

GENDER EQUALITY IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES AND FAMILY RESOURCE ALLOCATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined gender equality in household chores and family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised all the secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State, while the target population was all SS 2 students in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 30 Senior Secondary Schools, and from each of the selected schools, simple sampling approach was used to select 15 students which led to the selection of 450 students that participated in the study. A researcher's designed questionnaire with reliability coefficients of 0.84 was used for data collection. Percentage, mean rating and independent t-test were used for data analysis. Findings from the study revealed that the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils, fetching water, washing clothes, helping children with homework, and running errands outside the home; the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are in the cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils and running errands outside the home; and that there is significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender in favour of male students. Based on the findings of the study, it was, therefore, recommended among others that parents should be orientated on the need to share family resources equally between male and female children.

Key words: Gender Equality, Household Chores, Family, Resources, School

Introduction

Equality has to do with distribution, fairness or impartiality with which a given entity has been distributed. According to Alumode (2010) equity in education means the provision of equal opportunities for those who are qualified to receive education without regard to differences in sex, religion, social standing and environment. It refers to a situation where women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and potentials; are able to contribute equally to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results. Furthermore, it entails that the underlying causes of discrimination

are systematically identified and removed in order to give men and women equal opportunities.

Gender inequality exists and permeates all aspects of society. Due to this, gender equality has become one of the dominant subjects in academia, policy and political circles. Across the globe, some of the issues discussed are the gender pay gap, formal labour force participation and differential treatment accorded male and female children at home (Arulampalam, Booth & Bryan, 2007). The training of girls is often different from that of boys. The vocational training of women has largely been concentrated in fields related to their perceived household responsibilities. They are trained in catering and related courses rather than technical or scientific courses. The latter training promises income-generating activities associated with products and services with significantly greater added value and consequently higher incomes (Ndawa, 2014). While household skills are important, they should not remain a monopoly of women.

Gender inequality has necessitated lots of discrimination against, and such discrimination has remained an unresolved issue in society and a major source of concern in scholarly discourse. Children are regarded as the pride of their parents and the society's greatest asset in every civilized society, particularly in Africa. This is why children are generally treasured and actively protected from all types of danger and abuse. However, due to some traditional practices, stereotyping, cultural and religious beliefs that place them at risk of abuse and neglect, girl-children have not been as fortunate to be treasured, protected, and loved in our community.

The global problem of inequality has various dimensions, but the basis of all forms of discrimination and bias, especially against girls and women is found in society's conventions, traditions, and conventional worldview, which views girls and women as lesser people. From the dawn of human civilisation, women and girls have been abused in the most inhumane ways (Offorma 2009; Alabi, et al., 2014). In some regions of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia, the history of injustice against girls has persisted. In today's society, female feticide, female infanticide, sexual abuse, marginalization in terms of nutrition, health care, and education, violence against women, and bias against women in all sectors of life, including social, political, economic, and religious arenas, are all common standards (Alabi, et al., 2014).

In some parts of Africa, social norms dictate a very strict gendered division of household labour. In Ghana for instance, wives must carry foodstuffs from the farm, take water to the bathroom for the husband and show humility in action and speech to the husband, while the traditional role of men is to provide for the family, earning money by working a full-time job, providing information and guidance relating to sports, careers and financial matters (Diabah and Amfo, 2015). This highly gendered division of household labour is not restricted to developing countries. Gender differences in the time spent on housework like cooking, cleaning, and laundry have decreased over the past several decades, but large gender differences remain with women still performing the bulk of unpaid work (Fletcher, 2017). Bonke (2010)

found that children are usually engaged in doing cooking, cleaning utensils, fetching water, washing clothes, and helping children with homework. Allais (2009) observed that twice the proportion of girls than boys works more than 28 hours per week doing household chores.

Gender inequality also affects family resources allocation, and this seems to exert negative impacts on females more than males. In cases where families are economically pressed, parents often opt to educate boys, as girls remain to assist at home, or are made to work in order to make additional income for the household. Formal education is often used for assessing levels of education. In Kenya, national primary school enrolment rates at independence in 1963 were only 50%, and by 1991 this had risen to 95%. During the same period, the proportion of girls to the total population of pupils in primary schools was still low (Munyao, 2013).

