage, simple random sampling technique was used to sample 50 students from each of the selected schools to arrive at 900 respondents. Researchers' developed questionnaire with a reliability coefficient 0.63 was used to obtain data on the types and extent of students' engagement in domestic works while a pro forma was used to obtain students' academic performance in upper-basic schools. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and inferential statistics of chi-square to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

Answering of Research Questions

Question One: *What are the types of domestic works that upper-basic female students engaged in, in Kwara State?*

In answering this question, a cut-off score of 1.50 was used as the baseline for determining participants' responses since the questionnaire items were structured in a two-response-type (Yes and No). Thus, items with mean scores equal or above 1.50 indicated that such domestic works were engaged in by students while items with mean scores below 1.50 revealed otherwise.

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Participants' Responses on the Types of Domestic works that Upper-Basic Female Students Engaged in, in Kwara State

SN	Items	Mean	Rank	Remark
1	Running Errands	2.33	1 st	Engaged
2	Washing of Cloths	2.31	2 nd	Engaged
3	Sweeping	2.27	3 rd	Engaged
4	Fetching of water	2.27	3 rd	Engaged
5	Washing of plates	2.24	4 th	Engaged
6	Caring for babies/children	2.22	5 th	Engaged
7	Cleaning of household equipment	2.09	6 th	Engaged
8	Ironing of cloths	2.04	7 th	Engaged
9	Cooking for the household	1.97	8 th	Engaged
10	Mopping	1.92	9 th	Engaged
11	Laying of beds/mats	1.88	10 th	Engaged
12	Setting of table	1.84	11 th	Engaged
13	Caring for the sick	1.71	12 th	Engaged
14	Washing/cleaning of cars/vehicles	1.52	13 th	Engaged
15	Feeding of goats, chicken, etc.	1.52	13 th	Engaged
16	Cleaning of the poultry house	1.34	14 th	Not Engaged
17	Gardening	1.21	15 th	Not Engaged
18	Hoeing	0.44	16 th	Not Engaged

As revealed in Table 1, ranked 1st, 2nd up to 13th are items whose mean scores are above 1.50. This shows that running errands, washing of cloths, sweeping, fetching of water, washing of plates, caring for babies/children, cleaning of household equipments, ironing of cloths, cooking for the household, mopping, laying of beds/mats, setting of table, caring for the sick, washing/cleaning of cars/vehicles and feeding of goats, chicken, among others were the types of domestic works that upper-basic female students were engaged in, in Kwara State. However, ranked 14th, 15th and 16th were items whose mean scores are below 1.50. This shows that Cleaning of the poultry house, Gardening and Hoeing were not the types of domestic works that upper-basic female students were engaged in, in Kwara State

Question Two: *To what extent do upper-basic female students engage in domestic works in Kwara State?*

The scores of each respondent on the extent of engagement in domestic works in Kwara State were estimated and subjected to percentage analysis. Given that the extent of engagement in domestic works could be *often, sometimes or rarely*, students whose scores fell within the score range 15 – 30; were rarely engaged in domestic works; students with score range 31 – 45 were sometimes engaged in domestic works; and students with score range 46 – 60 were always engaged in domestic works. The statistics of respondents' scores are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Extent of Engagement of Upper-Basic Students in Domestic Works

Extent of Engagement	Frequency	Percentage
Often	389	63%
Sometimes	307	26%
Rarely	204	11%
Total	900	100%

Table 5 showed that 389(63%) of the respondents often engage in domestic works and 307 (26%) of the respondents sometimes engage in domestic works while 204(11%) of the respondents rarely engage in domestic works. This implies that majority of upper-basic students often engage in domestic works in Kwara State.

Question Three: What is the academic performance of students in upper-basic schools in Kwara State?

Students' results in core subjects (English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies) were collected and subjected mean (average score) and percentage analysis to determine the level of their academic performance.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Upper-Basic Students' Academic Performance in Kwara State

Performance	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage
High	70 and above	109	22%
Average	50 – 69	642	49%
Low	0 – 49	149	29%
Total		900	100%

Table 3 shows that 109(22%) of the students had high academic performance; 642 (49%) of the students were of average academic performance while 149 (29%) of the students were of low academic performance in Economics. This shows that the majority of upper-basic students sampled were of average academic performance in Kwara State.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of domestic work on female students' academic performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State

Table 4: Chi-square Analysis of influence of Domestic Work on Female Students' Academic Performance in Upper-Basic Schools in Kwara State

Academic Performance	Students' Engagement in Domestic works			df	χ^2 -cal	Sig	Remark
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely				
High	34	47	28	4	22.14	0.02	S
Average	304	194	144				
Low	51	66	32				
Total	389	307	204				

As shown in table 2, the χ^2 -value 22.14 was obtained with a p-value 0.02 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.02 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that female students' engagement in domestic works significantly influenced their academic performance in Kwara State (χ^2 -cal₍₄₎ = 22.14, p < 0.05).

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that upper-basic female students were involved in different types of domestic works which included running errands, washing of cloths, sweeping, fetching water, washing plates, caring for babies/children, cleaning of household equipments, ironing of cloths, cooking for the household, mopping, laying of beds/mats, setting of table, caring for the sick, washing/cleaning of cars/vehicles and feeding of goats, chicken, among others in Kwara State. These outcomes corroborate Swai (2010) and Emmanuel (2015) who referred domestic works as gendered roles which are socially

constructed and culturally accepted as belonging to females and males, which can sometime be termed as feminine and masculine activities. However, this study showed that such domestic works as cleaning of the poultry house, gardening and hoeing were not imposed on upper-basic female students in Kwara State.

Results obtained from this study showed that the extent of engagement in domestic works among students was high as majority of upper-basic students often engaged in domestic works in Kwara State. This outcome corroborates Idagboyi (2010) and Emmanuel (2015) who argued that domestic works have been made daily compulsory duties for female children; such as cleaning utensils, cooking, minding children, fetching water, running errands among others, all in the name of assisting their parents. Furthermore this study revealed that majority of upper-basic students sampled were of average academic performance in Kwara State. This result disagrees with Sule(2002) whose study revealed higher academic performance of female students in Integrated Science in Nigeria.

Finding from this study showed that female students' engagement in domestic works significantly influenced their academic performance in Kwara State. In corroboration with this finding, Karani (2006) argued that poor performance of female students in rural basic schools was attributed to a greater household chores such as fetching of water, collecting firewood, helping with cooking, caring for the young etc. all imposed on female children.

Conclusion

With respect to the findings obtained from this study, it could be concluded that female students are daily engaged in different types of domestic works which interfere with their academic studies and thereby resulting in less academic performance among female students in Kwara State.

Recommendations

Given the findings obtained from this study, it is therefore recommended that government and Ministry of Education in collaboration with the school authorities should organise education campaigns to sensitize parents on the need to lessen girls' involvement in domestic works in such a way that it would not affect girls' academic work.

Also, parents should organise exceptional schedules for home activities in such a way that clearly allows time for girls' academic home studies. This would not only progress students' academic performance but also boost their academic commitment and punctuality to school. It is also necessary that boys in Nigeria should be made in assisting in domestic works to reduce its burden on girl-child.

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