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The Educational Challenges Faced by Muslim - Girl Child (From the Zongo) on Academic Performance: Selected Senior High Schools in Sekyere Central District in Focus

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Abstract:

This study is focused on Muslim girls in the Zongo community education in the Senior High School. Two schools: namely Ghana Muslim Mission S.H.S and Nsutaman Catholic S.H.S were selected. The population was all female Muslim girl child, teachers, parents/guardians and opinion leaders. The target population was 260 and 50% of which is 130 accessible population were used. Random sampling was used to select 100 students who were Muslims from Zongo community, and purposive sampling for 20 parents and opinion leaders and 10 teachers (Muslims and non-Muslims) to avoid bias and to arrive at true findings. The data collected were analyzed using various descriptive and inferential analyses with the aid of Statistical package for social science (SPSS). The study revealed most parents perceived that no matter how the level of their daughter's education, she will end up being married and be a house wife. Muslim girl child from the Zongo community education in the senior high school academic performance was influenced by challenges like poverty, large family size, gender norms, culture/customs, religious issues, and early or betrothal marriage. Though there are considerable existence of programs and interventions by the Ghana Education Service, the District Assembly and NGOs in diverse ways are trying to promote girl child education in the district but still there is the need for special attention to be given to the Muslim girl child from the Zongo communities in the district to foster development within the district. In this regard, the study made number of recommendations towards the improvement of Muslim girls from the Zongos education in the senior high school level education and awareness creation on the need for assistance and support for such students, gender equality, more access to boarding house facility, free meals at school for day students, controlling family size by parents, avoiding early/betrothal marriage among the students to prevent teenage pregnancy, NGOs assistance and provision of counseling/orientation, pre senior high and vacation classes will help them a lot to improve their academic performances. The Muslim girls from the Zongo should embrace intervention programs that support them and their parents and must also develop positive attitudes toward their daughters' education to motivate them.

Keywords: Girl-Child education, academic performance, Zongo community, culture and gender

1. Introduction

Education is the right of every human being, which includes females at everywhere and a key for life transformation and development of the society since females outnumber the males in the world. Without education these innocent girls are denied the opportunity to develop their full potential. It is very sad that there are few programs and support that exist to support and aid girl child education in the Zongos. It is globally known that education provides knowledge which has the potentials for empowering, social development and better life standard.

Researchers such as Allen et al. (2007), Bloom et al. (2006) and von Grief (2007) have explicitly noted that education has remained the main driven force in the development and progress of societies and countries. As noted by Jekayinfa (2009), the educational system of any society is an elaborate social mechanism plan, to harness the individual certain skills and attitudes that are noted to be helpful and desirable in the society. Regarding educational importance, the United Nations General Assembly (2015) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which state that everybody has educational rights which should be free at least in elementary and primary stages. Similarly, most states in this world including Ghana prioritizes the right of education of her citizens, regardless of gender, tribe, religion, physical disability or whatsoever.

According to the UNESCO (2005), there has been an increase in school enrollment in Sub-Saharan Africa with increasing national and international commitment and support to education over the past few years. Issues relating to education and its gender disparities in enrolment at schools are constantly being tackled. For instance, the World Bank works with other developmental organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO and DANIDA to identify and assess interventions

that can lead to the progress and success of girls' education and also provide resources for implementing such initiatives (Auma, 2014).

In Ghana, successive governments have all based their educational policies trying to provide accessible and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. Female education has been one of the top most issues among gender studies for a significant amount of period because of disparities which is evident in the ratio of males and females in basic and secondary school levels. In this regard governments in Ghana design policies that will enable or motivate people to attend school regardless of gender or religion. It is not surprising therefore that school enrollment has improved over the year's even people living in areas like Zongo communities which is usually slums that develop near major urban areas of which most Muslim girls stay or live.

According to the Ministry of Zongo and inner city development (2018), there has been a tremendous improvement in the enrolment of the people residing in Zongo communities especially girls in schools due to the Free Senior High School education policy. Historically, the term 'Zongo' was used to refer to the arriving point 'travelers camp' of most Hausa and Muslim traders from other West African Muslim countries (Emily, 2013) it means 'travelers camp' or stop over in Hausa. It was used to define the area which Muslims live by the British Colonial Officers. Traditional inhibitors of the settlement were Muslims migrating from the north to the south territories for trading purpose and or for hired fighters (Enid, 2007). Today Zongos have spread a vast network settlement and has become multi culture community and there is at least one Zongo in every urban center in Ghana. The current Zongo states are faced with a lot of shortfalls and challenges such as illiteracy, poverty and a high level of social and economic vulnerability, the peculiar characteristics of a Zongo community are slum-like conditions with poor infrastructure and sanitation. Residents in Zongo communities are typically poor or low-income earners.

