

IMPACT OF WOMEN EDUCATION ON HEALTH AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE IN OBIO-AKPOR L.G.A OF RIVERS STATE.

Wike, Ruth Ejuwa, Ph.D and Egwurugwu, Doris Chikaodi
Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oruworokwu, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Email: ruth.wike@ust.edu.ng, dorisegwurugwu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of women education on health and academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The study which adopted descriptive survey design was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The population consisted of 1, 816 teachers in the 36 public primary schools in Obio/Akpor L.G.A. A sample of 363 teachers representing 20% of the population was selected via stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire entitled: "Impact of Women Education on Health and Academic Development of Children of Primary School Age Questionnaire (IWEHADCPA)" developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument which had 17 items was well validated and tested for reliability which yielded 0.84 through Cronbach Alpha Method. Mean, standard deviation, mean set and rank order were used to analyze the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results indicated that the health development impacts of women education on children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA include among others ensuring that children are adequately immunized and inculcating personal hygiene practices in their children. While the academic development impacts of women education on children of primary school age in the study area include assisting the children in doing their school home works, providing necessary school materials and ensuring that their children are regular and punctual at school. Based on the findings conclusion was drawn and the following recommendations were made: more efforts should be made by parents, community leaders, government and stakeholders in education to encourage women education; and educated mothers should invest more time and resources on the health and academic development of their children.

Keywords: Women Education, Health Development, Academic Development, Children and Primary School.

INTRODUCTION

Women are very important people in every society, they play key roles in child bearing, nurturing and development. We can not talk about family, community or national development without mentioning the women. They contribute enormously through their services and participation in socio-economic, political, infrastructural, educational and health advancement of our societies. The level of exposure, empowerment and education acquired by women help them to perform their duties effectively and contribute their quota in various developmental activities. For women in Nigeria, education is a privilege because not all of them have access to it. Some people in Nigeria see education as a commodity and there are many children currently out of school. According to Okeke (2019), it is estimated that about 30% of girls aged 9-12 years in Nigeria have never been to school. The children who are in school are likely to be male. Some families have faced violence for sending their daughters to school.

In the past, Nigerian families did not value female children. They considered male children to be superior to female children. Hence, the male children enjoyed a lot of privileges which the female children were not allowed to have. According to Abokwara- Attari (2022), female children were discriminated against in various ways which included female infanticides, denying them access

to good education, good nutrition and good health care amongst others. Their education was of no concern to their families as they were married off sooner or later.

In some quarters, it is believed that sending female children to school will expose them to modernity and loosening morals. This will make it difficult to control them. Some even doubt the intent of western education while others held strongly to their socio-cultural beliefs that the place of a woman is in her husband's home or better still in the kitchen. There were also those who claimed that female children often benefit less economically from education investments, hence there is no need for such waste of resources. With time, as literacy rate gradually increases due to constitutional provisions of equal right of access to education irrespective of sex, and the various national and international women conventions, the narrative began to change and women education began to attract more attention in our society.

Women education according to Somani (2017) is primarily the kind of education that is aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of women. It helps them to take advantage of opportunities that can potentially be of relevance to their families and the society. Women education according to Adamu (1996) improves their self-respect and dignity. It encompasses general education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional as well as health education for girls and women. The education of women according to George (2008) is a development priority due to the dynamic potentials of educated women. To be educated implies to be impacted with knowledge and to become empowered. Women education is geared towards making women to become economically independent and self-reliant. Women as mothers are educators within their families because what they learn, they pass onto their children and their future generations.

The society is gradually appreciating the benefits of women education because of the numerous impact it has on our families, communities and the entire society. It is on this premise that the researcher was motivated to investigate the impact of women education on health and academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A, of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Women education has become a popular issue all over the world. Globally, conferences are held and agreements are reached to consolidate and improve on the gains that have been made in the struggle over the years. World bodies like United Nations Organisations (UNO) and United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have championed the campaigns to eliminate illiteracy and discrimination against women education. In addition to their efforts several international women organisations and non-governmental organization (NGO's) have come up to add their voice to the struggle for women education.

