

**AN EXPLORATION OF POVERTY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL
FACTORS ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO HIGHER
EDUCATION IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA**

By

BABATUNDE EMMANUEL DUROWAIYE

Supervisor: Professor Sultan Khan

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Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, Durban,
South Africa

School of Social Sciences

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DECLARATION

I, **Babatunde Emmanuel Durowaiye** declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed.....

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God almighty and my loved ones.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank God almighty for strength to move on in the pursuit of this programme. To God alone be all the glory.

I owe the deepest thanks and appreciation to my supervisor and mentor, Prof Sultan Khan, for his support, commitment and endless patience with me as I struggled through the writing of this thesis, and for his excellent advice and feedback on my submissions. I am a better scholar and writer for having had the privilege to be supervised by him. No word is enough to express my sincere appreciation. I will forever be grateful to you. Indeed, you are a mentor! Thank you Sir.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEA: Association for the Development of Education in Africa

ANCEFA: African Network Campaign on Education for All

COE: College of Education

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

FMOE: Federal Ministry of Education

HEI: Higher Educational Institutions

IDIs: Individual In-depth Interviews

JAMB: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

NAN: News Agencies of Nigeria

NBTE: National Board for Technical Education

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NUC: Nigeria Universities Commission

UBE: Universal Basic Education

UTME: University Tertiary Matriculation Examination

ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on research, which explores young people's access to higher education as shaped, by poverty and socio-cultural factors in Kogi state, north Central Nigeria. It is occasioned by the absence of young people's voices from existing literatures which examined their access to higher education in Africa, particularly in the Nigerian context. By considering young people's access to higher education beyond their rational choices, this study takes Bourdieu's theoretical arguments and Lewis' culture of poverty in explaining the influences on young people's access to higher education as shaped within their socio-cultural milieu and other relational condition such as poverty. Through an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data involving 300 participants: 120 respondents in the survey; 60 participants for the focus groups, i.e., six focus groups (10 in each session); and 120 in-depth interviews comprising 60 young females and 60 males, aged 18 to 28, the study illuminates the different social factors and contexts that were of significant influence on the young people's access to higher education.

Evidence from the findings in the study has suggested that young people are confronted with various contradictory norms and social constrains with respect to their gender, economic status and relational positions in gaining access to higher education. For instance, contrary to the social and religious norms within the local context of the young people that encourage them to attend formal education up to higher educational level, the existing gender norm limits female access to higher education. Apart from this, the young people were constrained in many ways that were often in conflict with other expectations widely held in their religious communities. The study concludes that socio-cultural factors played an essential role in young people's access to higher education while limited economic resources had a major impact on their educational pursuits.

Accordingly, the study identifies a need for sensitization and a reconstruction of dominant gender norms affecting female's access to higher education. It also recommends more research on young people's access to higher education through the voices of young people themselves and studies that may go beyond the problem-centred approach in attending to the contexts of the exact implication on access for young people's higher education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is generally conceived as a necessity of life (Mwenda and Mwenda, 2013). It has been empirically proven and universally acknowledged to play a crucial role in the continued survival, growth and development of a nation (Ahmed, 2015; Ogunniyi and Dosumu, 2014; African Higher Education Summit, 2015). Based on this global recognition of education as an essential social component, a considerable attention has been directed by various governments and international bodies towards the participation of individual's particularly young people who are indisputably the target and future of any nation.

In Africa, education has been recognized as an essential drive for effecting development in the continent in order to reduce or eliminate poverty (Asiyai, 2013). However, access to basic and secondary education appeared to have increased over the past decades (UNESCO, 2002, 2013). Studies have revealed that there has been little attention in improving access to school at higher institution levels (Frempong and Mensah, 2012). For instance, the Dakar summit on "Education for All" in 2000 was sponsor towards increasing enrollment in primary education as a leading instrument for economic growth, without recognition of the place of higher institution (Tilak, 2003). This probably may be as a result of earlier studies which found no positive relevance of higher education to economic growth or poverty reduction (Tilak, 2003) in Africa. However, as opposed to the early perception, recent empirical and non-empirical studies have persistently revealed that higher education has numerous economic benefits both in private and public domains (Bloom, Hartley and Rosovsky, 2006, Asiyai, 2013). Significantly, higher education serves as an instrumental force to achieving social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and political development of any nation (Republic of South Africa, 1997). For instance, a recent report asserts that Africa records the highest level of return to investments in higher education (State of Education in

Africa Report, 2015). It has further been argued that higher education holds the potential for promoting the less developed economies and attainment of equitable level of development for the marginalized and socially disadvantaged groups (State of Education in Africa Report, 2015). Olujuwon (2002:2) unfolds the National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria which articulates the specific goals for instituting higher education. Part of the goals of the NPE was that higher education would enhance both physical and intellectual skills that would enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of their society. It was also envisioned that higher education would assist individuals' capacity to contribute to national development through generation of high level manpower trainings that would inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society. Similarly, higher education is viewed as capable of assisting a country's economy by generating higher tax revenue, savings and investment, improved technology, nation's health as well as leading to a more entrepreneurial and civic society (Bloom et al, 2006).

As can be argued, one of the ways to achieving these developmental promises that higher education holds is through the empowerment of young people's capacities in terms of facilitating their access to higher institutions of learning in order to produce a set of educated and skillful workforce that would contribute positively to the development of their nations (World Bank, 2002; Boughey, 2011). In addition to globalization, there has been increasing demand for skilled workers that would accelerate development of a new culture of information technology and effective delivery strategy for their society to become part of the global village. A major problem nevertheless lies in the fact that this goal is yet to be achieved in most developing nations including the Sub-Saharan countries (Boughey, 2005).

Global report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013) directly addresses the extent of non-participation of young people in formal education. It was revealed that about 10.6% of the world's youth are non-literates while about 12.1% of youth in developing countries were recorded as illiterates. Overall, about 29.6% of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa were idle, resulting in over 225 million of them not in any form of education, employment or training (UNESCO, 2013). As at 2014, the number of non-educated youth in Sub-Saharan Africa was reported to have increased to 37% (African Union, 2014).

Essentially, research have further attested to the fact that a large number of youth in African settings still miss out on opportunities to acquire human capital development which symbolizes the necessary skills and gainful earnings that can be obtained through the attainment of higher educational qualification. For example, a majority (over 60%) of the African population are located in rural areas which are usually characterized by poverty and impoverished conditions (NPC, 2011; Durowaiye and Babatunde, 2015). Thus, many African rural young people are often subjected or oriented into income generating business/activities as children; a kind of practice that undermines the need for children's enrollment in formal education (Akin, 2013).

From a gender perspective, it is crucial to acknowledge that earlier education in Sub-Saharan Africa including Asia was available for men (Ogunniyi and Dosunmu, 2014). Women were from the onset placed at a disadvantaged or marginalized position due to their low access to formal education and consequently less privileged to take up formal employment in the public sector (Ogunniyi and Dosunmu, 2014). Owing to this established gender norm, the various international conventions that canvas for 'education for all' in limiting the gender gap in terms of negotiating access for women's participation in education have not yielded the expected results (Onochie, 2010; Temba, Warioba and Msabila, 2013). Studies have persistently revealed that many African countries have continued to lag behind in sustaining women's access to higher education and their retention in school (Aja-Okorie, 2015). For instance, in the Nigerian setting, women's access to higher education has been negatively affected by various discriminatory practices in the form of norms and traditional values that increased the number of women with incomplete schooling, high level absenteeism, early marriages or tendency for younger women being conditioned into coercive relationships with older men as a way of raising funds to educate their male siblings or fending for their family (Ogunniyi and Dosumu, 2014). These circumstances militate against women's access and completion of school, resulting in 60% and 40% literacy rates for men and women respectively. However, this is far worse off in the predominantly less-educated northern part of the country (Okpukpara and Chukwuone, 2005; Ogunniyi and Dosumu, 2014).

More importantly, analysis of differential rates of non-participation in formal education and increased rates of those dropping out of school pervades the literature of young people especially in the less developed and developing societies (Imam, 1989; UNESCO, 2002; Nwaobi, 2003; Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003; Tahir, 2005; Hunt, 2008; Ofoegbu, 2009; the National Literacy Survey 2010; UNESCO, 2011; UNICEF, 2012; Duze, 2012; Migosi et al, 2012; African Union, 2014). In Africa, particularly in the Nigerian context, much research into young people and educational attainments have taken a problem-centred approach with overwhelming focus on the number of young people dropping out of school, or never attended schools, or those engaging in one form of economic activity or the other (Ngwagwu, 1997; Tehobo, 2000; Evans, 2002; Egwunyenga and Onyeabo, 2004; Nakpodia, 2010; Olaniyan 2011; Abdulkarim and Ali, 2012; Dichaba, 2013; Aliyu, 2015).

Despite the overwhelming recognition and concerns often expressed on many aspects of young people's lives across different societies especially as it relates to their access to formal education, only a few studies have attended to the link between the multiple factors and the various contexts that influence young people's access to higher education. While there has been a lot of research into the prevalence of drop outs and non-enrolments of young people in school in African countries with case studies in Nigeria, few existing studies have focused on investigating the effects of poverty and culture on young people's educational attainment and the correlation between the two. Some of the studies merely attended to other important areas such as the determinant factors on young people's enrollment and dropping out of school and also on the psychological aspects which involved the views of parents, teachers and other stakeholders (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Worrel and Hale, 2001; Hunt 2008; Osakwe and Osagie, 2010; Mørcke, et al., 2012; Mhele and Ayiga, 2013; Eweniyi and Usman, 2013; Mucee et al., 2014; Rahbari, et al, 2014).

On one hand, the existing studies are helpful in drawing public health attention to the status of young people's participation in formal education and have also played a prominent role in response to problems surrounding young people's dropping out of school. These studies, on the other hand, are limited in the formation of knowledge, as they do not provide further explanation of the experiential accounts by young people on the social and cultural contexts that shaped their access to educational attainment.

Consequently, in spite of the various efforts and initiatives set out by government and international organizations in addressing problems of non-participation or drop-out rates of young people in formal education through policies and initiatives such as African Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA), Universal Basic Education programs (UBE), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and so forth, Nigeria is ranked among the top-ten countries of the world with the highest population of illiterate adults (African Union, 2014) and among the four countries with increased population of out of school young people (UNESCO, 2011; Premium Times, 2015).

Against the afore-mentioned background, this study presents a socially and culturally situated study of how young people's access to higher education can be constructed within their local context. By examining young people's access to higher education through the voices of young people themselves, this study also explores other relational positions such as the effect of poverty on young people's access to higher education in Kogi State of Nigeria as a case study.

Importantly from a sociological perspective, it has been argued that most social problems cannot be explained in terms of individual rationality but are profoundly a social phenomenon that takes place within social contexts (Aderinto, 2002). Hence, with the intent of providing an example of detailed research that attends to the various factors that facilitate or limit young people's access to higher education, this study seeks to provide answers to questions related to the different socio-cultural contexts that influenced young people's access to higher education. It further explores the various ways in which young people narrate their social and economic backgrounds and other relational positions that may influence their access to higher education.

An important aspect of this study is that, it makes its distinctiveness with a departure from those quantitative studies taking a problem-centred approach to a study that applies both statistical and qualitative methodologies to examine the various factors that influence young people's access to higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Globally, education is generally recognized as a fundamental human right. It is considered a major factor for sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries (Temba, Warrioba and Msabila, 2013). Studies have argued that education is a major means of enhancing individual's ability, capacity and opportunity for socio-economic development and also a *sine qua non* to greater productivity and reduction of poverty for individuals and society (Ainabor and Ovbiagele, 2007; Mudzielwana and Maphosa, 2013). Thus Undiyaundeye, (2013:9) points out:

“Education is a human right, an instrument of freedom, democracy, good governance, and sustainable human and national development hinges on it. It also aims at elimination of ignorance, poverty, disease and the provision of the requisite knowledge for the empowerment needed for full actualization of human potential”.

More importantly, education particularly at higher level has been identified as a viable instrument of social change (Aja-Okorie, 2014), as well as the ‘antecedent of poverty’ (Ogunsakin, 2012:31), a major tool for poverty reduction, wealth accumulation, economic growth and competitiveness (Ojogwu, 2010; UNESCO, 2010; Ogujiuba, 2014; Ezebuilo and Emmanuel, 2014). As studies have indicated, higher education plays a crucial role in development, particularly in the global context in which knowledge-based innovations and products offer high value on the market and scope for developments at local, national and international levels (Magaisa, 2006). Moreover, since education serves as one of the measures used to indicate nations’ developmental status, studies have showed that countries with lower literacy rates are more vulnerable to increased poverty level, sustained complex cycle of poverty and are mostly confronted with extreme conditions or diverse effects of poverty often characterized by serious social and economic problems (Aruna, 2006; Adedokun, 2012; Ogunsakin, 2012; Yusuf et al., 2013). In addition, empirical and non-empirical studies especially in Africa have also identified numerous consequences of lack or low access to formal education. For instance, at a theoretical level, economists considered education as an ‘economic good’ or ‘capital good’ that any country must pursue

for the development of their human capital (Temba, Warrioba and Msabila, 2013). In this sense, human capital represents human resources such as skills, talents, and other investments that people acquire to enhance individual productivity. These are expected to eventually lead to a total transformation of a country's economic and social standards (Temba, Warrioba and Msabila, 2013). On the other hand, low educational attainment or poor access to education often limits individual's capacity to understand themselves and the world, hinders people from acquiring and utilizing information, limit people's ability to overcome or reduce poverty for themselves and their families as well as hinders their capacity for increasing productivity or acquiring broader experiential knowledge which would transform their lives and thus enhance their informed choices as consumers, producers and citizens (Ijaiya and Nuhu, 2011).

In most countries across the world, one of the most significant demographic trends has been the continuous growth of young people across different nations. A large proportion of the world population constitutes young people, with more than one young person in every group of four (Nugent, 2006). Unsurprisingly, a growing concern has mounted for a wide range of problems on social, economic, education, health and other challenges confronting young people in most countries particularly those that are in developing and Sub-Saharan Africa where the young age groups are concentrated and still rapidly growing in numbers.

One of the universally acceptable ways of improving young people's social and economic well-being is the attainment of formal education (World Bank, 1996; Durston and Nashire, 2001; Ucha, 2010). Nelson Mandela argues,

“Education is the great engine to personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the president of a great nation” (McCullum 2005:1).

Additionally, a number of studies have also viewed education as a critical determining factor for meeting the numerous needs of young people including economic security, access to essential health and services, adequate housing and personal safety (World Bank, 1996; 1991; Jibril, 2003; Ibrahim, 2005; Ogbuvbu, 2007; Ocho, 2005; Oriahi and Aitufe, 2010), or as a means of gaining social mobility-conditions that enhance equal access of individuals to opportunities within their social world (Mudzielwana and Maphosa, 2013). Similarly,

Mwenda and Mwenda (2013) reinstated one of the Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948:158) on education, which in Article 26, states that:

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strength for human rights and fundamental freedom”.