Although there has been a general improvement in enrolment, UNESCO (2010) posts that the increased in enrollment does not, however, mean improvement in the academic performance of the learners particularly in deprived communities. Academic performance at the Senior High School is challenged with many factors which include admission points, basic school background, socio-economic status, gender and culture of the people. According to Graetz, (2005), an individual educational success relies very much on socio-economic status of the parents. Considine and Zappala (2002) elaborate further that family where the parents or guardian are advance socially, educationally and have financial muscles economically facilitate a high level of achievement in their wards. The academic performance of Muslim girls from Zongo communities in senior high schools needs to be addressed following the sensitive and peculiar characteristics of the issue. For instance, coming from Zongo communities raises concerns about the socio-economic and basic school backgrounds considering the low standards of living in Zongo communities. Limited empirical research has been done in Ghana to explore the academic success in second cycle education (SHS) of these girls. The study is therefore conducted with the aim of generating useful information with regards to the academic success of the Muslim girls in secondary education.

1.1. Review of Related Literature

According to Howard (2006), Gender is a social definition of women and men. It is not similar as sex biologically. Determination relies on conception of task, function and roles attributed to male and female in a society. Gender and sex should be distinguished more and clearly in educational research. Adama (2017) and UNICEF (2018) define gender equality as leveling the playing field for girls and boys by creating an avenue that allows every child to have an equal opportunity to develop their talent. It depicts that the interest, needs and priority of male and female are taken care of, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is a fair and sound means of behaving towards males and females so that both are treated equally without any discrimination

Ziggah and Afful. (2006), see education as the system of giving information to an inexperienced person to aid the person to progress physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually politically and economically.

The above definition prompts the need for individual to acquire the desired knowledge, skills and values known as cognitive, psychomotor and affective behavior to enable him/her function adequately and be a useful citizen. These are the merits or the focus of training individual. Education is the process which involves helping those who are taught to be aware of what is happening.

According to girl child unit of Ghana Education Service, girl child education is any formal education girl child goes through to enable her acquire knowledge, skills, good attitude and values. This enables them to exhibit their talent in the society. Farah. (2007) also explains it as education girls receive through learning to help them get equal opportunities as boys to enable them use what they have learnt to solve problems in the society, this can be formal or informal

Formal education is formally Organized and guided by a well-planned curriculum, it comes with an award of formal certificate or recognized credential upon completion by the institution or by the government. Teachers and facilitators are professionally trained to assist in teaching and learning process (Elaine Eaton, 2010). Formal education constitutes a process that enables one to acquire universal cognitive proficiency so that one will be able to construct his or her own ideas and thought critically.

Dr. E. Kwagyir-Aggrey (1875-1927) once said 'If you educate a man you educate one person but if you educate a woman you have educated a whole family'. This is what Mr. Ban Kim Moon a UN General Secretary (2014) had to say on girl child education when he read his first speech at the International day for the Girl Child, 'Investing in girls is a catalyst for changing the world. We must do our possible best to let girls be girls and not brides. Chill (2007) also explains awareness on the level of the discrimination. It is to this effort that has led the international community to make several

inputs to promote girl education in developing countries like Ghana. It is noted that there were gender biases against girls at all level of education as girls appear to have substantial education difficulties (UNICEF, 2010).

Ghana National education campaign coalition report, reveals that enrolment for girls continue to depreciate a bit from elementary up to tertiary level of education though there have been several local ,national and foreign interventions such as Education for all and Millennium Development (MGD). Kosner (2007), Moses (2004) and Millennium Development account third goal supports the promotion of equality and among gender and further advocate for empowering women. This crucial objective will be achieved only if the girl child gets access to good education

Dr. Raheaq Ahmed Abbasi Secretary-General Minhaj-Quran International (personal communication, 13th October, 2018) shares his opinion on Muslim girl child education. Muslims are commonly accused of gender bias among males and females in terms of opportunity for education and among other issues. Most Islamic states are labeled as a major source of this problem and the religion cited as stumbling block for women especially in Africa as there are many restrictions for females to acquire education to the highest levels .Over fifty percent of females in such situation are denied of the opportunity for such basic right. This weakens the economic, social and political advancement of such countries. Knowledge is one of the pillars of Islam and as such this tag on Muslim should be a concern