Moreover, observations have shown that most educated women are doing very well irrespective of their fields of study and they contribute immensely to various forms of community and national developments. It has been accepted by many scholars that improving the education of women significantly improves their health, economic, academic and social prospects as well as that of their family members. What is not clear is how far we have succeeded in this social emancipation of women and the impact of women education on health and academic development of their children. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the impact of women education on health and academic development of children primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives

This study aimed at investigating the impact of women education on health and academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the following objectives guided the study which sought to:

1. determine the impact of women education on the health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.

2. ascertain the impact of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the impacts of women education on the health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State?
2. What are the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the health development of children of primary age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.
- HO₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature Review

This study is anchored on human capital theory which was propounded by Scbhultz in 1971. According to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997), human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and very important in improving the productive capacity of the members of a given society, the human capital theorists argue that an educated and healthy population is a productive population. Human capital theory emphasizes on how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings. The essence of educating human beings and also ensuring that they are healthy is to increase their productive ability.

Someone can only be productive when he is healthy and engage in a meaningful activity. Impacting on health and academic development of people is part of human capital development efforts. By ensuring that people are healthy and are provided with the right knowledge and skills through education will improve their productive capacity. Moreover, it is only a healthy child that can pay attention and benefit from school programmes. Good health will improve academic development of pupils. All efforts made by parents, organisations and government in order to enhance the health and educational development of students is seen as a worthwhile investment or effort in human capital development, which the proponents of human capital theory considered as equally or even more important than various forms of physical capital. The impact of women education on health and academic development of students will enhance human capital development, productivity and economic growth of the nation.

Conceptual Literature Review

Providing sound education for women has increasingly impacted into their health, that of their children and their reproductive health in particular. Education helps women to understand how they can combine foodstuffs to meet the nutritional needs of their family members for healthy living. So many health challenges that people suffer such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, respiratory infections, sickle cell anaemia, measles, gastrointestinal infections etc could be prevented through socio-economic progress that in turn affects nutrition, housing, hygiene and education. women education improves their personal and environmental hygiene practices. An educated women is more likely to

keep herself, her children and her environment neater than an uneducated woman (Koch; Thorp and Bravo, 2012).

Women education has led to greater health status of many educated women and their family members. With exposure from education women pay adequate attention to good health practices. They seek health information from accredited health institutions and well trained health personnels. According to McAlister and Baskett (2006) educated women take good care of their children by providing adequate nutrition, good drinking water, good medication, good shelter, better clothing, better hygiene practices, adopt better reproductive health practices than uneducated women. These qualities are passed into their children who observe and learn from their parents. Education promotes efficient utilization of health facilities among women. It gives them the confidence and boldness to ask questions about their health issues. According to Stover and Ross (2010) children whose parents are educated are more likely to seek for medical attention whenever they are sick because it is a routine they have learnt from their parents.

Women education has led to improved family planning among educated women who often have less number of children than uneducated women. According to Glasier, Gulmezogblo and Schmid (2006) educated women adopt better reproductive health practices. This implies that they are able to have a satisfactory and safe sex life, and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how to do so. No wonder educated women are more likely to provide sex education to their children in order to protect them against sexual abuse. Women education contributes greatly to sustainable development.

It has been observed by scholars like Kateja (2007); Shetly and Shraddha (2014) that children of educated women experience significantly lower rates of mortality and risk of malnutrition than children whose mothers are not educated. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between mortality rates, malnutrition and women education. An educated woman will ensure that her children eats before going to school. She ensures that her child is in good health before leaving the house for school. She ensures that the school has adequate information about the child's health status. She equally ensures that the child judiciously takes her drugs according to the doctors prescription whenever the child is sick. These her efforts contribute in no small measure to the health development of the child.

Maternal education is the corner stone in development of modern society. Mothers according to Saima, Tahir and Quarat-ul-an (2011) are the principal providers of primary care that their children need during the first six years of their life. The type of care they provide depends on their level of education, environment and awareness. Maternal literacy plays a significant role in child growth and cognitive development. There is a positive association between higher level of education of mothers and lesser incidence of illness, better immunization status, healthier nutritional position and improved scores of cognitive tests.