Following closely on this recognition of formal education as a way of ensuring the integration of youth into social life and to lead them out of poverty (World Bank, 1996; Durston and Nashire, 2001; Ucha, 2010), or as a prerequisite to the development of human society, there has been increasing global concern over young people’s access to formal education. This is particularly so in Sub-Saharan Africa, where young people have been identified as those with the lowest literacy rates (EFA, 2006). In Nigeria, young people are central to the discussion of problems relating to the lack of access to formal education. As a result, various governmental and non-governmental organizations have initiated policies to address the problems attributed to young peoples’ access to formal education.

In many African countries, studies have identified groups of young people (both children and youth) as the disadvantaged group with high number of those neither with a job nor enrolled in school. However, little or none of these studies have focused on enquiring from the young people the causes of their limited access to school or impact of their educational attainment. This is based on the fact that previous works have centered mainly on quantitative analysis of the number of those dropping out of school or never attending schools or those engaging in one form of economic activity or the other (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003; UNESCO, 2003; Tahir, 2005; Ofoegbu, 2009).

While these studies and other highlighted literatures have described precisely the non-participation of young people in formal education in a decontextualized manner: it cannot provide in-depth analysis of why young people are dropping out or not participating in formal education. In the light of this importance, this study extends the focus to different social and cultural contexts such as social class, economic circumstances, religion, gender and other relational factors that may influence young people’s access to education.

Essentially, expanding this study beyond a problem-centered approach will enable an exploration of young people's access as related to an African environment and specifically the Nigerian context, which appears to be endlessly complex.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to provide detailed description of the challenges encountered by young people in gaining access to higher education within their specific socio-cultural contexts. It is expected that achieving this will provide results from which new knowledge and policies can be generated. Accordingly, the specific objectives will include the following:

1. To examine the influence of poverty on young people's access to higher education and in pursuing their desired educational goals;
2. To identify the different socio-cultural factors that influence young people's access to higher education; and
3. To examine whether young people are being affected by gender discrimination in different ways in their higher educational pursuit.

Based on the above objectives, this study shall be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the ways in which young people narrate their social and economic backgrounds in relation to their access to higher education?
2. What are the different socio-cultural contexts that influenced young people's access to higher education?
3. What are the ways in which young people are being affected by gender identity in relation to access to higher education?

1.4 Rationale for the Study

What is already known?

In Nigeria, much research work on young people's participation in formal education is framed within a problem-centred analysis of those attending school or dropping out of school (UNICEF, 2002; UNESCO, 2003; Tahir, 2005; Ofoegbu, 2009). The number of young people affected by poor socio-economic backgrounds are numerous across African countries and a high percentage of the age group affected by poverty in Nigeria are young (UNICEF, 2002; Ofoegbu, 2009). Various intervention programmes have addressed the need to improve enrolment of young people in formal education. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria have recently introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and School Meal Programme (SMP) among others to increase enrolment and participation of young Nigerian people in institutions of higher learning. This has not yielded the desired result (FMOE, 2006). Despite these concerted efforts, accesses to education for all Nigerian children have remained unattainable (UNICEF, 2002; Okeke et al., 2008).

What should be known?

Very limited studies have focused on the socio-cultural context and other relational social factors like poverty in unfolding multiple realities on how young people's access to higher education are or influenced in Kogi State. This study therefore is significant as it sets out to unravel the challenges facing young people with regards to achieving their higher educational goals. It is necessary to document the various norms, beliefs and ideas in their socio-cultural milieu that impact on young people within their local context.

What this study will add

Since several studies have used quantitative methods in examining learner's enrolment and dropping out of higher education, this study extends the focus to wider different social contexts such as traditions, culture, norms, values and beliefs and other relational factors which may influence young people's access to higher education.

Another requirement to be addressed in this study arises from the fact that existing literatures have focused on enrolment in formal educational institutions in urban areas while excluding the rural. Those that are in the rural areas need to be addressed as well. This study incorporates both rural and urban young people in terms of those factors that may be facilitating or inhibiting their access to formal education and particularly higher educational level at the appropriate age.

The voices of young people with focus on gaining access or entry into higher education are chiefly absent from existing literature and this thesis seeks to address this identified gap.

Apart from contributing to existing knowledge, the findings of this study will also assist the government, opinion leaders and other stakeholders in planning and implementing intervention programmes which will mitigate the effect of poverty and socio-cultural impediments among young people particularly in Nigeria and especially, Kogi State. Additionally, findings from this study will provide relevant information that could serve as a tool for further research inquiring into the factors that limit Nigerian young people's access in terms of gaining entry and completion of studies at a higher educational level.

1.5 Key Research Concepts

Defining 'Access'

Access is defined as being able to get one's need or opportunity to approach or means to entry.

'Access to Education'

Access to education is the act of making formal education available to all within the reach of every citizen of a nation regardless of their social, economic and cultural background.

Defining ‘Education’

For the purpose of this study, education is defined as individuals’ involvement in formal training in order to acquire basic knowledge, skills and expertise necessary for living a meaningful and impactful life. It generally aims at the development of human activities.

Defining ‘Higher Education’

Higher education is the study beyond the secondary (high school) educational level. It is a study at the end of which a degree, diploma, or certificate is awarded. Institutions of higher learning include Universities, Institutes, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, professional schools in the fields of Law, Theology, Medicine, Music, Arts and so on.

Defining ‘Participation’

This is the act of taking part in something or activities or being engaged in some activities.

Defining ‘Socio-cultural factors’

Socio-cultural factors/context denotes the interrelated complex of religious, political, economic and other institutional, ideational and social factors which form a unique system.

Definition ‘Post-secondary’

This is referred to as any stage following the completion of secondary school education..

Definition ‘Tertiary’

Tertiary is usually the third stage of educational level, or the qualification before entry into the workplace.

Defining ‘Young people or Youth’

In the Nigerian context, young people are generally defined as those between ages 10 to 24 years. (UNFPA, 2003:4). However, the Nigerian National Youth Policy (2009:6) identifies youth as comprising all young males and females between ages 18 and 35 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

For the purpose of this research, the definitional parameters of young people are set between 18 to 28 years of age. Moreover, from a sociological perspective, the concept of ‘young people’ is best understood as a relational concept: this group represents a constructed population in Western industrial societies, defined through prevailing social, historical and cultural processes (Wyn and White 1997: 10). Accordingly, age-based definitions of ‘youth or young people’ vary between social and economic contexts. This presents difficulties in ascertaining a consistent and replicable framework for research inquiry. Thus, while there are considerable variances in definitions of ‘youth’ from existing literature, in this study, young people are represented as being in equal recognition of both young women and men between ages 18 and 28.

1.6 Chapter Overview

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter One being the introductory section, introduces the research topic, background to the research, problem statement and discusses the motivation for this study with the aim of providing greater understanding on the challenges encountered by young people in gaining access to higher educational institutions within their specific socio-cultural contexts. Further, this chapter outlines the objectives, research questions, justification of the study and how it progresses in achieving the set objectives.

Chapter Two focuses on introducing the purpose of this study for which relevant literatures were sourced and discussed. First, the chapter critically reviewed existing studies on the various factors and contexts that shape young people’s educational attainment in different parts of the world. Lastly, it provides the basis for the study and makes evident various social and economic factors and how they may or may not influence young people’s access to higher education in an African context.

Chapter Three discusses the relevant theoretical frameworks: two major theories are discussed. These are Bourdieu’s concepts of Social and Cultural Capital, and the Oscar Lewis’ Culture of Poverty theory.

Chapter Four focuses on the description of the methodological strategy employed in carrying out the study. It presents the rationales for selecting both quantitative and qualitative methods employed. Explanations on the choice of a particular method used have also been articulated. The chapter also describes the different steps utilized in generating and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data sets. The Kvale's (1996) social constructionist approach was adopted, which involves the seven stages of selecting themes, designing, interviewing, transcribing, interpreting and reporting or analyzing research findings. These methods provide systematic processes of addressing the objectives of the study while incorporating excerpts from the data under specific themes. It also includes a detailed discussion of the ethical implications of the study, particularly participant anonymity, privacy and informed consents, which have been addressed in the process of selecting participants, retrieving and analyzing data. The chapter concludes with a description of young people within their social world.

Chapter Five focuses on analysis and interpretation of data (Part I): presentation of data and computation of data. Chapter Six focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data (Part II), where emerging themes from the study were addressed and the reflexivity in the research process were also brought together. Lastly, Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter of this thesis. Hence, the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations were presented. Specific recommendations were made for policymakers while the intervention programs in the area of education and particularly higher education with respect to the research findings were formulated and finally, there were suggestions for further and future studies.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic and discussed the rationale for the study. It unfolds the need to study the challenges of young people's access to higher education within the specific socio-cultural milieu in addition to the relational positions of young people in Nigeria. Following this, the aims of this study have been delineated with details which have been earmarked in line with the progress of the study. Finally, the structure of this thesis in terms of chapter sequence has been provided. In the next chapter, this study

will review the existing literatures on young people, their access to education and other related issues relevant to the research topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Education as a developmental phenomenon cannot be divorced from historical, social and cultural contexts especially when discussed within the framework of most developing countries, which includes Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, it is fundamental in this research to review the background literature that informs the research questions of the study. In achieving this, this chapter focuses on the social, economic and cultural contexts of young people's access to formal education as entrenched in different societies and the extent to which these various contexts have affected their access to higher education.

2.2 Nature/Extent of Illiteracy in Developing Countries, Especially in Africa

The impact of education for individuals, communities and the entire nation cannot be over emphasized. This is especially true when examining the impact of literacy on individual's well-being, economic security, social and political participation and the development of a nation (Nakpodia, 2010; Abraham, 2011). For instance, in terms of individual well-being, literacy level has been viewed as a major influence in reducing mortality rates, as well as in sustaining or improving healthy living. As observed in three countries of Africa -Senegal, Niger and Nigeria by Oxfam (2009), child mortality were at lower rates among mothers with at least secondary school education compared to their uneducated counterparts.

In addition, empirical and non-empirical studies have affirmed that education serves as a dominant tool for reducing the level of inequalities of opportunities and economic growth among countries of the world. As Ojogwu (2010) has argued, the rates of literacy and development are closely linked with the view that African countries are generally categorized as third world due to some notable underdeveloped features such as low literacy

rates and unskilled workforce with attendant consequences of unsustainable and relatively slow social, economic and political developments. On the other hand, the developed nations such as the United States of America, Britain, Canada and Japan are characterized by a highly educated population and skilled workforce have increasingly been identified with greater industrialization, information technology and greater productivity in modern economies and attainment of full democracy (Ojogwu, 2010; *see also* Oxfam, 2009; Nakpodia, 2010). Such arguments reveal the manner in which most African countries have remained underdeveloped in virtually all spheres of life.

Contrary to the global recognition of the essential goals and indisputable effects /promises that education holds, the trend and extent to which illiteracy have remained prevalent and concentrated among young people in developing parts of the world and nations with less developed economics such as most African countries including Nigeria have remained worryingly low (Hunt, 2008; Oriahi and Aitufe, 2010; Mhele and Ayiga, 2013; Yusuf, 2013; UNESCO, 2013).

A compilation of regional trends and illiteracy patterns revealed that the vast majority of the illiterate populations of the world live in developing countries with about 775 million adults not able to read and write (Education For All (EFA), 2010; Inko-Tariah, 2014). A further breakdown of the EFA report shows that the extent of illiteracy as it affects most developing and poor countries can be measured in both relative and absolute terms. In absolute term, about three quarter of the world's 775 million illiterate adults are argued to be found in ten countries, (India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Brazil, Indonesia and the Republic of Congo) which basically covers three regions- namely the South and West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa (EFA, 2010). As argued by Yusuf et al., (2013), the top ten countries identified with highest level of illiteracy in this respect are those from the developing countries and Sub-Saharan Africa while the most affected groups are women, the poor masses and other marginalized people. In relative terms, the regions with lowest literacy rates are Sub-Saharan Africa, the South and West Asia, and Arab States. These countries are still confronted with relative literacy deprivation, having literacy rates of around 60% despite the various policies and

interventions adopted to expand access to formal education and promote literacy within the past decade (EFA, 2010; Inko-Tariah, 2014).

In West African countries, there have been some improvements on the literacy rates among young people (aged 15-29) following the various intervention programs in the education sectors. However, the progress has not been as fast as desirable to meet the development and sustainable economies (Adedokun, 2012; Ogunsakin, 2012). In a recent review, over 65 million young people and adult, comprising more than 40% of the entire West African population are non-literates. Available data reveal that out of eleven western African countries identified with lowest literacy level, 14 million children are not enrolled in any formal school of which about 8 million of them are girls (Oxfam, 2009).

Nigeria as the most populous nation in Sub-Saharan Africa has also continued to be enlisted among countries with a low literacy populace. The existence of formal education and its importance became noticeable in Nigeria since the colonial era. Since then, there has been a critical consciousness by various government and international organizations to eradicate or at least reduce the level of illiteracy among the Nigerian populace. Yet, Nigeria is still ranked among the selected nine countries with the highest level of illiterate population particularly of those in ages 15 and above (Yusuf et al., 2013). Using data from a recent report by the National Commission for Mass Illiteracy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NCMANE), Ihejirika and Onyenemezu, (2012:222) reported that an estimated 46,340,000, which approximately constitute about 33.1% Nigerians, were still reported to be illiterates. According to UNESCO (2013) the adult literacy rate in Nigeria is 51% leading to an estimation of adult illiterate population as high as 41 845 172 million of which over 60% are women (see also Inko-Tariah, 2014). In addition, about 9 814 568 million young people of ages 15-24 are also reported as non-literates. This report goes in contrast to the target set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate illiteracy among the Nigerian populace by year 2015 (Inko-Tariah, 2014).

In a more recent study in Nigeria, Nwakaudo (2013) has argued that various intervention programs have recently been introduced to eradicate illiteracy among the Nigerian populace. For instance, the provision of funds for Almajiri education programme in northern Nigeria, the provision of Girl-child education to improve women's literacy level

across the country and the special vocational training boys-traders (young boys hawking business) in the South-South and South-West regions and other government funded projects are directed towards increasing literacy level have not yielded the expected results (Nwakaudo, 2013 cited in Inko-Tariah, 2014).

While the aforementioned literatures exposed the rates of illiteracy across developing and Sub-Saharan African countries including Nigeria, a majority of these studies have narrowly focused on the statistical analysis of young people who are non-literates while neglecting the views and perceptions of young people. This gap has been identified by the present study. Thus, this study shall extend focus on the out of university young people in order to explore the various forces that led to their non-literate status or lack of education thereof.