Kosner (2017) and Offorma (2009) also share their views on the issue of barriers of female Muslim that a hundred years ago education among females was a waste of time in the society. Their gender kept them home bound for cooking, scrubbing, child rearing and other house-hold chores. The society was patriarchal (Basanta, 2018).In this 21st century those barriers have been eliminated and opportunities for women are everywhere. According to Ban Ki Moon females encounter discrimination, violence abuse each day and empowering them is a moral imperative, an issue of fundamental human right, justice and equality necessary for achieving the Millennium Development goals. It again advances economic growth and helps for building peaceful societies (Jamaica observer October, 2012).

1.2. ConceptualFramework

It represents the researcher's synthesis of literature on how to explain a phenomenon. It maps out the actions required in the course of the study given his previous knowledge of the researcher's point of view and his observations on the subject of the research. 'Conceptual framework: a step-by-step guide on how to make one' (Regonal, 2005) It indicates presentation of particular research question that derives the investigation being reported base on the problem statement. The problem statement of the thesis presents the context and issues that caused the researcher to consider the study. It lies within much broader framework called the theoretical frame work. The conceptual-framework shows the researchers synthesis of the literature on how to explain the phenomena. It maps out the action required in the course of the study given his or her pre-knowledge of the other researchers point of view and his observation on the subject view of the researcher. In short it is the researcher understands of how particular variables in the study connect with each other. This indicates the variables required in the research investigation. It is the research map in carrying out the investigation.

Though a lot of research works have been done on girl child education, the researchers intended to do this research because this was among girl child student from Zongo only and also the geographical area

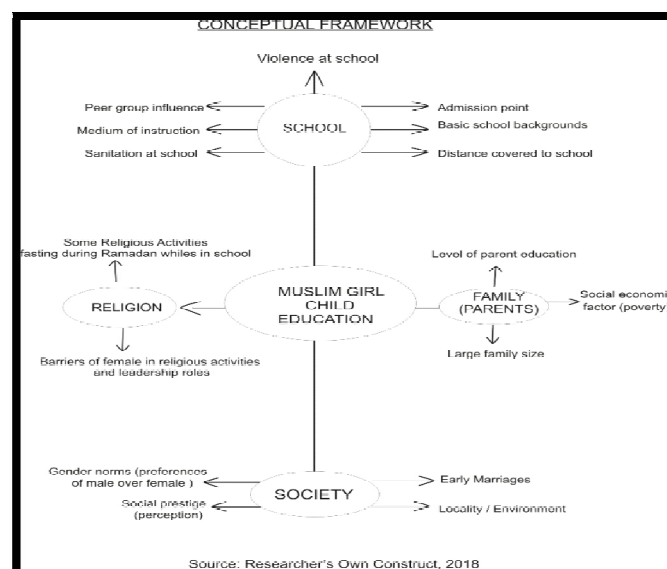


Figure 1

2. Methodology

The cross sectional approach was used. The study was driven by both qualitative and quantitative research approaches/design. This calls for a thorough investigation into the barriers of education of Muslim girl child and their influence on their academic performance in Sekyere Central district. Qualitative research since no numerical data were generated and used to measure the opinions of the respondents (Creswell, 2014)

The study used descriptive cross sectional research method also since the objective of the study was to describe, analyze and evaluate the factors that influence the academic performance of the Muslim girl student. The researchers also

used case study research method as well which involved the use of interview for teachers and (parent/guardians /opinion leaders), questionnaire and observation for students to collect qualitative data (Neale, Thapa and Boyee, 2007). Embarking on this research data from primary and secondary sources were collected. The secondary source included peer-reviewed or credible journals, articles and books on related topic of study; these published and unpublished reports to help the study. In all 130 sample size was used comprising 50 students by random sampling, 10 teachers (5 from each school) and 10 (parents/guardians and opinion leaders) by purposive sampling

2.1. A Questionnaire for Students

- Are you a Muslim student Yes / No
- Do you live or stay in the Zongo community Yes / No
- What set of Muslim denomination are you.....
- What tribe are you and which religion do you come from.....
- Which school did you complete Public / Private
- Name of the school
- What was your BECE aggregate
- Did you gain admission immediately after JHS Yes / No
- If no how many years did you stay at home before going to SHS.....
- How old were you before gaining admission to SHS.
- Did you have pre SHS classes before coming to SHS Yes / No
- Do you do vacation classes when school vacates Yes / No
- Who provide your educational and basic needs for you Guardian /parents /self

What is the highest education background of your parents?