There are several pathways in which maternal education positively affect child health. According to Lung Shun, Chian, & Lin (2009) educated mothers are more active in implementing good health practices, and have greater access to information. They have greater voice in family health decisions. When the mother is literate, real benefits flow to children in terms of reduced risk, the same benefits, however, do not flow when the father, but not the mother is literate. Improvement in maternal education is directly proportional to better rate of vaccination, personal hygiene, physical and mental health of children and other family members (Chen and Lin, 2009). Educated mothers ensure that their children are neatly dressed more than uneducated mothers.

Educationally, women education has impacted so much in our families. It has changed the orientation of many women about life, enhancing their aspirations for themselves and their children. As mothers bestowed with the responsibility of rearing children with the values and knowledge that will help them to grow up as responsible people and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development of the society, mothers as first teachers to their children should be adequately prepared with quality education to enable them adequately serve as role models and nation builders. Educated mothers encourage their children educationally by ensuring that most of the school

materials needed by their children are provided for them. They help their children at home to do their home works. Some encourage their children academically by bringing a house lesson teacher to assist them overcome their academic challenges.

It is natural for every ideal woman to have high aspirations for her children. Where she could not reach in life, her children should be able to break such limitation and reach there. Educated mothers are more likely to pay more attention to the process their children go through at school than the product. They spend time to check their exercise books and note books to determine whether they actively participate in class activities. According to Lahey (n.d) educated mothers ensure that their children adopt healthy lifestyles such as taking their bath immediately they return from school, eat, observe their siesta and go through their school work during their study time. Such mothers equally make out time to see their child's teacher to obtain first hand information about the progress of the child and the challenges facing the child at school.

In this era where reading culture is depreciating among students, educated mothers encourage their children to read by buying them school recommended textbooks and story books (Osundare, 2009). Some buy visual materials and ICT components that will enhance learning and academic activities among their children. They equally monitor the type of friends that their children associate with. All these efforts encourages the child's academic development.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of all the one thousand, eight hundred and sixteen (1, 816) male and female primary school teachers in the thirty-six(36) public primary schools in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State. Source: Zonal Education Authority, Obio/Akpor L.G.A (2021 Report). A sample of three hundred and sixty- three (363) teachers, (148 male and 215 female) representing 20% of the population was drawn through stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self developed questionnaire entitled; "Impact of Women Education on Health and Academic Development of Children of Primary School Age Questionnaire (IWEHADCPAQ)". The instrument which had 17 items structured with four point response options of strongly agree (SA = 4 points), agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points), and strongly disagree (SD = 1 Point) was properly validated and a reliability index of 0.84 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha method. Mean, standard deviation, mean set and rank order were used to analyze the research questions, while z- test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: What are the impacts of women education on the health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.

Table One: Mean scores, standard deviation, mean set and rank order of the responses of male and female teachers on the impact of women education on the health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State.

| S/N | Health Impacts of Women Education on Children Primary School Age. | Males Teachers N = 142 | | Female Teachers N= 208 | | Mean Set | Rank Order | Decision |
|-----|--|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | | | |
| 1. | Educated women ensure that children are adequately going to school. | 3.08 | 0.69 | 3.24 | 0.66 | 3.16 | 8 th | Agree |
| 2. | Educated mothers ensure that their children are adequately immunized against various diseases. | 3.42 | 0.59 | 3.46 | 0.56 | 3.44 | 1 st | Agree |
| 3. | Educated mothers try their best in combining foodstuffs and preparing them adequately to meet their childrens nutritional needs. | 3.36 | 0.63 | 3.44 | 0.57 | 3.40 | 3 rd | Agree |
| 4. | Educated mothers often take their children to authorized medical facilities/personnel whenever they are sick. | 3.32 | 0.64 | 3.26 | 0.64 | 3.29 | 7 th | Agree |
| 5. | Educated women encourage their children to report to their class teacher or school nurse how they are feeling in their body when they are sick. | 3.28 | 0.68 | 3.32 | 0.62 | 3.30 | 6 th | Agree |
| 6. | Educated mothers discourage their children from sharing their personal belongings such as cups, spoons, napkins, handkerchief etc with other children. | 3.38 | 0.62 | 3.34 | 0.61 | 3.36 | 4 th | Agree |
| 7. | Educated mother's discourage their children from going to the sick- bay in their school whenever they are sick. | 2.24 | 0.72 | 2.18 | 0.69 | 2.21 | 9 th | Disagree |
| 8. | Educated women inculcate the practice of personal hygiene in their children such as wearing of neat cloths/ school uniforms, cutting their over grown nails, hair etc. | 3.30 | 0.66 | 3.38 | 0.60 | 3.34 | 5 th | Agree |
| 9. | Educated mothers report the health status of their children to the school authorities. | 3.40 | 0.60 | 3.42 | 0.58 | 3.41 | 2 nd | Agree |
| | Aggregate mean and standard deviation. | 3.20 | 0.65 | 3.23 | 0.61 | | | |

Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 1 shows that all the items had mean scores that were greater than 2.50 except item number 7. All the items were accepted as the health development impacts of women education on children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The items in the rank order of 1st to 9th indicated that item number 2 with a mean set score of 3.44 ranked first in the rank order, followed by item number 9 and number 3 that ranked 2nd and 3rd positions respectively. The aggregate mean score of 3.20 for male teachers and 3.23 for female teachers which are above the criterion mean and closely related is an indication that both respondents did not differ in their opinion on the health impacts of women education on children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

Therefore, the health development impacts of women education on children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA include: ensuring that children are adequately immunized against various diseases; reporting the health status of children to the school authorities; combining different foodstuffs and preparing them adequately to meet children's nutritional needs; discouraging children from sharing their personal belongings with others; inculcating personal hygiene practices in their children; encouraging their children to report any symptom of ill health to

their teacher or the school nurse; taking the children to authorized medical facilities/personnel whenever they are sick; and ensuring that children are adequately fed in the morning before they leave for school.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

Table 2: Mean scores, standard deviation, mean set and rank order of the responses of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

| S/N | Impacts of women education on academic development of children of primary school age. | Males Teachers N = 142 | | Female Teachers N= 208 | | Mean Set | Rank Order | Decision |
|-----|--|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | | | |
| 1. | Educated women assist their children in doing their school home work. | 3.38 | 0.64 | 3.40 | 0.63 | 3.39 | 2 nd | Agree |
| 2. | They provide the necessary school materials for their children | 3.42 | 0.62 | 3.38 | 0.65 | 3.40 | 1 st | Agree |
| 3. | They visit their children's school from time to time, to discuss the academic progress of their children. | 3.24 | 0.70 | 3.32 | 0.66 | 3.28 | 4 th | Agree |
| 4. | Some educated mothers sometimes hire house lesson teacher(s) to assist their children overcome some of their academic challenges | 3.20 | 0.72 | 3.28 | 0.68 | 3.24 | 6 th | Agree |
| 5. | They pay attention to the spelling and pronunciation mistakes of their children and correct them. | 3.26 | 0.68 | 3.24 | 0.69 | 3.25 | 5 th | Agree |
| 6. | They ensure that their children are punctual and regular at school. | 3.32 | 0.65 | 3.34 | 0.64 | 3.33 | 3 rd | Agree |
| 7. | Educated mothers motivate their children to learn by taking them out sometimes to historical/educationally relevant places | 3.28 | 0.67 | 3.16 | 0.70 | 3.22 | 7 th | Agree |
| 8. | They discourage their children from associating with brilliant pupils. | 2.04 | 0.73 | 1.82 | 0.74 | 1.93 | 8 th | Disagree |
| | Aggregate mean and standard deviation. | 3.14 | 0.68 | 3.12 | 0.67 | | | |

Data on table 2 indicate that all the items had mean scores that were greater than 2.50 except item number 8. All the items were accepted as the impacts of women education on academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The items in the rank order of 1st to 8th revealed that item number 2 with a mean set score of 3.40 ranked 1st in the rank order, while items number 1 and 6 with mean set scores of 3.39 and 3.33 ranked 2nd and 3rd positions respectively, the aggregate mean of 3.14 and 3.12 for male and female teachers indicated that the respondents unanimously agreed on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

Therefore, the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in the study area include: providing the necessary school materials for their children; assisting their children in doing their school home works; ensuring that their children are punctual and regular at school; visiting their children's school to discuss their academic progress; paying attention and correcting spelling and pronunciation errors made by their children. Hiring house lesson teachers atimes to enable their children overcome their academic challenges; and motivating their children to learn more by taking them out to visit historical/educationally relevant places.