2.3 Nature/Extent of School Drop-Out in Africa

Since formal education has become the norm for modern societies, the rate of school drop-outs has remained a global phenomenon and generates considerable levels of attention from educators, educational researchers and policy makers in education for decades. Studies have indicated the term drop-outs to denote the proportion of individuals or learners who were previously enrolled in schools (mostly young people) but withdrew before graduation (Bedard, 2001; Onyeka, 2013).

One of the recent reports on the rates of dropping out of school is presented by the EFA monitoring statistical report (2010). The study revealed that 38 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa dropped out from both primary and secondary schools. Similarly, other literature on school drop-outs has focused on various perspectives in examining the prevalence of drop-outs in different countries of the world. For instance using the longitudinal perspective, the EFA monitor (2010:42 cited in Abraham, 2011) reported that more than half of the out-of-school children of the world are found in some countries which include Nigeria (8.6m); Pakistan, (7.3m); India (5.6m), Ethiopia(2.7m), Niger (1.2m), Kenya (1.1m), Yemen (1.0m), Philippines (1.0m), Burkina-Faso (0.9m), Mozambique (0.9m), Ghana (0.8m), Brazil (0.7m), Thailand (0.7m), and South Africa (0.5m).

In addition, a recent report by UNESCO (2014) asserted that for over a decade, most countries across Sub-Saharan Africa have not made significant progress in preventing dropping out of young people from school. Consequently, the number of learners who enrolled in school has decreased from 58% in 1999 to 56% in 2010 (UNESCO, 2014).

In many African countries, following the various intervention programs to improve literacy, there have been relatively increased rates in school enrolment especially among young people of 16 and 17 years of age (Hunt, 2008). However, this improvement has not been noticeable due to the prevalence of drop-out among learners. In a review of a survey of seven African countries on the prevalence of school drop-outs in Burkina-Faso, Ethiopia, Namibia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, and Nigeria, it was observed that over 50% of children between ages 10-19 had already dropped out of primary school in the countries enlisted in the study, with more than 80% of rural children in the four countries having left school after gaining access (Bruneforth, 2006 cited in Hunt 2008).

In a relevant study conducted in Ghana, Ananga (2011) found out that school enrolment has relatively increased with a Gross Enrolment rate of above 95% between 2001 and 2006. However, it was observed that over 20% of children enrolled in school eventually withdrew after gaining access, leading to an estimation of 15% of non-completion rates of learners at primary school level and about 35% of non-completion rates of young people in the junior secondary school level.

While it could be observed from existing surveys that the problem of school drop-outs is prevalent in most African countries, this area has been under-researched especially when considering the view points of the 'victims', those who are addressed as drop-outs on the various context that influences their dropping out of school. In line with this identified gap, this study extends focus beyond young people in higher education to include those who are also currently out of school.

2.4 The State of Higher Education in Africa and Nigeria

Higher education which is also referred to as post-secondary or tertiary education is an education system which consists of Universities, Polytechnics, Institutes, Colleges of education and professional or specialized institutions (International Association of Universities (IAU), 2000; Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). In Sub-Saharan African countries, higher education has been recognized as the pre-requisite for an investment in human capital and economic development for both African young people and the entire society (State of Education in Africa Report, 2015). As further argued, higher education has increased the rates of employment opportunities and job prospects, improved quality of life, economic growth and development (State of Education in Africa Report, 2015). Despite these tremendous benefits attached to higher education in Africa, the numbers of people that have access to higher institution are still limited.

Enrollment rates in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa are by far the lowest in the world. Although, the gross enrollment ratio has increased in the past decades, as at 2015, only 6% of young people in sub-Saharan Africa are enrolled in higher institutions compared to the global average of 26% (State of Education in Africa Report, 2015). More worrisome is the fact that many countries in Africa are struggling even to maintain these low enrollment levels.

For instance in Mozambique, despite low enrollment ratio, the country is confronted with challenges of overcrowded campuses and poor quality of courses. These, apart from the high cost of tertiary education, suggest that many potential candidates from poor socio-economic background cannot enroll. Consequently, less than 3% of the total staff in national public administration has attended higher education (UNESCO, 2006).

Similarly in Nigeria, the higher educational sector are confronted with multi-faceted problems such as poor funding, brain drain, unstable curriculum, poor infrastructure, lack of sufficient academic staff in most federal and state higher education leading to overcrowding in lecture halls with a statistics showing an average of 50 percent more students per

professor (Dawodu, 2010; Okojie, 2007; Ahmed and Adepoju, 2013; Asiyai, 2013; Iruonagbe, Imhonopi and Egharevba, 2015). These aforementioned challenges and many other problems confronting higher educational institutions in Nigeria has hindered many young people from gaining admission into higher institutions especially university education which is viewed as the bedrock or citadel of learning and most admirable for most people who are determined to attend a higher educational institution (Aluede, et al., 2012). As observed by Aluede, et al., (2012), only about 5.2 to 15.3 percent of candidates that apply to the Nigeria Federal and State Universities are admitted every year, leaving out as many as 84.7 to 94.8% of the candidates who are denied access. Table 1 illustrates the total number of universities applications and admission trends from 1999 to 2009.

Table 1: Nigeria Higher Education System

S/N	Year	Number of Universities	Number of Applications	Number Admitted	Number of denied Admission
1	1999/2000	45	417,773	78,550	339,223
2	2000/2001	46	467, 90	50,227	417,213
3	2001/2002	52	550,399	60,718	544,321
4	2002/2003	53	994, 380	51, 845	942,535
5	2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	941,793
6	2004/2005	56	841,878	122, 492	719,386
7	2005/2006	75	916,371	N/A	N/A
8	2006/2007	76	803,472	123,626	579, 846
9	2007/2008	94	1,054,053	19,521	859, 532
10	2008/2009	95	1,182,381	N/A	N/A
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X	2012/2013	122	1,503,9	N/A	N/A

Source: Ajadi, (2012) adapted by Iruonagbe et al., (2015).

Furthermore, it is also significant to mention that apart from the University education system, other higher institutions have emerged which are of increased demand in the country. For instance as demonstrated in Table 2, between 2001 and 2005, other forms of higher institution have also increased from about 163 to 178 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

Table 2: Increase/Decrease in Enrolment in Higher Education

Institution Type	Federal	State	Private	Total	Enrolment	%
University	40	38	50	128	1 131 312	58.4
Polytechnic	21	38	12	71	360 535	18.6
Monotechnics	23	2	2	27		
College of Agriculture	17	19	0	36	91 256	4.7
College of Health Technology	9	40	1	50		
Vocational Institution	0	0	69	69		
College of Education	21	41	17	79	354 387	18.3
Total	131	178	150	460	1 937 493	100

Compiled by Olayinka and Adedeji (2013)

However, as can be observed from Table 2, despite the growth or increase in the numbers of higher institutions in the country and the increasing demand for admission into the institutions, the available higher institutions do not have the capacity to absorb the majority of the potential candidates.

In a study conducted by Esomonu and Adirika (2012), it was observed that the available universities are still relatively few compared to the population of eligible candidates. Notwithstanding, there are huge differences in tuition among the federal, state and private universities in addition to the poor socio-economic status of many Nigerian families and poor academic performances were all identified as major barriers to accessing higher educational institutions in Nigeria (Esomonu and Adirika, 2012).

Another study conducted on the need to ascertain access to higher education in Nigeria revealed that out of the total population applying for higher education admission in Nigeria between 2003 and 2012, only candidates between 13.12% and 26.52% succeeded in gaining admission to either Universities, Polytechnics or Colleges of Education, while a high

number of 73.48% to 86.88% are denied admission into either of the higher institutions (Kpolovie and Obilor, 2013).

Similar to the observed trend, Aluede et al., (2012) have reported that only candidates between 5.2% and 15.3% gain entry to university education in Nigeria with the denial of over 90% of those seeking access to study further indicates that several factors are attributable to the poor access to higher education. These may also include inadequate public financing, economic constraints, poor infrastructural facilities and challenges relating to curriculum delivery (Aluede et al., 2012).

As it concerns the present study, evidence from available data has revealed the problem of access to higher education as multi-dimensional, involving a number of factors inhibiting young Africans from enrolling in higher institution, it is essential to further explore other contexts such as the socio-cultural milieus that also impacts on young people's access to higher education within the Nigerian setting.

2.5 Poverty and Young People's Access to Formal Education in Africa

Empirical studies have demonstrated that children from higher socio-economic backgrounds have better chances or access to higher educational institutions compared to their counterparts from lower economic backgrounds (Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013). Similar to most countries in developing regions, evidence from available studies across Sub-Saharan Africa have shown that the numerous strategic policies adopted by various governments to attain sustainable literacy rates for young people in Africa have often been thwarted by the depth of poverty level which confronts the African region (Ogujiuba, 2014). In most African countries, young people have continued to be vulnerable to the effects of poverty, keeping a high number of them out of school and others as drop-outs. Evidence from empirical findings from different nations of Africa such as Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Republic of Congo have revealed that more than half of the adult population are among the working poor masses, with the highest rates of them being young women and rural youth (Hervish and Clifton, 2012).

Undoubtedly, Africa is one of the highly populated continents in the world. Consequently, the high population growth especially in the Sub-Saharan region is noticeable to be exerting extreme pressures on the available resources such as housing, health and educational facilities which are the most basic of human needs. For instance, evidence from a study conducted in Ghana reveals that poverty is an essential factor that shapes access to higher education. As Pryor and Ampiah (2003) observe that after considering the households income and the financial implications of schooling, a majority of Ghanaians in the study viewed formal education as a 'relative luxury'. This apart, a number of statistical and empirical studies have affirmed the link between poverty and access to school (UNESCO, 2002; Nwaobi, 2003; Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003; Tahir, 2005; Bruneforth, 2006; Hunt 2008; Ofoegbu, 2009).

A review of literature on the poverty situation in Nigeria presents a paradox as it is observed that despite the fact that the country (Nigeria) is endowed with vast human and material resources, the level at which poverty is being experienced by a large proportion of the Nigerian populace is pervasive, chronic and multifaceted (Omonona, 2009; Yakubu and Aderonmu, 2010; Ogujiuba et al., 2011; Ojimba, 2011). In the same vain, several quantitative analysis have attested to the growing incidence of poverty at its depth across the nation (Nwaobi, 2003; Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003; UNESCO, 2002; Tahir, 2005; Ibrahim and Umar, 2008; Ofoegbu, 2009).

In Nigeria, the primary school age is officially stated as between ages 6 and 11 years, while the secondary school age is 12 to 17 years. Statistics have also attested to the increased level of deterioration that has occurred in education in terms of enrolments, dropout rates, and students' performance in many Nigerian schools due to poverty status in many households across the country (Nwaobi, 2003; Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003). More so, as Lincove (2009) argues, given the high levels of poverty in Nigeria where about 68% of the population live below the poverty line (below \$1.25 per day) (UNDP, 2013) enrolment and retention of children in school by poor parents may be impossible (Ejere, 2011). In addition, it has often been observed that enrolment of children and their level of educational attainment are highly dependent on the family's socio-economic status (Lewin, 2009).

Similarly, Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) examine the influence of parental socio-economic status and educational background on their children's education. It was observed that parents' level of education often determine their perceptions of the benefits associated with formal education, and their decision to enrol their children in school as well as the children's level of educational attainment.

It has been well documented that in many parts of the country, young people are often constrained by unsafe and degraded environment, poor sanitation, and lack of access to health care facilities, clothes, food and other basic amenities by virtue of their social and historical backgrounds (World Bank 2001; Ogujiuba et al., 2011). The effect of poverty predisposes young people to dropping out of school and raises the need for many young people to combine schooling with economic activities.

This section has reviewed existing literature on the prevalence of poverty and its effects on young people in Africa especially as it affects their access to formal education. Essentially, the various studies that have been carried out in the past tend to focus on quantitative analysis of the impacts of poverty on young Nigerians. It may be argued that an in-depth study of young people would yield a better understanding of how they are exploited or otherwise due to their socio-economic/ poverty status. It will also be interesting to view how young people's experiences have changed over time within their specific contexts. This study addresses this gap in academic knowledge. While findings from a wide range of studies have identified various factors hindering young people's access to higher education in Nigeria at a general level, this present study specifically examines the various possible factors that impacts on young people's access to higher institution through the perceptions of the affected group.

2.6 Socio-Cultural Context and Education

Most research studies on young people's access to education dealt primarily with the statistical reports of the proportion of learners mostly, young people who are either in-university, out of school or those dropping out of school. There has not been any extensive

study through the voices of young people themselves on the effects of socio-cultural context on their access to school especially to higher institutions of learning.

However, some of the existing studies have identified some determinant factors that may facilitate or discourage access to formal education among different age groups in their specific contexts (Tehobo, 2000; Evans, 2002; Egwunyenga and Onyeabo, 2004; Nakpodia, 2010; Olaniyan 2011; Abdulkarim and Ali, 2012; Dichaba, 2013; Aliyu, 2015).

For instance, culture has been identified as a major component, which may impede access to education. In a Tanzanian study, Ngoitiko (2008) assessed the multi-facet factors that impacted on girls' education among the marginalized group of Massai. In spite of the various efforts by the Tanzanian government to promote Massai girls' education notably with the development of MED, that is 'Massai Education Discovery' which offers free education to girls in the region, gender disparity was found to exist as male education were prioritised over their female counterparts. One of the factors that were found to have accounted for the unequal access to education among the Massai was the dominant patriarchal culture which encourages male dominance and subjugation of women as inferiors with marginalised positions observable by forced marriages, heavy workloads and other physical constraints that limit girls' access to formal education.

In a study that reveals the perceptions of parents on factors that determine girl-child' access to formal education in the northern part of Nigeria, Eweniyi and Usman (2013) found that, one of the major social factors that shape access to education for a girl-child is parental religious orientation. Most parents expressed their fulfilment in adhering to their religious obligation, which entails denying their female children access to western education. Bagudo (2007) has also reported similar findings in a study on assessment of girl-child education in Sokoto State, also in northern Nigeria. Due to parental religious beliefs and love for Qua'ranic education for their children, Bagudo observed that female children were restrained from attending formal schools. This was coupled with the trepidation that formal education may expose their children to other religious orientations, western values and teenage pregnancy (Bagudo, 2007; Eweniyi and Usman, 2013).

Additionally, studies have found that there is a close link between economic status and access to school. For instance, in a study conducted in the Eastern part of Nigeria, Onyeka (2013) observes that a number of young men were dropping out of school in pursuance of prosperous businesses. As this study observes, a number of young men could not complete their secondary school education while some who could do not attempt to seek entry into higher degree education due to the notion that they would find it easier to accumulate wealth as young businesspersons than undergoing the rigorous pathway of higher education. However, as Onyeka (2013) concludes, many of the young men in this setting do not become successful business men due to lack of adequate skills and literacy level that higher education would have imbued on them.