Guardian Mother Father

- Primary
- JHS
- SHS
- Tertiary
- None
- What is the occupational status of your Guardian... Mother.....Father.....

16. Has your parent/guardian attended PTA meeting on your behalf before? Yes / No

17. How many siblings do you have Male..... / Females.....

18. Out of these how many attend/ attended school (males) / females).....

19. Who do you think your parents will pay for education, if they are to choose one?

Son / Daughter

20. How many meals do you take a day 1 / 2 / 3

ii. If A or B why.....

21. Are you married or betrothed/ engaged by somebody Yes / No

ii. If yes was it by a). Wish b). Force

22. Have you been harassed by any teacher or student in any of these form before

i) verbally yes/no ii) physically yes/no iii) Sexually yes/no

23. How safely do you feel at school?

a). At time feel unsafe b). Always feel unsafe c). Feel safe always

24. Do you do group discussions with your male counterpart at school. Yes / No

ii. If no Why.....

25. Do you go to school when you are on your menstrual cycle Yes / No

ii. If no why

26. How much distance do you cover before getting to school?

a). Below 0.5km b). 1 - 2km c). Above 2km

27. By what means do you get to school

a). Bus b). Motor c). Bicycle d). Foot

28. What are some of the challenges or problems that you face at home and school which hinders your academic performance

1..... 2.....

3..... 4.....

29. Choose six essential needs that if provided or available it will help you to improve your academic performance in order of importance from the list below

1..... 2.....

3..... 4.....

5..... 6.....

- A) Financial support, b) free meal c) safety d) transportation e) sanitation f) boarding facility g) Female Muslim teachers h) extra classes at home during vacation
 30 Do you enjoy any scholarship in school yes/no if yes from whom? Government/NGOs/other bodies
 31. Do you fast in Ramadan when yes/no if yes how do you cope with lesson during that period.....

2.2. Interview Guide for (Parents/ Guardian and Opinion Leaders)

- 1 What is your occupation?
- 2 Your highest education level / qualification?
- 3 How many wives do you have or does your husband have?
- 4 How many children do you have? a) Sons..... b) Daughters.....
- 5 Out of this how many attend/attended school? a) Sons b) daughters
- 6 What is your perception on your daughters' education on the following?
 - A) Socio-economic importance/development
 - B) Culture and customs
 - C) Gender equality and female empowerment
- 7 Who will you educate if you are to choose one a) daughter b) son.
 If b why.....
- 8 Have you ever attended PTA meetings on behalf your daughter at school before
- 9 Do you read or inquire about your daughters' terminal reports yes/no if no why?
- 10 Do you provide sanitary pads for your daughters' during their menstrual period yes/no if no why?
11. Has your daughter ever reported of any sort of harassment at school before yes/no if yes what was it and your reaction towards it?
- 12 Will you give your daughters hand in marriage while she is still at school? Yes /No
 If yes why?
- 13 What do you think are some of the challenges your daughter faces that affects her academic performance at school?
- 14 Any suggestions to the problem

2.2.1. Interview Guide for Teachers

- 1 Do you have some Muslim girl students in your class?
- 2 what is your opinion on the following concerning these students
 - A) Economic status/poverty
 - B) Culture and custom
 - C) Gender equality and Female empowerment
 - D) Parents and guardians perception on these students
3. Are these students punctual and regular at school yes/no. If no what are some of the reasons they give when they absent themselves from school
- 5 What do you think are some of the other problems these Muslim girls face at school that impede their academic performance? Any suggestions to the problem
- 6 Are there any government /NGOs and other entities interventions to aid these students **yes/no**. If yes how effective is it?
- 7 Has there been any report of early marriage/betrothed marriage/pregnancy among these students before in the school

3. Results and Discussion

One of the goals of the school is academic excellence and is mostly measured by examination.