Test of Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test of difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | SD | Df | z-cal. | z-crit. | Level of sign. | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Male teachers | 142 | 3.20 | .65 | | | | | Ho ₁ not |
| Female teachers | 208 | 3.23 | .61 | 348 | 0.435 | ± 1.960 | 0.05 | significant |

Table 3 shows a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor L.G.A of Rivers State. The z-test calculated which was used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.435 while the critical z-value was ± 1.960 at 348 degree of freedom using 0.05 level of significance. The calculated z-value was less than the z-critical value. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on health development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA was retained.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

Table 4: z- test of difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | SD | Df | z-cal. | z-crit. | Level of sign. | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|--------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Male teachers | 142 | 3.14 | .68 | | | | | Ho ₂ not |
| Female teachers | 208 | 3.12 | .67 | 348 | 0.275 | ± 1.960 | 0.05 | significant |

Table 4 reveals a summary of mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State. The z-test calculated which was used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.275 while the critical z- value was ± 1.960 at 348 degree of freedom using 0.05 level of significance. The calculated z- value was less than the z-critical value. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the impacts of women education on the academic development of children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State was retained.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that the health impacts of women education on children of primary school age in Obio/Akpor LGA include: ensuring adequate immunization of children; reporting health status of children to school authorities; combining foodstuffs and preparing them adequately to meet nutritional needs of their children; discouraging children from sharing their personal belongings with others; inculcating the habit of personal hygiene practice in their children;

encouraging children to report any ill health symptom to their teacher or school nurse; taking their children to authorized medical facility/ personnel whenever they are sick; and ensuring that children are adequately fed in the morning before they leave for school. These findings are in agreement with Mc Alister and Baskett (2006); and Koch, Thorp and Bravo (2012). Women are very passionate about the welfare of their children especially when they are educated. The knowledge and skills they acquired through education helps them to take good care of their children and provide solid foundation to them for proper growth and development. Education helps women to understand that most of the sickness suffered by people are preventable through good health habits and nutrition, as well as proper immunization against some of the infections suffered by children at infant stages of their life.

With this background most educated women ensure that their children are adequately immunized against various diseases in order to reduce ill health challenges. They ensure that personal and environmental hygiene practices are adequately adopted to reduce the spread of germs and other agents responsible for the spread of diseases. Mothers with good level of education understand the link between adequate nutrition and good health. They do their best to combine various foodstuffs to meet the nutritional needs of their children for proper growth and health development (Shetty and Shraddha, 2014) and (Kateja, 2007).

Educated mothers often pay more attention to their children's health more than uneducated ones. They are more likely to take their children to authorized hospitals and doctors whenever they are sick. They equally report the health status of their children to their children's school authorities. They encourage their children to lay complains about their feelings to their class teachers or school health officer whenever they observe some ill health symptoms in the school (Stover and Ross, 2010). All these efforts significantly improves good health development among children. Women education results to the production of educated mothers who will not only value their health but that of their children also.

The study equally revealed the academic impacts of women education on children of primary school age to include: providing necessary school materials; assisting children to do their school home works; ensuring that their children are punctual and regular at school; discussing academic progress of their children with their teachers; paying attention and correcting wrong spellings and pronunciations; hiring lesson teachers where necessary; and taking children to places of historical/educational relevance. It has been widely acknowledged that mothers are the first teachers to their children. They start early to inculcate some values and norms in them even before they are enrolled in school. Every rational woman wants to answer the mother of a great son or a great daughter. They put in their best to place them on the path of greatness. They provide most of the school materials needed by their children as well as pay all the recommended fees. Educated mothers assist their children at home to do their school home works and when this task is becoming overwhelming they hire house lesson teachers, just to ensure that their children improve in their academic performance.

Women education has raised mothers who pay so much attention to the academic performance of their children. They listen to them and correct their pronunciation mistakes. They go through their books and correct their spelling errors. Sometimes when these mothers are dissatisfied with the performance of their children at school, they will schedule a visit to see their class teachers for one on one discussion of school challenges affecting their children. This meeting will help them to adopt some strategies that could enhance the academic performance of the pupils. They indulge in all these activities because they want to produce children who are educated and better equipped for successful living (Iruloh, 2015).