In a related study that examined key determinant of school drop-out in Uganda, Mike et al. (2008) identifies parental educational status as a key determinant to young people's access to school. The study observes that parents with high academic attainment are most likely to facilitate access for their young adults and prevent them from dropping out of school than the non-educated parents.

A similar study was conducted in Nigeria to reveal the socio-economic and educational attainment of parents as instrumental to their children's access to formal education. Through a critical review of existing literature, Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) reported that parents' level of education, occupation and income act as dominant influence on their attitudes towards their child's education which also determines the level of support they provide for their children. It was observed in the review that parents with relatively high socio-economic status and educational attainment often facilitate their children's access to school, and encourage achievement of higher educational goals.

In a Kenyan study, Mucee et al., (2014) examined the socio-cultural factors that influenced students' access to secondary school in Tharaka south sub-county of Kenya. Through an opinion survey of teachers, principals, and head teachers in this region, the study found that family size, gender preference, parental educational attainment and social class are major influences that determine young people's access to school in the region. It was revealed that the majority of parents in this setting are from large families (with 5-8 children) with limited economic resources. This led to preference for male children's enrolment in

secondary school with a number of parents involving their children in income generating activities. In addition, given that only 1% of parents in this region had higher educational attainment, they lacked the capacity and social status to ensure the retention of their children's enrolment in school or to facilitate their entry into higher education.

Taken together, the above studies highlights different ways in which certain factors such as socio-economic situation, parental religious and educational background and how certain practices may constrain young people's access to school. However, a major criticism of this literature is that most of the studies were conducted among stakeholders in relation to young people attending primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. There is a need to reach out of school young people in order to explore the disparities and similarities in their experiences and factors that influenced their educational attainment.

Having explored the various social and cultural factors that shape young people's access to education, it is pertinent to expand this review to examine existing studies on the influence of gender disparity on young people's access to formal education, which the next subsection does.

2.7 Gender Disparity and Access to Formal Education

In most developing countries including Africa, the problem of access to education for a girl-child was widespread. While many sub-Saharan countries have relatively improved on children enrolment in school through universalizing primary education (UNESCO, 2010), there has been an observable gender disparity in the rates of enrolment and dropping out of school among t young males and females. According to a UNICEF report (2004), over 50% of them of an estimated 142 million children who are out of school across the world are girls.

Meanwhile, the concept of gender disparity as it concerns young people's access to formal education explains that the practice of gender inequalities are embedded more in most African cultures and manifested in various ways that include access to formal education.

Empirical findings have affirmed that in most African culture, women are considered as second class citizens (Bakari, 2001) or as a mere man's property or object "meant for producing children" (Duze and Yaz'ever, 2013: 203).

In most West African countries, despite the progress made in achieving literacy across different age groups since the 1980s, research still found that more than 65 million young people and adults lack access to formal education due to the effect of poverty. It is also notable that a higher percentage of West African non-literate group are women (more than 40% of 65million) (Oxfam, 2009).

In Nigeria, a more recent report by the National Literacy Statistics, UNESCO (2013) reported an overall literacy of Nigerian young people to be 51%. As can be observed, Nigeria remains the most populous nation in Africa with an estimated population of 167 million people of which women constitute more than 50% (NPC, 2011). Despite the influence of modern values, empirical evidences suggest that several factors have continued to widen the gender gap, and subjugate women to inferior and marginalized positions. For instance, among the young population, from ages 15 and above, a report states a gender disparity between the male and female status, of which the literacy rates is 61.38% for males and 41.4% for females. Similarly for the adult population of ages 15-24 year, literacy rate is found to be 66.4% for males and 58.0% for females (UNESCO, 2013). This observed gender discrepancy has resulted in the violation of women's social, economic and cultural rights, and their denial of human rights as full Nigerian citizens.

More recently, Osagiobare, Oronsaye and Ekwukoma (2015) examined various ways in which religious and cultural beliefs have impacted on girl-child education in six area councils of the Abuja Federal Capital Territory. It was affirmed that literacy rates among young women have remained low due to the cultural interpretations and negative meanings attributed to females' access to education. For example, it is generally conceived in the study areas that educating the girl-child would empower them and contravene their traditional gender roles of becoming house wives with domestic relevance and fulfilment of religious precepts that constraint women within the private domain. Consequently, a number of girl-children from this region were found in circumstances or victims of early

marriages, poverty-stricken conditions and mainly confined to domestic duties that were culturally constraining (Osagiobare et al, 2015).

In a survey of Mushin women in Lagos, Fapohunda (2012) reveals the roots of constraints faced by women in the formal sector. Through a critical review of relevant studies and a survey of 150 women, it identifies the lack of formal education and training as major obstacles to women's participation in the formal sector. Evidence from this study affirms that socio-cultural and limited economic resources interrelated as contributing factors to women's disadvantaged positions. For instance, it was observed in the study that various factors such as adolescent pregnancy, early marriage and the over burdensome household labour restrained many young females within the private domain. Moreover, out of the total of 150 female respondents in the study, about 11% had no formal education, about 41% had only primary education, 32% had secondary school while only 14% had one form of higher educational qualification.

In another relevant study, Amadi (2014) examines the effect of socio-cultural factors on the girl-child's access to formal education in Ihiala local government of Anambra State, (Nigeria). The study argues that family socio-economic background, parental attitudes towards girl-child, effects of early marriages all combine to influence females from gaining access to formal education. This concurs with Adedokun (2012) who observes that women's participation in the political sphere has continued to be hindered due to gender norms and for cultural reasons. The above studies further corroborate the assertion of Sutherland-Addy (2005) stating that:

“Socio-cultural factors place a premium on the productive and domestic roles of girls and women. The girl-child is made to assist mother or female relatives in playing their domestic roles, and to make transition into adulthood role of wife, mother or producers of food and other economic goods and services. Her chances of completing secondary education are lost. Thus, girls have less incentive to persist through secondary education because of the gender roles associated with them and are not deemed to require high level skills or academic background” (p53).

The above statement reinstates findings from available studies on the various challenges confronting the young female adults especially in many African countries. Such gender norms and practices have been noticeable through various existing studies as major barriers that hindered equitable access to formal education among young African people (Obasuyi and Igudu, 2012).

Meanwhile in a study that examines factors associated with dropping out of school girls in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Grant and Hallman (2008) reveal that even though teenage pregnancy is not conceived as a social problem in KwaZulu-Natal, young women are observed to be at risk of becoming pregnant while attending school. Consequently, teenage pregnancy was found as a major factor affecting young women's capacity to complete their education or follow up their educational plans.

It is important to summarize here that the majority of empirical studies confirm some levels of disparity in accessing formal education, which afford the male folks an advantageous position over their female counterparts. Most of the African studies discussed so far have found the socio-economic and cultural context to be important factors in promoting gender gap in literacy rates. However, some of the studies in this review lack explanations of how the identified limited economic resources and gender norms influenced individual's accounts in gaining access to formal education. The reason for this is that the studies have relied too heavily on demographic health assessments based on quantitative data. There is a dire need to augment these findings with further studies among young Nigerians and to pay particular attention to some neglected areas of the studies reviewed, such as how young people experienced their access or lack thereof to higher education by virtue of their gender.

2.8 The Concept of Poverty

This section reviews some literature and research findings that are relevant to this study. Any attempt to analyse poverty must begin with the recognition of the level of income resulting in social class in society. Social class may be defined as a connection with an individual position in society be it working class, middle class and upper class. These classes can be categorized in two forms such as: the elite and the proletariat whereby the elite are the wealthier individual and the proletariat are the less privileged. Poverty is scarcity, lack

of something for example lack of food, or the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money (Merriam, 2013). Poverty was considered largely unavoidable as traditional modes of production were insufficient to give an entire population a comfortable standard of living. Poverty reduction is a major goal and issue for many international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. The World Bank estimated 1.29 billion people were living in absolute poverty. Taking the human development index of 2005, Nigeria is ranked in the 158 position of 159 (World Bank, 2008).

Of these, about 400 million people in absolute poverty lived in India and 173 million people in China. In terms of regional populations, Sub-Saharan Africa at 47% had the highest incidence of absolute poverty in 2008. Between 1990 and 2010, about 663 million people moved above the absolute poverty level. Still, extreme poverty is a global challenge; it is observed in all parts of the world, including developed economies (World Bank, 2011).

Women are more likely to be poor than men, although their poverty has often been masked behind studies that focused on male-headed households (Ruspini, 2000). The causes of women's poverty are complex. One important element concerns the gendered division of labour both inside and outside the home. The burden of domestic labour and the responsibility of caring for children and relatives still fall disproportionately on women. This has an important effect on their ambitions and ability to work outside the home. It means that they are far more likely than men to be in part-time, rather than full-time. Occupational segregation between a man's job and women's work in the labour force remains entrenched. Women are disproportionately represented in less well-paid industries, which has a negative pension later in life (Flaherty et al. 2004). Indeed, it could mean a condition of exclusion, vulnerability and powerlessness (Bankole, 2010). Generally, poverty refers to a condition of not being able to secure the basic goods and services important to human survival. Yet others view poverty as the inability to meet human need such as food, healthcare, shelter and education (Bankole, 2010).

2.9 Types of Poverty

Poverty is usually measured as either absolute or relative (the latter being actually an index of income inequality). Relative poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. An example of absolute poverty measurement is the percentage of a population eating less food than is required to sustain the human body which amounts to approximately 2000-2500 calories per day for an adult (Wikipedia, 2009).

Absolute poverty: This refers to the deprivation of basic needs, which commonly includes food, water sanitation, clothing, shelter, health care and education. Absolute poverty is synonymously referred to as extreme poverty (UN declaration at World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995). Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. First introduced in 1990, the dollar a day poverty line measured absolute poverty by the standard of the world's poorest countries. The World Bank defined the new international poverty line as \$1.25 a day for 2005 (equivalent to \$1.00 a day in 1996 US prices), but have recently been updated to be \$1.25 and \$2.50 per day. Absolute poverty depends not only on income but also on access to services. Robert McNamara, the former President of the World Bank, described absolute poverty as a condition so limited by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency. Life expectancy has been increasing and converging for most of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has recently seen a decline, partly related to the AIDS epidemic (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2009).

The concept of absolute poverty is grounded in the idea of subsistence- the basic conditions that must be met in order to sustain a physically healthy existence. People who lack these fundamental requirements for human existence- such as sufficient food, shelter and clothing are said to live in poverty. The concept of absolute poverty is seen as universally applicable. It is held that standards for human subsistence are more or less the same for all people of an equivalent age and physique, anywhere in the world, can be said to live in poverty if he or she falls below this universal standard (World Bank, 2007).

Many developing countries have large sections of their population living in extreme poverty, more than one-third in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Namibia, for example, and over 60 percent in Rwanda and 70 percent in Nigeria. Clearly, material conditions of life in the developed countries are very different from those in developing countries. However, in terms of inequalities within individual countries, the share of national revenue which goes to the bottom fifth is often not so starkly different. For example, in Rwanda, some 5.3 percent of national revenue goes to the poorest fifth of the population, whereas in the USA the fifth is 5.4 percent. Nevertheless, it remains the case that many people in the developing world today still live and die in conditions of absolute or extreme poverty. Many people in the developed world who experience relative poverty will suffer more illness and die earlier than those in wealthier social groups (Madnnes, and Kenway, 2006).

Relative poverty: Relative poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on the social context, hence relative poverty is a measure of income inequality. Usually, relative poverty is measured as the percentage of population with income less than some fixed proportion of median income. There are several other different income inequality metrics, For example the Gini coefficient or the Theil index. Although measured by this rate, about a billion people will still live on less than \$ 1.25 a day in 2015 and many of those who escape the \$ 1.25 a day poverty across 1981-2005 would still be poor by the standards of rich or even middle-income countries (World Bank, 2008)

Relative poverty is the most useful for assessing poverty rates in wealthy developed nations. Relative poverty reflects the cost of social inclusion and equality of opportunity in a specific time and space (World Bank, 2008). Relative poverty measure is used by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Canadian poverty researchers (World Bank 2010:124).

Once economic development has progressed beyond a certain minimum level, poverty problem from the point of view of both the poor individual and of the societies in which they live is not so much the effect of poverty in any absolute form. It is the effects of contrasts between the lives of the poor and the lives of those around them. For practical purposes, the problem of poverty in the industrialized nations today is a problem of relative

poverty. According to the Global Hunger Index, Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest Child malnutrition rate of the world's region over the 2001-2006 periods. Relative poverty measures are used as official poverty rates by the European Union, UNICEF and the OECD. The main poverty line used in the OECD and the European Union is based on 'Economic distance', a level of income set at 60% of the median household income.

2.10 Poverty in Nigeria

In Nigeria, poverty has always existed since independence. In pre-colonial period, people exchange what they produced for what they needed through trade by barter. This ability to meet their needs was limited to the quantity of their production. During the colonial era, there was self-sufficiency in food, but per capita income and social services were low. The oil boom between 1973 and 1980 brought mixed blessings to Nigeria. The increased revenue was diverted to develop infrastructures, social services, increase in wages especially in non-agricultural sector leading to a drastic fall (from 60% in 1960 to 31% in early 1980s). Nigeria became a net importer of food. Hence, when oil prices began to fall in 1982, the welfare system was affected, per capita income and private consumption dropped. That marked the beginning of real poverty in Nigeria. Poverty in Nigeria is endemic and visible, it is found to be more prevalent in the rural areas. The problem in the rural areas is further compounded over the years by the biased development pattern towards the urban areas (World Bank, 2000).

Generally, the poverty level in Nigeria has been extremely high with about two-thirds of the population living below the poverty line in 1996. Specifically, poverty level went up to 50% between 1980 and 1985 from 28.1% to 46.3%. Between 1982 and 1992, there was a drop of about 4%. However, by 1996 the level jumped up to 65.6%, an increase of more than 50% of 1993 figures. In absolute figures, however, the population in poverty continued to rise over the 16-year period. The estimated number of the poor, therefore, rose from 18 million in 1980 to 35 million in 1985, 39 million in 1992 and 67 million in 1996 (Ijaiya and Mobolaji, 2004).

The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS, 2006) estimated that in 2001 poverty incidence in the country has reached 66 percent in statistical terms; this means that 76.6 million Nigerians

out of the then population of 110 million were poor. With an estimation of 150 million today, about 80 million Nigerians or two-thirds of the population are poor. According to FOS (2006), “*poverty permeates virtually all ramifications of Nigeria’s national life*”. In 2003, Nigeria ranked among the ten countries which have the greatest number of people without access to safe water. The World Bank Report (2003) stated emphatically that the cash income of the poor in Nigeria is insufficient to cover minimum standards of food, water, shelter, medicare and schooling.