While the situation confronting Muslim girls from Zongo communities attending senior high school are complex with many impeding factors to consider, the following are some of the major ones of which the research was conducted. These included the following;

3.1. Poverty

It was obvious that the most overriding hindrance to these girls success in academics and even access to education was poverty. About 95 % cited inadequate money for school supplies, vacation classes, practical, educational trip fees and etc. Further studies by WAJU in the district also revealed that these parents prefer their daughters to learn a trade or work in the farm or market to bring income .Due to poverty, about 70% of the day students said that they normally take two meals a day instead of three, an insufficient one in the mid of morning and afternoon called (brench) and a proper supper.



Figure 2: Some of the female Muslim students doing their practical's



Figure 3: Some of the Muslim female students from Zongo being sideline because of Their inability to buy their utensils (equipment) and to pay practical fees

3.2. Culture and Gender Norms

Cultural mindset and gender roles were some of the influential factors on female education especially among Muslims in the Zongos. The ideology towards females is changing though but still there are gender disparities among Ghanaian culture. Men or boys have a preference or entitlement and superiority, while women lack self-esteem that they can achieve much. This ignorance prevails in academic performance of females within this society. Again Females always performed more household chores than males and this made them tired, weak and sleepy in class. At times these girls are forced to stay home for their brothers to complete school before they can get the nod to go to SHS 50% said they stayed home for two years after J.H.S. before they continued to SHS

3.3. Early Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy

Most of the ethnic groups in the district allowed for early marriage of females which is called betrothed marriage at tender age. Though none of the students responded positively to early marriage but upon interview with school authorities and teachers revealed that about five of the past students were engaged and were married, and two of them even gave birth on the day they were writing their final exams, thus, WASSCE. Such acts put pressure and affect the students' academic performance as they have divided attention. Some of the teachers attested to the abysmal performance of the victims when the results were in.

3.4. Large Family Size

Islam allows men to marry up to four wives provided he can cater for all of them equally. Most male Muslims have taken this as an advantage without taking into consideration the clause that goes with it. During the one on one interview with parents revealed that 80% of (fathers) have more than one wife and average of 8 children comparing the ratio of those who attend or attended school, female obtained 60% while that of males is 70% of their number; even this has been an improvement due to the free S.H.S program. The large family size bring pressure and burden on both parents and their daughters as they find it difficult to provide the needs of the girls at school as there is preference for the male more than the female. As of now the females are also obliged to help at home by performing certain tasks such as taking care of the younger kids and so on

3.5. Harassment

Islam strictly vow against immoral act such as fornication. There are severe punishments enshrined in the Sharia law, such as death penalty etc. This keeps students away from immoral acts. 91% percent responded 'no' for sexual harassment. Nine percent who responded yes indicated that it was both from teachers and students who propose sexual affairs to them in return for aid such as money, gift, and favor for marks during examination.

S a f e t y	No of students	Percentage
F e e l s a f e	40	40%
S o m e t i m e s f e e l u n s a f e	35	35%
O f t e n f e e l u n s a f e	20	20%
N e v e r f e e l s a f e	5	5%

Table 1: Findings on How These Students Feel About Their Safety

3.6. Distance Covered to School / Means of Transportation

The researchers found out that the major means of getting to school by these girls was by foot since they could not afford bus fees. It was pathetic to see them sweating profusely after commuting from their nearby homes which is miles away from the school

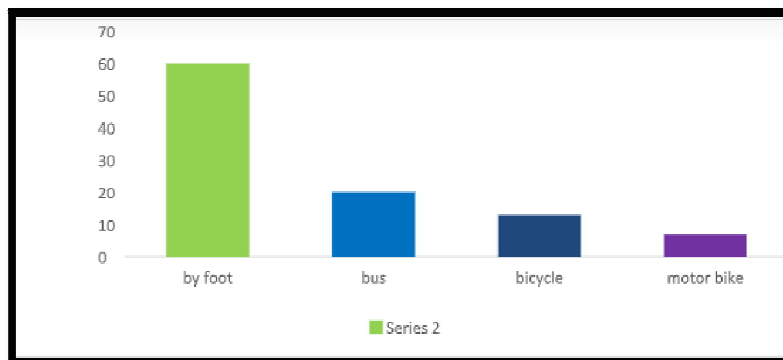


Figure 4: A Chart Showing Means of Transportation by the Students to School



Figure 5: Pictures Showing Means of Transportation of Students to and From School by Bus



Figure 6: By Motto



Figure 7: By Bicycle



Figure 8: By Foot (Walking)