Women hold very high aspirations for their children. Educated mothers wouldn't want anything that will affect their children's education. Some of them sometimes starve themselves of food and other valuable things to ensure that their children go to school. Some in very critical conditions sell their properties or jewelries to pay school fees for their children. In order to motivate their children to study very hard, some of them buy gifts for their children or pledge to them what

they will give to them if they get certain positions in class. Women education has made tremendous impact on academic development of children of primary school age.

CONCLUSION

Education is an agent of change in the status of women and in playing an intervention role in their empowerment. Women education exposes them to the value of education and assists them to support their children to pursue it, ensuring that no one is left behind. It therefore goes a long way in enhancing the overall development of the society. Women education helps them to take good care of their children. It has improved the health status of their children by adopting good hygiene practices, providing adequate nutrition and medication. It has enable most women to assist their children in their academic activities which has resulted to academic improvement of so many children. Hence, women education is a necessary parameter for adequate health and academic development of primary school pupils in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. More efforts should be made by, parents, community leaders, government and stakeholders in education to encourage women education in Obio/Akpor LGA of Rivers State.
2. Educated mothers should invest more time and resources on the future of their children especially in their health and academic development because these two factors at length will shape how far they can go in life.

REFERENCES

- Abokwara- Attari, D. O. (2022). *Girl-child education in Nigeria and India: Challenges and prospects*. In Y M. Abdulrahuman, R. O. Anyaogu, N. J. Izuagba & R. O. Osim (Eds). *International and Comparative Education: Cross-cultural approach* (pp. 267-275). Celwil Publishers.
- Adamu, H. (1996). Women education: Meaning and importance. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 3(2), 79-91.
- Chen, Y., & Lin, H. (2009). Mother's education and child health: Is there a nurturing effect? *Journal of Health Economics*, 28(2), 413-426.
- George, T. O. (2008). *Women and adult education in Nigeria: A panacea for sustainable development*. 2nd National Conference Proceedings, Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago- Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.
- Glasier, A., Gulmezoglu, A. M., & Schmid, G. P. (2006). Sexual and reproductive health: A matter of life and death. *LANCET*, 3(9547); 1595-1607.
- Iruloh, B. N. (2015). Enhancing women's level of educational aspiration: Relevance of Counselling. *Trends in Educational Studies*, 8(2), 78-89.
- Kateja, A. (2007). Role of female literacy in maternal and infant mortality decline. *Social Change*, 37(2), 29-39.
- Koch, E., Thorp, J. & Bravo, M. (2012). Women's education level, maternal health facilities, abortion legislation and maternal deaths: A natural experiment in Chile from 1957 to 2007, *PLOS ONE*, 7(5), 1-15.

- Lahey, J. (n.d). How to help your children succeed at school. Retrieved from: www.nytimes.com.
- Lung, F. W. Shu, B.C., Chiang, T. L; & Lin, S. J. (2009). Parental mental health, education, age at child birth and child development from six to eighteen months. *Acta Paediatric*, 98(5), 834-841.
- Mc Alister, C. & Baskett, T. (2006). Female education and maternal mortality: A worldwide survey. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, 28(1), 983-990.
- Okeke, E. C. (2019). *Education and society: Overcoming the gender divide in the Nigerian setting*. (157th Inaugural Lecture series), University of Port Harcourt. 16th May.
- Osundare, N. (2009). "Education and sustainable development." *The News*, March 05, 2009.
- Psacharopoulos, G. & Woodhall, M. (1997). *Education for development: An analysis of investment choices*. Oxford University Press.
- Saima, A., Tahir, C. & Quart- ul-ain, N. (2011). Effect of maternal literacy on child health: Myth or reality. *Ann. Pak. Inst. Med. Sci*, 7(2), 100-109.
- Shetty, A. & Shraddha, S. (2014). Impact of female literacy on infant mortality rate in Indian States. *Current Pediatrics Research*. 18(1), 49-56.
- Somani, T. (2017). Importance of educating girls for the overall development of the society: A global perspective. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 7(1), 11-19.
- Stover, J. & Ross, J. (2010). How increased contraceptive use has reduced maternal mortality. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 14(5), 687-695.