2.11 Conclusion

From the literature review it may be concluded that the majority of empirical studies confirm that a high population of young people across Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria still lack access to formal education. Various factors were found to be a determinant in the ways in which young people’s access formal education. These factors include poverty, socio-cultural context, economic status and religious backgrounds, and gender disparity of the young people. Most of the African studies discussed suggest that poverty and the socio-economic condition of women to be an important factor in promoting unequal access to school. However, some of the studies in this review lack explanations of how the limited economic resources or poverty influenced individual’s accounts or experiences of negotiating access to higher education. The reason for this is that the studies have relied too heavily on demographic health assessments based on quantitative data. There is an imperative need to augment these findings with further research among young Nigerians and to pay particular attention to some neglected areas of the studies reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical framework underpinning the study. It reveals the theories used for which relevant literatures has been sourced and discussed. The theoretical framework is an attempt to offer a contextual understanding to the study. The theories attempt to answer the relevant research questions that this study proposes, which are:

1. What are the ways in which young people narrate their social and economic background in relation to their access to higher education?
2. What are the different socio-cultural factors that influenced young people's access to higher education?
3. What are the ways in which young people are being affected by gender identity in relation to access to higher education?

It is a critical decision for a researcher to decide what theory to be adopted in any given research work (Higgs and Smith, 2002). This study is grounded in two theories and these include: a French Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) theoretical/conceptual arguments of social and cultural capital and the Oscar Lewis' (1914-1970) culture of poverty in exploring the young people's access to higher education as shaped within their socio-cultural context and other contextual framework as poverty.

Pierre Bourdieu, a renowned scholar in the field of sociology was especially prominent in the area of education, culture and political sociology. He was an author of almost 40 books and about 400 articles (Calhoun and Wacquant, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 2005; Wacquant, 2007). It is not surprising therefore that in Africa and Nigeria as a

focus, the work of Bourdieu is taking a gradual diffusion, even though his core concepts have recently been pronounced interdisciplinary. To date, sociologists have become inclined to the work of Bourdieu, whether in chronological or reversed order. Meanwhile, the concept of ‘culture of poverty’ is a social theory that began to attract academic and policy attention since 1960s following the publications of the work of Oscar Lewis (1968) at the international Congress of Americanists in San Chose, Costa Rica (Harvey and Reed, 1996). Oscar Lewis was the first to popularize the concept of the “culture of poverty” and stimulated empirical analysis about poverty in the scientific world. In short, Lewis position has been well criticized but found relevant in the development of knowledge and conceptualization on poverty and culture.

In this study, both Bourdieu and Lewis concepts and theories provide theoretical frameworks which buttress this research. Together, these combinations of perspectives offer conceptual tools to explore some implications of poverty and socio-cultural factors on young people’s access to higher education within the specific study areas.

3.2 Pierre Bourdieu’s Theories/Concepts of Social and Cultural Capital

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), is popularly recognized as one of the most preeminent sociologists of the late twentieth century (Coulhoun and Waquant, 2002). His theoretical contributions (in social theory) and methodological works have been of global influence and remained prominent in different academic fields of social sciences including political science, economics, educational research and essentially relevant to sociological analysis of the contemporary society (Reed-Danahey, 2004). There are two versions of Bourdieuan theory. The first is his theory of society generally termed as “*practical theory*” in which he emphasizes the significant role of social interaction and specific context of study objects in more accurate and complete sense. The second strand is Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus* alongside with other concepts of different forms of capital which are linked in complex ways to his theory and together deepens understanding of the workings of power relations in human society as a whole (Bourdieu, 1984).

Bourdieu's social and cultural capital and its roles have generated considerable attention or interests. He uses his theory of social reproduction to explain his cultural capital. The inequalities experienced in young people's higher education are traceable to cultural capital. The focus of social reproduction is on family, education and social class. He opined education to play a supportive role in the reproduction of social class within society, increasing social inequalities and social exclusion. Bourdieu's cultural capital can be viewed from the educational perspective. His argument includes that young people who have educational cultural capital are being rewarded in terms of educational qualifications and a better future life while those young people without educational capital have penalties in the future (Bourdieu, 1977). Schools, where these young people acquire their educational qualifications are therefore referred to as the agents of social exclusion (for non-cultural capitalists) and reproduction for cultural capitalists (Bourdieu, 1977).

According to Bourdieu, (1980), in attaining cultural capital and educational attainment, the roles of family cannot be underestimated as an agent of socialization for transferring cultural capital from parents to offspring, in a relatively vicious circle. Reflecting the class position, the concept of his '*habitus*' introduced a form of cultural inheritance making only the elite's capital to be valued and recognized in society (Bourdieu, 1984). Young people from the elite family are therefore exposed to elite culture and are generally at an advantage. Once the differences between the two classes are created, it could lead to "*symbolic violence*" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:5). It depicts that parental cultural capital is the background required for cultural capital to be transmitted from one generation to another generation.

The conditions for cultural capital to be transmitted from one generation to another include the following: Strong inference between parents and the young people's cultural capital; association must be persistence; parental cultural capital must have significant effects on young people's initial occupational achievement and young people's cultural capital must be inclined by parental cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:5).

Although there are a number of theoretical positions that analyze Bourdieu's theories in the field of sociology, they share similarities with respect to their ways of situating/viewing some of his key concepts (for example, different forms of capital) within the networks of social relationships. According to Bourdieu, there are different forms of capital, and social capital is considered as one of them. Bourdieu (1986) expresses social capital as one form of capital in comparison to other types of capital, particularly economic capital which on its own, is referred to as the momentary income and other financial resources and assets, and finds its institutional expression in poverty rights. Cultural capital exists in various forms including long-standing dispositions and habits acquired in the process of socialization, formal educational qualifications (like the higher education) and training, and the accumulation of valued cultural objects. Social capital is therefore the sum of actual and potential resources that can be mobilized through membership in social networks of individual actors and organizations. However, the social capital is also viewed from the perspective of human capital as suggested by Coleman (1988). In the main, one type of capital does not exist in isolation, but are considered to be influential to each other.

As it concerns this study, the researcher turns to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to provide understanding of human society as a structure of social domination and oppression. This explains the various contexts that produce power relations within which young people's access to higher education are constituted. For instance, Bourdieu (1984) in his book *Distinction*, discusses the *habitus* as "a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices" (Bourdieu, 1984: 170) or as "an internalized embodied social structures" (Bourdieu, 1989a:18). From this perspective, *habitus* consists of individuals' deeply embedded or acquired habits, skills, thoughts, beliefs, interest, even tastes (for clothing, food, art, cultural objects) and understanding of the social world. That is to say in Bourdieuan's terms, human habits and dispositions in the social world such as class consciousness are products of some internalized values, ideas, beliefs and norms that are inculcated in individuals through socialization – parental upbringing and some external forces operating within the local context of individuals. This may further include certain situations or conditions in one's social environment in terms of the resources available to

achieving/acquiring education. While *habitus* may generally be viewed as an internalized structure, Bourdieu argues that *habitus* is not an internal force (or based on natural drive) that determines our thoughts and actions. He argues instead that *habitus* only possesses the capacity to limit, maximize or regulate our thoughts/ life styles within a range of structural or symbolic constraints. From this perspective, *habitus* is a sensibility acquired through one's life-time which often determines our values and the ways in which individuals understood, thought of, and lived lives within specific social and cultural contexts. It could therefore be argued that individuals' *habitus* can be produced, and modified by virtue of age, location, orientation, social class and experiences of the social context or field of social interactions. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1973, 1986) conceptualizes the concept of capital as the value given to material and non-material assets by everyone across different societies. Bourdieu's notion provides a way of viewing the contemporary world in connection with class conflicts. He conceived capital as a form of power which could emerge in different forms. Essentially, Bourdieu (1987) describes capital as accumulated material and financial resources or assets which forms the basis of social life or what determines the placement of individuals in different social class in contemporary society. Thus, Bourdieu viewed economic capital to imply accumulated material and financial wealth or individuals capacities to acquire/gain access to wealth in a given context. He extended his analysis of capital beyond economic capacities to include the social, cultural and symbolic realms (or forms of capitals). As Bourdieu (1986; 1973) further postulates: social capital refers to valuable individual's social networks and connections with social and formal groups such as friends, play groups, and membership of various organizations which may be based on acquaintances or at a high level of recognition. Cultural capital is the embodied high status of cultural knowledge or resources like music, arts and practices that can serve as access to power for an individual. Lastly, there is symbolic capital which is conceived as the social placement, honour and prestigious status accorded to individuals that possess the different forms of capital once they are recognized as being legitimate. Having highlighted the four dimensions of capital as postulated by Bourdieu, this study specifically pays attention to his theoretical arguments of social and cultural forms of capital to seek

understanding of the social context or interactional field that could be influential to young people's access to higher education.

3.3 Implications of Bourdieu's Social and Cultural Capital Theories

In his conception of social and cultural capital theories, Bourdieu's (1973) argument is centered on the existence of class struggle and the ways in which societal structures are produced and reproduced in ways that are instrumental to the existence and reinforcement of social inequalities across different social classes. As Bourdieu argues, modern societies are structured in the field of class relations, that is, an exercise of power through which the dominant class gain control over the less powerful class by placing recognition or legitimizing their values like the educational system, cultural goods and anything achievable to them (that is, the dominant class) as the bases of social life.

For instance, Bourdieu's notion of social capital is explicitly focused on the social contexts that produce and reproduce dominant class in the capitalist societies. Social capital is explained in terms of individuals' ability to sustain and utilize one's social networks as resources to move up to a higher social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1986). Here, the emphasis is on values, socially negotiated ties (relationships) and resources. By way of implication, social capital becomes a resource or an investment in the social struggles and those with more social resources, (which in this context serve as a powerful tool for moving up to higher social hierarchy) use their valuable connections to accumulate more capital resources in order to maintain their dominant positions (Bourdieu, 1986, 1987). To put it succinctly, the higher the level of social networks or valuable connections an individual can mobilize, the higher the resources or social capital that individual is able to acquire. Thus, an important implication of Bourdieu's analysis of social capital is that the type of social relations or groups that one belongs to, potentially determines the amount of social capital individuals can acquire. In furtherance to Bourdieu's perspective, it has also been argued that *habitus* forms a powerful medium through which cultural capital are constructed, shaped and reproduced. In this sense, cultural capital is described in the form of non-monetary

assets, a particular stock of knowledge and competencies acquired through educational knowledge/credentials, familiarity with cultural history or specific cultural practices, which are found, expressed in one's behaviours, thoughts, class relations and practices (Bourdieu, 1986; Bennett and Silva, 2006).

In short, Bourdieu views culture as playing a determinant factor in the ways people respond to their surroundings. For instance, the working and lower class young people (students) are more likely to attend government universities and it is probably impossible for them to attend esteemed or relatively private institutions as may be compared to their upper class counterparts (Hearn, 1990; Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer, 2009; Rosenbaum, 2004). As he (Bourdieu, 1990) further argues, there are three states of cultural capital: the first is the embodied cultural capital which explains the way individuals display their educational attainment through language, dispositions, and communication of knowledge, lifestyles and thus develop their characters and relationships. A typical example of cultural capital as Bourdieu discussed is linguistic capital which is the "*mastery of, and relation to language*" (Bourdieu 1990:114). This suggests language as constituting the major medium for expressing cultural norms, values, and beliefs that are critical for learning within formal settings (educational institutions) across different societies. The second is the objectified cultural capital which takes the form of cultural goods that are acquired by individuals. This consists of physical objects such as works of arts (paintings), books, dictionaries, and machines/instruments that can be transmitted in exchange for monetary benefits or acquisition of highly prestigious status which can further enable/facilitate individuals in possessing symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1979, 1990). Thirdly, the institutional form of cultural capital as discussed by Bourdieu (1990) explains the different patterns of institutional recognition and educational qualifications acquired by the individuals. These include academic success, certificates of competencies, diplomas and so on. In sum, the major argument behind cultural capital is the fact that it embodies or generates practices that establishes social hierarchies in a given context (field) across societies.

3.4 Critique of Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of Social and Culture Capital

Bourdieu's analysis has influenced recent works within the social theorists' framework, particularly those adopting Bourdieu's theories on young people and in educational research. Despite this, his ideas concerning some distinguishing features of his contexts have also attracted a number of criticisms, which can be highlighted in what follows. Bourdieu concentrated on education as a major phenomenon or system that is responsible for cultural capital accumulation. Bourdieu sees the educational system in an urban industrialized society to be the legitimacy for class inequalities. His argument on educational systems is the basis for cultural value, that is, education as a structured system is viewed as a field of struggle (Bourdieu, 1993:30) between power relations and between social classes, which often forms the basis for domination, subordination or equivalent. In addition, Bourdieu assumes that young people have equal opportunities and access to elite cultural capital. His idea of class inequality is a directional educational inequality. Additionally, the assertion that educational systems play a "pedagogic action" in cultural reproduction is arbitrary (Bourdieu 1990:23). The family is the first group that the young people associates with and as an agent of socialization, plays a significant role in terms of pedagogic activity rather than just schools. As Bourdieu puts it, that the schools role is "to conserve, transmit and inculcate the cultural canons of a society" (Bourdieu 1969:110). In this sense, educational systems are viewed as an agent for cultural reproduction. The idea of an educational system being a basis for social groups has therefore been over-flogged (Halsey, 1980; Robinson and Garnier, 1985) and his theory lacks sufficient evidence (DiMaggio, 1979; Jenkins, 2002). According to Honneth (1990), Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital is ambiguous in the way he conceived the dominant class as cultivating *distinction* for their own life-style in contrast to those in lower class. Wacquant (2005) posits that Bourdieu tends to institutionalize his concepts. For instance, social capital is invariably used like cognomen of those young people from the upper class and cultural capital as elite academic credentials.

The over representation of students from the dominant class household among prestigious disciplines, such as mathematics, literature and philosophy is paramount to

his analysis. Bourdieu's analysis has also been criticized in the sense that his work is not only "complex", but difficult and confusing (Jenkins 2002:162). He fails to analyze the possibilities of class mobility, which is the possibility of individuals moving from one class to another through a significant change in economic capital leading to social and cultural capital. His analysis is confusing in that he argued against himself that the distribution of cultural capital did not correspond to the distribution of economic capital (Bourdieu 1973a: 87-94). No matter the closely knitted relationship between cultural capital and economic capital, cultural capital is not necessarily shaped by economic capital. For instance, due to the complex nature of Bourdieu's objectivism and subjectivism, he introduced the concept of *habitus* to recapitulate meanings of individuals to be of social action only. Critics hold that the concept of *habitus* relates only to objectivism, which Bourdieu disagrees with (Brubaker, 1985:746; Jenkins, 1992:18). In addition, his concepts of social capital has been criticized for being a theoretically loose concept, and attributable to a number of tautological statements in his theory (such as the successful succeed). One of the major criticisms of the Bourdieuan's perspective is that it overwhelmingly focuses on economic and class conflicts and ignores the possible absence of class struggle/power relations in social relationships. Critics suggest the need to consider social networks beyond exploitation or economic interactions. Another important limitation identified is the fact that Bourdieu's theory is viewed as elastic. For instance, only young people with rightful connections (such as those from wealthy background) are viewed as those who can access more capitals that are social. It flouts the possibilities that the less privilege may also benefit from their social ties. Finally, Bourdieu's theories have further been criticized for seeing all actions as interest-oriented. Despite the above criticisms, however, Bourdieu's view of *habitus* in its social, economic, cultural and symbolic forms as instrumental to acquisition of capital offers a useful contribution. Such an understanding is essential to this study, as it focuses on the social and cultural systems that shape young people's access to higher education. In addition, fundamental to this study is the importance of context, such as social, family background, religious and cultural viewpoints. Adopting a Bourdieuan perspective provides ways of thinking of various contexts that go beyond individual agency or personal decision making to

explain the complexities of socio-cultural contexts and other relational positions (such as poverty) which influence young people's higher educational attainment in African and particularly in the Nigerian context.