3.7. Limited female Muslim teachers as role models

It was found out that there were virtually no female teachers in the district who were Muslims. In the two schools only one female Muslim teacher was found. She was a senior housemistress at the Muslim Mission School. Students expressed strong desire to have more female Muslim teachers i.e. from their own, as they can confidently confide in them and be as a role model to motivate them and also share their academic problem with them. It was noted that some female teachers who were not Muslim usually have some issues with their dressing and behavior at campus. This often brought about unhealthy relationship between them and the teachers which impede their academic performance. Religious code, ethics, dress code posed a problem on their sporting and entertainment activities 50% of respondents said they do not partake in sporting activities and entertainment because of it, but there is a saying that all work and no play just make Jack a dull boy. In order to do well in academics you need to combine cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. (Duah, 2018) personal communication with Mr. Umar Mudasiru headmaster of Ghana Muslim mission S.H.S' Though I like working with staff of different religious backgrounds to respect, knowing and getting along well with them for tolerance but it is unfortunate to have only one female Muslim teacher in a Muslim Mission school. I wish I have more female Muslim teachers in the school to do away some petty difference and friction to help in situations related to religion, culture and beliefs in the school'



Figure 9: The Only Female Muslim Teacher in Spectacles with Some Students in the School

3.8. Occupational Status and Educational Level of Parents

It was revealed that parents/guardian occupation also had some influence per student input. *Student A said that 'my mother is a nurse and she has challenged me to be a doctor so I need to learn hard to achieve that'.* Some parents encourage their wards to exceed the height they have attained, especially the educated. This motivates students and

also made them aware of the task ahead to take their studies seriously. 40% of the parents made it clear that life does not depend on schooling alone. These were some of the opinions of the parents interviewed. *'I did not attend school but I work so if my children do not attend school it is not a big deal I will teach them my trade. Parent B said 'I will never allow my daughter to waste time and years at school. She needs to marry and give birth to many children to honor me and make the family big and strong I need, many grandchildren wallaai'.* Some parents especially those with good jobs provided for their wards' needs at school and this curtailed the excuses for not coming to school. The questionnaire revealed that about 80 percent of the respondents received or read their own terminal reports at home, also about 55 percent of these students' parents have never attended Parent Teacher Association meeting before. Some of the reasons were money for transportation, time wasting and irrelevance of it to them.

Occupation of Parents	Percentage (%)	
Peasant farmers	6	0 %
Traders	2	0 %
Food sellers	1	0 %
Scrap dealers	5	%
Others	5	%

Table 2: Occupational Status of Parents

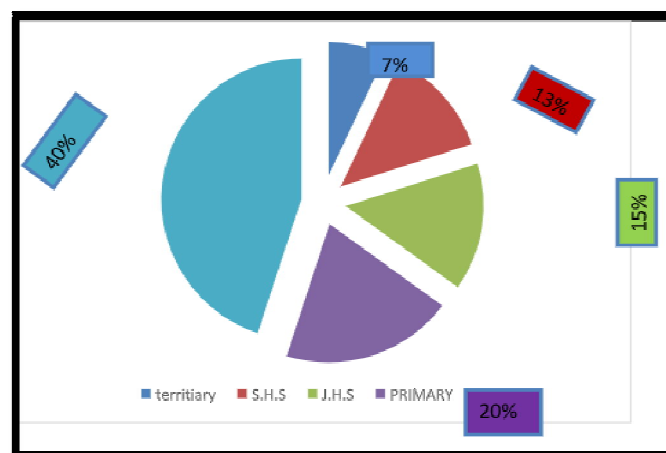


Figure 10: A Chart Showing the Educational Levels of Parents/Guardian

Variance in basic school and number of years spent at home before admission to SHS It was found out during the research based on the year that students were admitted to the senior high school, that the average entry age of these Muslims was 17 years instead of 14/15. This was as a result of these innocent Muslim girls from Zongo community had to stay at home for about one or two years to help their parents to gather resources or money before going to Senior High School. The researchers got to know that such students found it difficult in grasping the content at the beginning but may recover later from the teachers. Eighty five percent of the respondents said that they never had pre-senior high school classes before coming to SHS and 80% also did not have access to vacation classes due to lack of money, proximity issues and because of task or work that awaited them at home during vacation made it impossible.