Access to fewer economic resources extinguishes hope of going to school for many children. Girls are more likely than boys to lose educational opportunities due to poverty (UNICEF, 2005). Destitute families often cannot afford to send all their children to school. If it means choosing between sons and daughters, girls usually lose out. Even in cases where primary education is free, hidden costs such as books, supplies, uniforms or food may prohibit sending daughters to school. In societies where married women live with their husbands' kin, parents find little value in investing limited funds in a daughter's education only to see another family reap the rewards (Johannes, 2012). Other costs such as lost income or household labour also derail girls' chances of attending school. If household money or chores are needed, girls often land in the paid child labour force or are required to fetch water, find firewood and care for younger siblings or ill family members.

Lee (2012) found that females from low SES-background families were notably less likely to receive higher education than others. According to the study of Ye and Wu (2011), the more siblings a female had, the less education she was prone to receive, especially when she had brothers. Evans (2011) observed that male children enjoy family resources than their female counterparts in low income families. The study of Wu and Huang (2015) showed that the difference was greater in rural areas than in urban areas and the socioeconomic index of fathers' jobs. The education of parents and the number of siblings were all closely related with gender difference in educational attainment.

Despite substantial progress achieved in reducing gender inequalities at the formal employment level, the household still remains largely untouched. Indeed the picture that is conveyed by this situation is that these other spheres of attainment of reduction of inequality would somehow induce necessary changes at the household level of gender inequality. In contrast to the above supposition, this study takes the view that urgent direct focus is required to address household segregation of roles for several reasons. First, these household inequalities already constitute serious problems and hazards, as female children are usually hard pressed to cope with the often conflicting demands of household chores and resources allocation in which increasing number of them are engaged. In this situation, children's security is

endangered. Secondly, negative outcomes of household level gender role segregation and consequent low status of female children require urgent attention, including violence against girl child.

Generally, there is a tendency for the mainstream of enlightened society to trivialize micro-level gender inequality, even when they lead to brutalization of females as in the case of some widowhood and other practices in south east Nigeria (Okafor, 2002; Okemgbo, Kuteyi & Odimegwu, 2002). This results in concentration of policy focus on macro level economic sector employment inequalities, as these touch the lives of middle and upper class citizens, who bring more pressure on policy makers. Nonetheless, the reality is that the majorities of Nigerians (over 65 percent) is in the relatively poor rural communities and are mostly uneducated and somewhat isolated from the mainstream of modern socio-economic and political life. For most of these citizens, household gender role segregation continues to constitute a major set-back to necessary gender parity in their daily lives.

In view of the above situation, there remains an urgent need to maintain sustained focus on inequalities at the domestic level, since public level inequalities originate and are nurtured there. It has also been demonstrated by experience in Nigerian communities that interventions to relieve female children of constraints imposed on them by patriarchal value system have yielded some positive results in areas such as early marriage, female circumcision inheritance rights, and widowhood rites, but there has not been positive outcome in the area of house chores and family resources allocation. This form part of the research gaps this study filled.

The main purpose of the study was to examine gender equality in household chores and family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. Specifically, the study examined the:

1. household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State;
2. areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State; and
3. difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of the study.

1. What are the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State?
2. What are the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State?
3. Is there any difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender?

Research Hypothesis

This null hypothesis was tested in the course of the study.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive design. The population for the study comprised all the secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The study targeted only SS2 students in the study area. Simple random sampling was used to select 30 senior secondary schools for the study. From each of the schools, 15 students were selected using simple random and this led to the selection of 450 students that participated in the study. The instrument used for the study was a researcher developed questionnaire tagged "Gender Equality in Household Chores and Family Resource Allocation among Secondary School Students". The instrument consisted of section A and B. Section A contained item on the background information of the students' gender and age range, while section B sought for information on equality in household chores and family resource allocation with 4 point Likert scale response format. Experts opinion was used to ascertain the instrument's validity. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. Descriptive statistics of mean was used in answering research questions 1 and 2, while independent t-test was used in testing null hypothesis formulated in the study, at an alpha level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question One: What are the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State?