3.5 Oscar Lewis' Argument on Culture of Poverty

Lewis (1969:190-192) described the culture of poverty as way of life or a combination of certain traits from individual, family, and community that are socially and economically marginalized from a modern society. Such individuals develop certain patterns of behaviour to deal with their low status and from then, transfer such values from one generation to the next. In articulating this theory, Lewis (1969) emphasized the distinctive lifestyle of the poor which grew out of the experience of poverty. Poor people share particular 'deviant' cultural traits, which differentiated them from the rest of society, and that such characteristics perpetually maintain them in the position of poverty. That is to say, poor people have remained in their poor position not necessarily because of their marginal or low economic condition but because of the peculiar ideas and cultural values, which they have developed from poverty (Lewis, 1969). In his study of culture and 'subculture' of the urban poor, Lewis (1964:150) observed that individuals feel marginalized, helpless and inferior, and thus adopt certain attitudes of living for the present. Their cultural traits comprise helplessness, of dependence, inferiority, a strong present time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification, and sense of gratification and fatalism (Lewis, 1964:150). The theory also holds that the circumstances of poverty are similar in many respects in different societies, and similar circumstances and problems tend to produce similar responses, which are often developed into culture and subcultures. Thus, the culture of poverty includes a relatively distinct subculture of the poor with its own norms and values (Lewis, 1964; see also Eitzen and Baca-Zinn, 1994).

Essentially, Moynihan's (1965) report of the 'Negro Family', has argued that "culture of poverty" restrained poor people in impoverished conditions despite various intervention programmes designed to assist them. Moynihan (1965) reports that the

American poor black families as being caught in a “tangle of pathology”, he argues that the problems of the inner city black families resulted from the breakdown of existing norms such as the decline of male –headed households to matriarchal or female-headed family structure (Small, Harding and Lamont, 2010). As he further argues, the existence of family breakdown is attributed to the condition of slavery, unemployment, leading to black males’ powerlessness, dependence, and the creation of pervasive cycle of poverty among American black people (Small, Harding and Lamont, 2010; Suh and Hiesie, 2014). Viewing the report of the study of the Negro family together with his (1966) study, Lewis concluded that poverty is sustained by a set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, values and practices, which are transmitted from one generation to another.

Thus, the theory of culture of poverty is premised on the assumption that poor people would continue to live in impoverished condition even if structural conditions that gave rise to poverty changes. Similarly, Eitzen and Baca-Zinn (1994: 173) in analyzing Lewis’s concept of poverty assert that the poor are qualitatively different in values due to the peculiarity of their orientations/culture and such cultural differences explain why they are trapped in condition of poverty with little chance of escape. In addition, those that are trapped in the culture of poverty are also known for their peculiar cultural traits such as high divorce rates, which often result, to large numbers of female headed households. They have limited access to social services and healthcare facilities, parents in this context are permissive or less verbal in raising their young people; while their young people have drastically different orientations to life when compared to their middle class counterparts (for instance, they are more likely to work while very young and to experience early initiation to sex). In most cases, their families are based on consensual marriage; and less interested in formal education (Long, 2011; Eitzen and Baca-Zinn, 1994:173).

In sum, Lewis described the culture of poverty as a way of life, a combination of certain traits of poor people, which creates a cycle of intergenerational poverty. Culture of poverty is further understood as “adaptation to poverty” or “being at the bottom in an industrializing/ized capitalist society” (Gajdosikiene, 2004:90). As Harvey and Reed (1996) observe, Lewis’s analysis was from a Marxist background and initially geared

towards contending with the racial, national, and regional discriminatory explanations on culture. However, the wordings of Lewis' concepts and analysis were later criticized for contributing to racial explanations, which links poverty with the black race (Gajdosikiene, 2004; Suh and Heise, 2014).

It could also be observed from Lewis's (1964) perspective that while the culture of poverty becomes a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in society, it goes beyond a mere reaction to a situation as it takes on the force of culture with peculiar behavioural disposition which are internalized by the poor and passed on through generations. In sum, the culture of poverty then tends to perpetuate poverty through its characteristics, which are mechanisms for maintaining or surviving the situation. However, Lewis argues that the culture of poverty is not prevalent in the developed countries but most applicable to the less developed or third world countries in the early stages of industrialization (see also Eitzen and Baca-Zinn, 1994).

Overall, although only a few social scientists agree with Lewis's analysis (Suh and Heise, 2014), the theory of culture of poverty offers a useful concept for this present study. Despite the various criticisms to this perspective, Lewis's analysis essentially affirmed that culture constitutes a set of norms and values that guide the behaviours of individuals, families and community and provides an important context to this study. In addition, the theory also suggests that people might be adopting certain behavioural patterns or values by virtue of their orientations, by their specific social and economic circumstances, or as a strategy for surviving such conditions. This provides additional context within which to explore young people's access in terms of whether the young people were found to be influenced by their different social and economic circumstances in their access to higher education.

3.6 Critique of Oscar Lewis's Culture of Poverty

Lewis's theory has been recognized for its contribution to the analysis of the concepts of culture and poverty particularly within the sociological and anthropological

frameworks (Harrington, 1962; Eitzen and Baca-Zinn, 1994; Harvey and Reed, 1996). However, his basic ideas about the subculture of the poor have attracted a wide range of criticisms. One of such criticisms is his overemphasis on the negative aspects of the culture of the poor (Guata, 2004). His negative description of culture of poverty betrayed the basic assumptions of the culture of the poor. Critics suggest that there is need to consider some positive aspects on the subculture of poor people which Lewis has out-rightly neglected in his study (Berndt 1969:188 cited in Guata, 2004). In addition, Lewis has been condemned for his assumption that poverty is caused and retained by poor individuals due to their peculiar lifestyles and values. Such perception negates his earlier intention to conceptualize culture in terms of emphasizing the dignity and worth of the poor people (Gajdosikiene, 2004:91). Lewis's analysis has been generally viewed by other scholars as blaming the-victims for their problems, a perception that assumes that poverty can be eliminated by a change of culture (Bourgois, 2001).

Another important limitation identified by Small and Newman (2001) is Lewis's view of culture of poverty as unchanging or as a continuous process. That is, once poverty begins; it continues to perpetuate itself from one generation to another. Such perception ignores the dynamic aspects of human culture, as other scholars have argued; culture is a dynamic concept, which is subject to change, with some forms of modification. Thus, the subculture of the poor has possibilities of being transformed and people's behavioural patterns, including values, and ideas are subject to modification by different social conditions that people encountered during their life's course (Small and Newman, 2001). The idea present by the culture of poverty has also been accused of sustaining racism and discrimination in attributing the culture of poverty as applicable to the third world or developing countries or nations in their early stages of industrialization (Harrington, 1962). There are lower class communities in American society where the basic ideas of the culture of poverty are equally applicable. In addition, other scholars have also contended with an aspect of Lewis's (1969) view, which describe individuals from poor social strata as those who take more approach that is radical to life situations compared to young people from the middle class. For instance, Eitzen and Baca-Zinn cited in Long (2011:10) have argued that most poor

people attempt to live by society's value but their struggle is frustrated by externally imposed failures because society has not provided a means to achieve those goals.

3.7 Relevance of the Theories for this Study

This study builds on a combination of theoretical framework/analysis and empirical findings from young people in the study setting. At a theoretical level, the two theories are to be considered. The first is Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical/conceptual arguments of social and cultural capital to explore young people's access to formal education as shaped within their socio-cultural condition. The second is Oscar Lewis's (1964) argument on the culture of poverty. For instance, as it relates to this study, Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is utilized to provide an understanding of human society as a structure of social domination and oppression. This explains the various contexts that produce power relations within which young people's access to education are constituted. For instance, Bourdieu (1984) in his book, *Distinction*, discusses the habitus as "*a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices*" (Bourdieu, 1984: 170) or as "*an internalized embodied social structures*" (Bourdieu, 1989b:18).

From this perspective, *habitus* consists of individuals' deeply embedded or acquired habits, skills, thoughts, beliefs, interest, even taste (for clothing, food, art, cultural objects) and understanding of the social world. That is to say in Bourdieuan's terms, human habits and dispositions in the social world such as class consciousness are products of some internalized values, ideas, beliefs and norms that are inculcated in individuals through socialization – parental upbringing and some external forces operating within the local context of individuals such as formal education. This may further include certain situations or conditions (such as poverty considering this in the present study) in one's social environment in terms of the resources available to achieving/acquiring education. For instance, Bourdieu's notion of social capital is explicitly focused on the social contexts that produce and reproduce the dominant class in capitalist societies. Social capital is explained in terms of individuals' ability to

sustain and utilize one's social networks as resources to move up to higher social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1986). Here, the emphasis is on values, socially negotiated ties (relationships) and resources. In furtherance to Bourdieu's perspective, it has also been argued that *habitus* forms a powerful medium through which cultural capital are constructed, shaped and reproduced. In this sense, cultural capital is described in the form of non-monetary assets, a particular stock of cultural knowledge and competencies acquired through educational knowledge/credentials, familiarity with cultural history and specific cultural practices which are expressed in one's behaviours, thoughts, class relations and practices (Bourdieu, 1986; Bennett and Silva, 2006). In short, Bourdieu views culture as playing a determinant factor in the ways people respond to their surroundings. Bourdieu's view of *habitus* in its social, economic, cultural and symbolic forms are instrumental to the acquisition of capital offers a useful contribution.

Similarly, Lewis (1964) argues that the poor are qualitatively different in values due to the peculiarity of their orientations/culture and such cultural differences explain why they are trapped in conditions of poverty with little chance of escape. In addition, he argued that those who are trapped in the culture of poverty are also known for their peculiar cultural traits such as high divorce rates, which often result, to large numbers of female headed households. They have limited access to social services and healthcare facilities. Parents in this context are permissive or less verbal in raising their children; while their children have drastically different orientations to life when compared to their middle class counterparts. Such an understanding is essential to this study, as it focuses on the social and cultural systems that shape young people's access to education. In addition, fundamental to this study is the importance of context, such as social, religious and cultural viewpoints. Scholars have also contended with an aspect of Lewis's (1969) view, which describes individuals from poor social strata as those who take approach that is more radical to life situations compared to children from the middle class. For instance, Eitzen and Baca-Zinn cited in Long (2011:10) have argued that most poor people attempt to live by society's value but their struggle is frustrated by externally imposed failures because society has not provided means to achieve those goals.

Overall, the theory of culture of poverty offers a useful concept for this present study. Despite the various criticisms to this perspective, Lewis's analysis essentially affirmed that culture constitutes a set of norms and values that guide the behaviours of individuals, families and community, which provides an important context to this study. In addition, this theory also suggests that people might be adopting certain behavioural patterns or values by virtue of their orientations, by their specific social and economic circumstances, or as a strategy for surviving such conditions. This provides additional context within which to explore young people's access to higher education in terms of whether the young people were found to be influenced by their different social and economic circumstances. Having considered the theoretical perspective to the concept of poverty from Lewis's perspective, it is imperative to conduct an empirical study to further observe how poverty has affected the selected communities in Kogi State and on both rural and urban Nigerian young people particularly in relation to their access to higher education.

Adopting a Bourdieuan and Lewisian perspective provides ways of thinking of various contexts that go beyond individual agency or personal decision making to explain the complexities of socio-cultural factors and other relational positions (such as poverty) which influence young people's educational attainment in the African context. In accordance with these theories, it will be appropriate to carry out qualitative research in ways in which social norms, beliefs, ideas, different values and other relational factors might influence young people's access to higher education.

This study supports the arguments of Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital. Essentially, this study is presented as an effort to build upon and extend earlier quantitative applications of Bourdieu's ideas, and to provide a more detailed knowledge of Bourdieu's theoretical bedrocks. As revealed in the literature, the conventional approach in the quantitative research literature has been to focus on both in-university and out-of university young people who provide narrow analysis on what applies to Bourdieu's idea of social and cultural capital. Consequently, the application of Bourdieu's theory in understanding social inequality in the African context, especially as it affects Nigerian young people remains unclear. Thus, the aim of this

study is to clarify Bourdieu's concepts and to incorporate a Bourdieuan framework within the Nigerian context of the various ways the individual *habitus* have affected their choices of institutions and general access to higher education.

Over the past ten decades, Africa and Nigeria in particular has experienced a tremendous increase in the numbers of higher education or higher institutions, or what is otherwise called tertiary institutions. This experience has not changed the class division that has existed within the Nigerian society. The tremendous increase in higher education institutions in Nigeria has brought about different social opportunities and increase in upward mobility. To some, they have come to conclude that a diploma or even a degree is a meal ticket for an individual (Atwell and Lavin, 2007). Therefore, attainment of a higher degree determines a greater future earning and occupational mobility (Gerber and Cheung, 2008). One can draw a summary from Bourdieu's argument that social inequality drawn from higher education performs a social function of rewarding in terms of cultural capital through the acquisition of qualifications or results through meritocratic principles. Bourdieu postulates that the educational system is a major "pedagogic action" (Bourdieu 1990: 23).

As discussed earlier, the focus of this study is centered on poverty and socio-cultural factors on young people's access to higher education. This is somewhat similar to Bourdieu's empirical work. Comparing the different categories of students, Bourdieu observed that students from the upper class have over two-third enrollment in higher education. The present status "inherited cultural capital" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979:20-23) for these young people is achieved through an unconscious process of socialization. Not only that young people from industrialized society households have only about 2% enrollment in the university, they also lack "inherited cultural capital" to be engaged in academic curriculum or be part of the "scholastic market" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979:82). This is because academic discourse is distant for them from their family of orientation (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979). Those who pursue cultural capital accumulation are motivated to devote their support towards their children's elitist cultural accomplishment, while those that pursue economic capital accumulation

are more concerned with financial engagements. Others who are professionals engage in objective cultural and social connections (Bourdieu 1973a: 92-93).