3.9. Fasting

Respondents recounted the blessings they receive from ALLAH such as wisdom, knowledge, strength, health, favor, luck, prosperity and so on. About 96% of the respondents partake in fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. The rest who exempted themselves were as a result of genuine reasons such as sickness and other health related issues. Sixty percent admitted the fact that during that period which usually starts when they are in school weakens them and made them yawn and feel tired and sleepy during instructional hours in that period. About 20% of the respondents agreed that it had effect on their academics but were able to recover after it. Teachers also stated emphatically that the performances of such students normally drop during that period.

3.10. Sitting Arrangement during Classes and Prep Time

A little observation conducted in the classrooms by the researcher showed that female Muslim students do not mingle with the opposite sex in class and at prep. Respondent said it was 'haram' forbidden to do that as it is only your brother, father or husband who can touch you, in order to prevent this they sit at one end while the males also sit at another end. These denied students to do group discussions and share ideas with their male counterparts



Figure11: Sitting Arrangements of Students

3.11. Stigmatization of the Muslim Student in Non-Muslim School

Respondents from none Muslim senior high school complained about the issue of at times being stigmatized by the non-Muslim students and even teachers per their dressing and religious culture. They expressed their worry about their school time table not favoring them with concerns to their five daily prayers .This made them usually late or missed some instructional hours which lead to problems with their respective teachers .They explained that this lower their motivation and made them isolated and unhappy at school.

3.12. Perception of Parents about Their Daughter's Education

Ninety percent of the respondents admitted that when their parents are faced with only one choice of sending either their daughter or son to school, their parents will choose the male instead. Seventy percent of the parents through interview also admitted that, it is more profitable and reasonable to send their male child to school than the female since eventually the females will be married and will be taken away and given birth to other family i.e. patrilineal lineage inheritance .It was surprising that even some parents and guardians with good educational status shared the same view .For some the aim was to complete SHS in order to get a wealthy husband, since nowadays it is becoming a requirement for wealthy families .*Parent c' They turn to lose our rich culture and become disobedient to the customs and give birth to one or two when they further their education chایی Allah forbid I want plenty-plenty ground children oo'. Mr. Kamil PTA secretary of (GHAMMISHS) said most of these parents do not turn up during PTA meetings and other meetings about their daughters welfare.*

3.13. Government and NGOs Support

It was found out that though there some government and other NGOs support generally for female education but it was very limited or scares to get access to and there was no special attention for these underprivileged girls

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Education is the success for a nation building. For lack of knowledge my people perished. Empowering females through education from Zongo as pre-dominated by Muslims is an agenda which will help to develop the Zongo communities immensely. Girl child education present enormous avenue for wealth creation and reducing poverty among people from such background it is obvious that the quest for senior high school are being faced with a lot of problems coming from all angles such as poverty, culture and gender, discrimination and segregation, harassment and other issues which hamper the success of their academic performance at school. It is therefore a great concern and our responsibility as a nation to help curb all these setbacks that decline the academic and educational growth of such female Muslims from the Zongos. The recommendations made in this study should be taken into accounts by policy makers and other stakeholders in order to spearhead the success of these students in terms of education. It was recommended that there should be educational sensitization on the need of girl child education in mosque, market place and in the Zongo community .It should point out examples of women who have made it in life in the country, even in male dominated areas. Free education with learning materials and above all scholarship schemes to be instituted to motivate such students. The government, PTA's, NGO's and able bodies should do more and put on massive infrastructure such as dormitories to augment the pressure since the free SHS policy has tremendously increased enrollment to enable the schools to admit more boarding students. Knowing the background of such female students from a poor community (Zongo) priority can be given to them to be boarders during the school placement to let them have a more conducive environment and also free meals at school for day students. Parents need to know that it is their obligation to provide for their daughters' needs especially sanitary pads for them during menstruation. The government can also provide free health insurance schemes for such students so that their health records can be kept and appropriate attention given to them. There should be safer environment at school. Teachers and male students, who take advantage of the situation and abuse such students verbally, physically and sexually, should be given appropriate punishment. Religious segregations in schools should strongly be prohibited. More effort should be put in place to help sponsor more Muslim females into universities and Colleges of Education to fill the gap. Establishment of more Muslim mission schools by the Muslims with support from the government will also be great .There should be education oncontrolling large family size by parents and preventing early/ force marriage and teenage pregnancies among students. Provision of free orientation, guidance and counseling, pre senior high school and vacation classes should also be paramount. It will be better if students are made to postpone the Ramadan fasting when they are still in school and made to do it during vacation when they are at home.

5. Acknowledgement

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