To answer the research question, responses on the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of mean. Decision as to the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State was based on the benchmark of 2.50. To achieve this, average of the numerical points for the response options were obtained as $(4+3+2+1)/4$. In which 4 stands for Strongly Agree, 3 stands for Agree, 2 stands for Disagree, and 1 for Strongly Disagree. Items with mean score of 2.50 or above were regarded as household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State, while items with mean score below 2.50 were not regarded as household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Rank Ordering of the Household Chores Performed by Secondary School Students in Ilorin, Kwara State

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1	Cleaning home	3.13*	1 st
2	Washing clothes	3.05*	2 nd
3	Cleaning utensils	2.98*	3 rd
4	Fetching water	2.84*	4 th
5	Cooking	2.74*	5 th
6	Helping children with homework	2.70*	6 th
7	Running errands outside the home	2.61*	7 th
8	Playing with children (looking after children)	2.44	8 th
9	Caring for elders	2.13	9 th
10	Collecting firewood	1.83	10 th

Table 1 shows the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. As shown in the table, in the order of ranking, the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are cleaning home, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, fetching water, cooking, helping children with homework, and running errands outside the home.

Research Question Two: What are the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State?

To answer the research question, responses on the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of mean. Decision as to the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State was based on the dimension of the responses. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage Analysis of the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State

S/N	Who Performs These Household Chores in Your House?	Mostly Girls	Mostly Boys	Both at Equal Level	Remarks
1	Cleaning home	291 (64.7%)	102(22.7%)	57 (12.7%)	Inequality*
2	Cooking	225 (50%)	78 (17.3%)	147 (32.7%)	Inequality*
3	Cleaning utensils	249 (55.3%)	102 (22.7%)	99 (22%)	Inequality*
4	Fetching water	90 (20%)	96 (21.3%)	264 (58.7%)	Equality
5	Washing clothes	72 (16%)	117 (26%)	261 (58%)	Equality
6	Helping children with homework	111 (24.7%)	36 (8%)	303 (67.3%)	Equality
7	Playing with children (looking after children)	105 (23.3%)	117 (26%)	228 (50.7%)	Equality
8	Collecting firewood	99 (33%)	45 (15%)	156 (62%)	Equality
9	Caring for elders	126 (28%)	123 (27.3%)	201 (44.7%)	Equality
10	Running errands outside the home	189 (42%)	108 (24%)	153 (34%)	Inequality*

Table 2 shows the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. Based on the analysis, the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are in the cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils and running errands outside the home.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender.

Table 3: Independent t-test of difference on difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender

Gender	No	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Male	237	32.59	5.81	448	3.73	0.00	Significant
Female	213	29.83	5.22				

Result in Table 3 show t-value of 3.73 and p-value of 0.00 in which the p-value is less than 0.05 ($0.00 < 0.05$). Since 0.00 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender in favour of male students.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined gender equality in household chores and family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The finding of the study revealed that the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are cleaning home, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, fetching water, cooking, helping children with homework, and running errands outside the home. This result is in line with that of Bonke (2010) who found that children are usually engaged in doing cooking, cleaning utensils, fetching water, washing clothes, and helping children with homework.

Another finding of this study showed that the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are in the cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils and running errands outside the home. The study showed that the inequalities were against female children. This means that some of the housechores are left to female students. This result is possible where parents value male children more than female children. The result is also possible where parents view it that female children need training on how to perform housechores than male children. This result is in line with that of Allais (2009) who found that twice the proportion of girls than boys work more than 28 hours per week doing household chores.

Furthermore, the result of the study revealed that there was significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender in favor of male students. This means that gender influences the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. This result is possible where parents attach more value to male children, which consequently makes them to ration resources in their favor. This result corroborates that of Evans (2011) who observed that male children enjoy family resources more than their female counterparts in low income families.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it was concluded that the household chores performed by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils, fetching water, washing clothes, helping children with homework, and running errands outside the home; the areas of inequalities in the household chores performed by male and female secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State are in the cleaning home, cooking, cleaning utensils and running errands outside the home; and that there was significant difference in the pattern of family resource allocation among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender in favor of male students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Parents should be orientated on the need to share family resources equally between male and female children.
2. There should be awareness campaign on the importance of women in the society and the need to encourage the development of female children.

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