In a related disposition, Bourdieu (1979), in dealing with his notion of cultural capital, studied students in different categories; the working student; elitist class or upper class students and the gender based (male and female test scores) differences. In his analysis of the academic performance of both male and female students, he described the performance of the female to be lower than their male counterparts; this is due to the different and unequal selection into their respective disciplines. It was found that females are unlikely to attend reputable or prestigious higher education or elite schools. Not surprising therefore, in the 1960s, “*girls are condemned to enrolling in [in the less prestigious] arts faculties twice as often as boys*” (Bourdieu et al., 1994:44).

3.8 Conclusion

Overall, Bourdieu’s and Lewis’s frameworks were found relevant in providing perspective for this research. Despite their various limitations, their theories affirmed that access to higher education cannot be assumed to be essential characteristics that can be understood as strictly biological or individual rationality. Based on their conception, access to higher education in this study is viewed as always constructed within wider cultural and material resources, which cannot be studied out in the realm of the social, but basically facilitated and organized around economic, religious, culture, family background and other social circumstances. Having considered the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu’s social and cultural capital and the concept of poverty from Lewis’ culture of poverty, it is imperative to conduct an empirical study to further observe how poverty and socio-cultural factors have affected both rural and urban young Nigerian people particularly in relation to their access to higher education. Having discussed the theoretical background of this study, the following chapter presents the methodological strategy that was employed in the collection and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodological approach used in addressing poverty and socio-cultural factors as a causal factor on young people's access to higher education. Research methodology is viewed as a strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and the use of particular methods, linking the choice, and desiring an achievable goal (Crotty 1998). It would identify the various steps that would be followed in the process of collecting and analyzing the data.

This chapter is divided into five sub-sections: the first part reiterates the overall aim and research questions of this study; the second discusses the methodological framework of the study. It explains the justification for choosing both quantitative and qualitative research designs as well as the rationale for selecting the use of questionnaire, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs); third is the description of negotiating access to potential participants; the fourth section describes the sampling methods for selecting participants, methods of data analysis and ethical issues that were considered in conducting the study. Finally, this chapter presents an overview of Kogi State and the selected communities of Kabba, Okene and Lokoja in Nigeria.

4.2 Statement of Aim and Research Questions

The overall aim of this study is to explore poverty and socio-cultural factors including the norms, beliefs, traditional values and practices and other social conditions (related to class, geographical location, family structure, religion, and access to other social and economic

resources) that shape young people's access to higher education in Kogi State of Nigeria. This study focuses on the following primary research questions:

- i. What are the ways in which young people narrate their social and economic background in relation to their access to higher education?
- ii. What are the different socio-cultural factors that influenced young people's access to higher education?
- iii. What are the ways in which young people are being affected by gender identity in relation to access to higher education?

4.3 Description of the Research Setting

This study was conducted in three selected areas of Kabba, Okene and Lokoja in Kogi State of Nigeria.

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria Showing Kogi State



The map illustrates the actual location of the study. In the section that follows, description of each of the study locality is provided.

4.3.1 Kabba

The first area selected for this study is Kabba, a small town in the Northern region of the state and the seat of the Kabba/Bunu Local Government Area (LGA). It has an area of 2,706 km² and a population of about 145,446 (NPC, 2007). The community is at the intersection of roads from the state capital (Lokoja) and a number of other cities and towns. An oral evidence (Chairman, Road Transport Association), suggests Kabba to be about 50 minutes' drive from the state capital, Lokoja and three hours from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. It is a commercial centre for farm produce and textile products from the surrounding towns. These features give Kabba like Lokoja some traits of an urban centre such as electricity supply, business enterprises including banks and a range of educational institutions like the Ahmadu Bello University of Agriculture, the Federal Technical College and a number of other missionary Secondary Schools like St. Barnabas' Secondary School, St. Augustine's College, St. Monica's College, Sacred Heart Secondary School and a host of others.

However, one major characteristic of a small town like Kabba is that it is predominantly a communal setting, where generations of families usually live within the same homestead. Households are largely in extended family structures and are polygamous; often composed of a number of wives and children who usually assist with farming activities as the community is agrarian in nature. Culturally, the people are highly traditional and religious; their deity, dress, songs, beliefs and entire existence are strictly bounded by their cultural milieu (Izugbara, 2004b). Kabba is a patrilineal and patriarchal society where the family is viewed as a sacred institution and the basis of social organization (Izugbara, 2004a). The headship of the family is the man or husband and their wives under his oversight. Male children are valued more than female and the former are socialized quite early to see them as heads of households and breadwinners, while the cultural socialization of females aims largely at training them to become responsible mothers and submissive wives (Fatiregun et

al., 2009). Generally, young people in Kabba, who are within the age specified in this study (18-28), have some unique names. While the young men are usually referred to as 'gbarufu', the young women on other hand are referred to as 'udan'. They are specific names given to a newly born child which usually portray cultural names which has some traditional meanings. In common with most places in Nigeria, land ownership is predominantly by men and the society is headed by a king known as 'Obaro of Kabba' (which literarily mean the king of Kabba), who is assisted by a council of Chiefs, consisting of men rooted in the traditions and culture of the society. Even though English seems to be the major language spoken by many, majority of the people from Kabba speak the 'Owe' language, which is their mother tongue or dialect.

4.3.2 Okene

Okene is the second selected town for this study. Okene is a Local Government Area (LGAs) in Kogi State. The LGA was created in 1976 from Ebira division under the leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Okene has a surface area of 328km² and a population of 320,260 as at the 2006 population census. The present Okene LGA is made up of Okene and Okengwe districts consisting of 11 wards which include: Bariki, Otutu, Orientesu, Lafia/Obessa, Okenne-Eba, Idoji, Onyukolo, Obhura-Eba, Obehira-Uvete, Abuga/Ozuja and Upogoro/Odenkuwards. The traditional head of Okene is known as the *Ohinohi* of Ebiraland.

In terms of religion, Okene people are predominantly Muslims though with relatively large numbers of Christians. Essentially, there is a combination of traditional and religious practices within the community of Okene. Okene is often described as a cultural zone where the mores, taboos, customs and traditions are strictly adhered to. The cultural component of the Okene community bind them together especially in such practices as festivals, diets, dressing, dances, songs, rituals, folklores, beliefs and myths.

In terms of education, the Federal College of Education (one of the selected institutions for the present study) is situated in Okene as well as the satellite campus of the Kogi State Polytechnic.

4.3.3 Lokoja

Lokoja is the third selected community for this study. While Kabba and Okene are both regarded as town, Lokoja on the other hand is a city. Lokoja is a city in central Nigeria, called the middle-belt zone and is the capital city of Kogi State with a population of about 195,261 people (NPC, 2006). Lokoja is one of the capitals oldest cities in Nigeria before it became the state capital in 1991 (Kogi State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1991). As history indicates, it was the first seat of government in Nigeria during the colonial activities under the leadership of Lord Lugard. Lokoja lies on longitude 700 48N and latitude 60440E and is approximately 162 kilometers from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria; 65 kilometers from Kabba and 52 kilometers from Okene (Ifatimehin, 2009). For the purpose of this study, emphasis was placed on the economic activities of this city, as this would provide an insight or background information on the factors that may be impacting on young people's access to higher education in the local context of Lokoja.

Lokoja is characterized as a trading port during the period of boom through European commercial activities and especially as a confluence city surfing traffic from River Niger and Benue and the Atlantic Ocean (NPC, 2006). The city of Lokoja benefitted from the United African Company (UAC) activities which is the largest company operating in Lokoja at that time. The company constructed a Wharf for the off-loading of goods for importing and exporting purposes. Up until today, Lokoja has continued to grow in terms of population, economic and commercial activities. It is common practice for young people to engage in commercial or income generating activities especially during peak periods in motor parks, other public places and in market places. In terms of education, the city has a host of higher educational institutions, among which Kogi State Polytechnic (one of the higher institutions selected for this study) and the Federal University of Lokoja.

4.3.4 History of Kogi State

Kogi State was created on 27th August, 1991 to become one of the 36 states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The state was formally a geopolitical unit known as Kabba Province under the British administration (KOSEEDS, 2004) and comprised 21 local government areas. The state was created from parts of Kwara and Benue States and located at the central region of Nigeria. Kogi State (*see map of Nigeria showing Kogi State*) has its capital in Lokoja (one of the three selected areas for this study). Lokoja was the first administrative capital of Nigeria and now is the capital of Kogi State. There are basically three main ethnic groups and languages in Kogi State; these are the Okun, Igala and Ebira. It has a total area of 29,833km² and a total population of 3,595,789 (1991 Census cited in KOSEEDS, 2004). Culturally, the people of Kogi State who are popularly known and called 'Kogites' are highly traditional and religious; their diets, dress, songs, rituals, dances, folklore, beliefs and entire existence are strictly bounded by their cultural affiliation. Kogi State is a patrilineal and patriarchal society where families are viewed as a sacred institution and the basis of social organization (Fatiregun, 2009). In terms of economic activity, Kogi State is primarily agrarian. According to the report submitted by the Obajana Cement Project (2005), farming is the dominant occupation of most communities in Kogi State and a major means of all cash incomes. Mostly, people own plots of farm land where they specialize in growing cassava, rice, cowpea, pepper, and millet. The communities also generate income through principal tree crops such as cashew and palm trees especially in the swampy areas. Other economic activities that are well known among the people of Kogi State include cattle rearing, civil service, trading, carving and artmanship/artisanship (Obajana Cement Project, 2005).

Generally, while English is the official language in the state, majority of people still communicate in the Yoruba language. Other languages spoken in the state include Hausa, Tiv, Owe, (spoken in Kabba, one of the study areas), Igala and Ebira. Kogi State predominantly comprises rural communities which are characterized by low income and lack of social amenities and limited access to services such as health care facilities, electricity, internet and portable drinking water. The predominant religions are Christianity

and Islam. However a few people are also known to be practicing the African traditional religion.

4.4 Methodological Framework

This section describes the methodological framework for this research. Methodology refers to the underlying theoretical and philosophical perspectives, values and knowledge assumptions that informed the selection and application of research methods (Crotty 1998:3).

The first aspect to consider here is the research design which forms an essential part of any empirical study. It is the strategic plan of action, as well as processes that justify the use of certain strategy, methods or decisions which guide particular choice(s) and methods adopted in research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Crotty, 1998). Given that the present study focuses on exploring young people's access to higher education in relation to some underpinning factors, such as poverty and socio-cultural factors, this study adopts both exploratory and descriptive research design. One feature that led to the decision for these approaches is that exploratory research has the potential of providing explanation on a particular problem or a phenomenon, which has not been, clearly defined (Blaikie, 2006). Most empirical research on the effects of poverty on education, particularly in African countries, has emphasized causal explanations and the frequent occurrence of young people dropping out of school or not attending school. Such findings provide little understanding of the various contexts and absence of the voices of young people themselves on what might be influencing their informed choices. Moreover, it is pertinent to this study to employ a method that would enhance a rich data in understanding the effects of social norms among young people in relation to their access to higher education.

Meanwhile, the descriptive aspect of the research would involve the use of questionnaire survey to gain general knowledge of the respondents on their biographical data, and their knowledge on factors that facilitate or limit young people's access to higher education.

Furthermore, achieving this overall aim would provide a significant insight into the buttressing factors that shape young people's access to higher education in this setting. In

addition, the results of this study, aside from others will provide useful information for policy formulation and effective intervention strategies for young people in the study area, especially in relation to poverty and socio-cultural factors as it facilitates or limits the young people's access to higher education.

4.4.1. Conducting the Research in a Social Constructionist Framework

A constructionist perspective informs the methodological framework considered in this study. As Charmaz, (2000:525) has observed, the constructionist approach is suitable for a kind of study that “aims to include multiple voices, views and visions in the rendering of lived experiences”. Importantly, the constructionist methodological framework offers participants an exceptional privilege of making the accounts of their own life-experiences as well as interpreting such life-experiences and events (Charmaz, 2006).

The philosophical bases of a constructionist perspective are usually informed by the ontological and epistemological viewpoints of constructionism. The ontological standpoint of relativism is the ‘study of being’ (Crotty 1998:10). This implies the theoretical and philosophical considerations of how reality is structured and understood by the human mind (Crotty 1998:10). This suggests that human perception or the normalization and regulation of certain forms of knowledge are constructed and established through local and specific social interactions. Within this social constructionist framework, reality does not exist as an external force or as universal experience but through human engagement and dialogue (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:206). Thus, one could argue from ontological arguments that there is no single or universal reality; what exist are social realities, which are produced from the specific forms of social interactions that occur in specific context. As Crotty (1998:64) further asserts, “the way things are is the sense we make of them”. That is to say, human understanding of reality are contingent upon cultural and historical locations as varying contextual conditions produce alternative interpretations of the same social phenomena.

While ontological positions consider the need to examine what we understand by reality, the constructionist epistemology on the other hand offers “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998:3). It deals with the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general standpoints (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; 2000). It also provides clear insights of the relationship assumed to be present between the researcher and the researched by posing important question of ‘what is the relationships of the knower to the known’ in order to ensure that findings or knowledge generated in research are valid and adequate (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:83; *see also, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000*). Within the constructionist epistemology, there is an understanding that no object or action in the social world can have meaning prior to human engagement. Thus, meaning-making is central to knowledge generation as the human consciousness construct meaning of and about the social world (Crotty, 1998). This calls attention to how we attribute meanings to objects or subject or particular form of actions, suggesting the need for researchers to observe the methods through which to generate meanings or shared knowledge. From this point of view, being critical of how we apply the ‘meaning making systems’ or how we apply meanings to particular form of knowledge would guide the researcher to avoid misrepresenting the voices of the researched. This can be achieved through transparency and accountability of the researcher all through the research processes by declaring one’s own influential presence in the research. This study is guided by the principles of social constructionist as it aims to obtain adequate and legitimate findings.

Essentially, given that the present study assumes that young people’s access to higher education are informed by the social and cultural values, attitudes and beliefs within Nigerian local contexts and particularly Kogi State, the epistemological underpinning of this study recognizes the importance of cultural and social values as a process embedded in the social system in which young people’s access and life choices in general are being shaped.

From a constructivist approach, this research focuses on the individual as a unique narrator and interpreter of his or her own life-experiences and events (Crotty 1998:58). The social constructivist research process allows research participants to account for their life-experiences with the aim of building an understanding of why and how people construct

their meanings in a particular way within the context of particular situation (Charmaz, 2006:130). Thus, this study adopted the social constructionist approach by Kvalve (1996) framework for qualitative research interviewing. These include the following seven stages: themes, designing, interviewing, transcribing, interpreting, verifying and reporting. This approach offers a systematic process that is capable of addressing the objectives and research questions of this study.

1. **Thematizing:** The aim of this study is to learn about young people's access to higher education in terms of what influences them, which led to the identification of themes. These have been utilized to construct the research questions. Participants were asked questions related to the identified themes and efforts were made to analyze all relevant responses, (both verbal and non-verbal), and to identify any emerging themes. At this point, the data revealed the different themes that allowed conclusions to be drawn concerning those factors, which shape young people's access to higher education, as well as their challenges with respect to the influence of poverty, and socio-cultural factors on their educational pursuit.
2. **Designing:** Before the fieldwork began, adequate plans were made concerning the selection of participants and what questions to be asked in order to achieve the objectives of the study. This included planning for the later stages of analyzing and reporting. Design is concerned with the management, analysis and reporting of data. In this study, it refers to how the interviews and their transcripts were categorized or interpreted and made meaningful.
3. **Interviewing:** The most important stage is conducting face-to-face (in-depth) interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). It required the researcher to be sensitive to non-verbal responses and to the nuances of the relationships between the researcher and the researched (that is, the participants). Although these subjective factors are sometimes considered threats to validity, they can also be strengths, because the skilled interviewer can use flexibility and insight to ensure an in-depth, detailed understanding of the participants' experience.
4. **Transcribing:** This step is necessary in preparing the interview material for analysis. It considered the practical suggestions of Kvalve (1996) and Patton (1990) concerning this process, which range from ensuring that the recording equipment is

functioning well to developing sensitivity in terms of transcribing every detail including the nuances as well as the non-verbal expressions.

5. **Analyzing:** As part of the earlier research design, the interviews and their transcripts were condensed, categorized or otherwise interpreted and made meaningful. This was expanded under the heading on data analysis. In the analysis of data, the first task was that of reducing the voluminous data gathered into more meaningful units to capture the emerging themes, highlighting the respondents' similar viewpoints as well as their dissenting points of views. This was accomplished with the use of Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) systematic process of data analysis: *familiarization, identification of thematic framework, indexing and coding, charting and mapping, and interpretation of data*. The researcher adopted this approach because it provided an in-depth and systematic process in analyzing the data.
6. **Verifying:** This stage seeks to determine reliability (how consistent the findings are), validity (whether the study really achieved what it was intended to investigate) and whether the findings can be applied to anyone outside of this particular setting. In qualitative studies, one important way of verifying findings or establishing validity is to actually take transcripts back to some of the interviewed participants for verification of what they really and initially meant (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). However, considering the time and financial implications of verifying findings from different sources, the researcher in the present study was interested in making follow up visits only to participants where necessary and possible.
7. **Reporting:** This final stage consists of writing up the research findings. The reporting stage also consists of writing up the research findings and taking ethical features into consideration.

In line with the purpose of this study, the research sought transformative ways by adopting suitable methods of generating data that could maximize or provide in-depth understanding of poverty and socio-cultural factors which either facilitates or constrains young people's encounter in achieving higher education.

4.4.2 Justification for Selecting the Qualitative Approach

The qualitative method of generating data is aimed at exploring the social norms affecting access to higher education among Nigerian young people. Thus, the selection of a qualitative approach is the most suitable option for this study as it aims to produce what Mason (2002:3) describes as “rounded and contextual understanding on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data”. More so, it has been argued that a qualitative research is best suited for a kind of research that seeks rich descriptions of individual experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:16). Similarly, qualitative method of generating data has often been recommended for studies that intend to elicit the contextualized nature of experience and action and attempts to generate analysis that are detailed, “thick and integrative” (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005:2).

Another justification for selecting the qualitative strategy is that this study is in fact motivated by a desire to move beyond the inadequate understanding generated by the dominant quantitative approach based on a positivist paradigm. Most empirical research into young people’s educational attainment, particularly in African countries, has over-emphasized frequent occurrence of dropping out and those not attending institutions of learning. The findings provide few explanations of young people’s access and understanding of the contextual factors which might have influenced their lack of education or dropping out of institutions of learning from the perception of the studied group.

Therefore, adopting qualitative methods for this study was highly suitable for learning how dominant norms, traditional beliefs and practices impacted on young people’s life experiences and access to higher education. Additionally, following Creswell’s (1998) assertion on qualitative research, eight rationales were considered before selection of such a method.

The first is whether research questions for a study starts with how or what as an attempt to explore in comparison to quantitative approaches to mainly ask explanatory questions. The second is whether the research topic is an exploration topic (that is, a topic to be explored) rather than explained. The third is whether a study seeks to present a detailed view of the topic. The fourth is the requirement to study people in their natural setting. Fifth, is whether

a study would recognize the author's presence in the study? The sixth is whether there is sufficient time and resources allocated to generating/collecting and analyzing data. The seventh condition is whether there is an audience (for instance, supervisor and wider disciplines) that is receptive to qualitative research methods and findings. The eighth rationale for qualitative research is the need for the researcher to position himself as 'active learner rather than expert'. The present study meets all of the aforementioned criteria.

4.4.3 Justification for Selecting Quantitative Approach

Quantitative method of collecting data is also considered suitable for this study. This is based on the need to facilitate the generalization of findings (Creswell, 1999, 2003). The use of quantitative method provided this study the advantage of increased content validation of the results. As such, findings from this study can be extrapolated to other circumstances. Thus, adopting quantitative method of data collection increases the generalizability or external validation beyond the sample of this study to other people or settings as well as settings considered social and cultural connectedness between the different methods and different groups of people (Creswell, 2003; Fankforth-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996).

Importantly as Creswell (2003) argues, quantitative data is a powerful research tool in acquiring original data especially through research tools such as questionnaires to collect numerical data and statistics. As it concerns the present study, the use of quantitative data offers a unique way of making this study a descriptive one as it aims to provide answers to research questions on the current status of the subjects of the study. That is, the current status of young people's access to higher education. It is important to mention here that selecting a quantitative method further minimizes the level of subjectivity of judgment in the research process (Fankforth-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996).

4.4.4 Justification for Using a (Mixed) Triangulated Method

Triangulation is an approach in research, which uses the multiple sources of data with similar focus which provides a rich collection of data designed to reveal similarities and

differences in different settings (Mitchell 1986; Brewer and Hunter, 1989). As Mitchell (1986) observes, there are four types of triangulation, namely: data, investigator, theoretical and methodological triangulations. The first, which is data triangulation, is the use of multiple sources of data which all have similar focus. Second, investigator triangulation occurs when more than one investigator is involved within a particular study. Third, theoretical triangulation involves the use of several hypotheses which are considered within the same body of data while the fourth, which is the most commonly used type of triangulation is methodological (Mitchell, 1986; Duffy 1987). This involves the use of two or more methods of data collection within one study.

Although a number of researchers have criticised the use of (mixed) triangulation methods in research for philosophical reasons (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), other researchers have validated its use for the need to increase the extent of reliability of data obtained from research (Patton 1987; Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Silverman, 2001; McPherson and Leydon, 2002). As Brewer and Hunter (1989:5) argue:

“Social science methods should not be treated as mutually exclusive alternatives among which we must choose...individual methods may be flawed, but fortunately the flaws are not identical. A diversity of imperfection allows us to combine methods...to compensate for their particular faults and imperfections”.

The above assertions suggest that the triangulating method or approach allows the weakness of each research methods (such as the quantitative or qualitative methods adopted in this study) to be overcome by the strength of the other method. Moreover, it has been argued that quantitative and qualitative methods are not totally exclusive in their use but depend on the theoretical and methodological frameworks for any research. Thus, the epistemological standpoints associated with qualitative methods should not prevent the use of quantitative methods in a study and vice versa, rather efforts should be made on justifying the use of both methods in connection with achieving the purpose of the study. What is considered important here as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) observe is that the use of triangulation method in research needs to be appropriate for the study to have reliable results. The bottom

line is that research approaches should be mixed in ways that offers the best opportunities for answering important questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004:16).

In this study, both data and methodological triangulation were adopted. Data collections included: the use of questionnaire (quantitative approach) and the use of individual in-depth interview (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) (qualitative approach). The use of triangulation in this study provided an in-depth understanding (qualitative) and current status (quantitative) of the intricacies of poverty, culture and traditional beliefs of the young people and the extent to which these have been associated with their access to higher education.

Moreover as the design is of mixed-methods, it is expected that this study will provide thorough understanding of the important subject of this study through triangulation and overcome inadequacies each research methods might have. However, despite the above benefits envisaged from triangulation methods, the use of multiple methods might require more time and resources for data collection and analysis.

4.5 Negotiating Access and Recruitment of Participants

The fieldwork was conducted between November, 2015 and March, 2016 and the locations of the fieldwork/research are specifically Kabba (being a town), Okene (a town) and Lokoja (being a city), all in Kogi State, a North-Central region of Nigeria. Kogi State is one of the 36 states that make up Nigeria (See map of Nigeria showing Kogi State as the study area). Blaxter and Tight, (1997), notes that one of the factors that determine a successful research is the researcher's consideration on how to get the approval from the recognized institutions or individuals that govern a research setting. The consent of the institutions concerned was sought and formal approval letters were obtained (gatekeepers' letters) to conduct the research (*See Appendix B, C and D: Gatekeepers' Letters*).

The starting point for preparation for the fieldwork began with the approval of this research by authorities of the selected higher institutions. The next step was to obtain ethical clearance approval from the School of Social Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Thereafter, the researcher proceeded to undertake fieldwork. This enabled the researcher to proceed to the different sites where the research participants are located. Thus, accessing and recruitment of participants on arrival on the field was enabled. On arrival in the field for the in-university participants in the study, the researcher visited key administrators (the Registrars and Provosts) of each of the selected institutions for further discussions and reminders on the need to conduct the research in their localities.

As for the out-of university participants, there was no formal letters of approvals; the individual consent of the young people were sought as they were between the ages of 18 and 28. In this case, the respondent's personal approval to participate was through verbal communication. The out-of university respondents were located at different forms of apprenticeship programmes or engaged in some form of economic activities. The study considered the geographical accessibility of respondents in terms of travelling to the research sites. Considering this factor, the purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed in recruiting the out-of university respondents for the in-depth interviews (IDIs). As with both in-university and out of university, research respondents were briefed on the research objectives before invitation to participate in the research. As with those in-university respondents, the interviews were designed to exclude the interference of staff members. This was to ensure a free and conducive atmosphere for the respondents to express or voice their opinions. The administration of questionnaire, IDIs and FGDs used the random and cluster sampling techniques to select the desired number of respondents for the study. The researcher visited those classes to be involved in the study during school hours and sought the consent of students in those classes and negotiated time for the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires. For the in-university, the researcher approached the 80 selected young people: 40 participants for the survey (questionnaires), 20 for IDIs and 20 FGDs respectively. This was also replicated in the three selected higher educational institutions.

In these recruitment processes, the researcher took note of the total number of respondents (both males and females) expected for the study. Following the suggestions of Mason (2002) on qualitative sampling, this study also included the use of purposive sampling. The process began by identifying respondents within the specified age range (18 and 28 years),

who were invited to take part in the study. This enabled the researcher to determine their 'information richness' and to negotiate convenient times and venues with those willing to participate in the questionnaires, IDIs and the FGDs respectively. This exercise enabled the researcher to meet with the potential respondents for the questionnaires, individual interviews (in-depth interviews) and the FGDs. In each of the institution, the FGDs were undertaken in two sessions: males' and females' session. The researcher ensured a relaxed atmosphere in which they could freely discuss the topics for the study.

4.6 A Reflexive Viewpoint on Interviewing Female Participants

Generally, the process of conducting qualitative research was often influenced by the subjective presence of the researcher (Sword, 1999). This necessitates the need for self-reflexivity as a way of expressing the researcher's own role in the research process. According to Tindall (1994:149), reflexivity is "an attempt to make explicit the process by which the material and analysis are produced". Central to this reflexive view point was the researcher's role in the research process as a male figure and a sole researcher interviewing both young women and men. This level of self-reflection was to enhance the trustworthiness of researcher's findings and make transparent the ways the researcher connects with the participants particularly the young women.

Although some feminists have argued that research on women should be carried out by women (Stanley and Wise 1993:30), the researcher did not feel constrained by this argument as this study was not a feminist or gender-focused research (or, that mainly focused on women), but generally focuses on the effect of poverty on both young men and women. Moreover, Reissman (1987) argued that the gender of the interviewer and interviewees should not interfere with collecting valid and reliable data. Despite this justification, however, the researcher anticipated that as a male researcher, it might be more difficult for him to elicit rich and detailed data from the female respondents as compared to their male counterparts. Thus, the researcher engaged a qualified woman social scientist to join him as a co-researcher in conducting the female sessions. In addition, the researcher envisaged that the process of interviewing both gender could have been facilitated through

good rapport due to previous experience as teacher and having worked with in-university and out of university young people on a similar family health related programme, (a USAID funded project, Lagos State, Nigeria in 2008/2009).

In the first place, the awareness of the researcher's social identity as a male researcher interviewing young women helped him to be more conscious in ensuring that his role in the research process was not to actively control the interviewees. The researcher followed the suggestion of Seidman (1991) to ensure that the researcher did not impose his ideas or values on participants in the process of collecting and analyzing data.

In addition, the researcher also borrowed Kong's et al., (2002:252) idea that stresses the need for an "ethical researcher" to ensure that their personal investment in the research was always transparent; the researcher adopted this approach by describing to the participants how his interest in this topic had risen from personal experiences. This level of transparency assisted the researcher in building rapport through a shared understanding, which further minimized the gender differences and the researcher's social status that would have created a barrier between him and the participants in making the interview a form of question and answer forum.

Further, after making the participants aware of what the study was about, the researcher allowed them to express their knowledge on the research topic. Specifically, for the female participants, the researcher avoided asking questions that directly related to the issue of gender. It specifically focused on issues such as how poverty and socio-cultural factors have influenced them in gaining access to school; who is responsible for paying their school fees; what they would have done if such resources were not available or whether they had any worries about sustaining their higher educational level up to completion.

4.7 The Study Population

This study was conducted in three communities in Kogi State namely: Kabba, Okene and Lokoja. The study population comprised the total number of students/ participants under study in these higher education/institutions; namely, Ahmadu Bello University College of

Agriculture, Kabba; Federal College of Education, Okene and Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja.

4.8 Sampling Methods

Sampling is generally defined as the process of selecting a number of individuals in a study in such a manner that the individuals selected will represent the larger group since it is mostly impracticable to study an entire population (Creswell, 1999; Pattern, 2005). Given the nature of this study, both the probability and non-probability sampling methods were adopted. The non-probability sampling method was used for the qualitative data (in-depth interviews and FGDs), while the probability sampling method was employed for the quantitative data collection (questionnaires).

For both the in-university and out of university, the respondents comprise equal numbers of females and males aged 18-28 who were selected for the administration of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and FGDs. The decision for this composition was to examine whether there would be differences or similarities in poverty and socio-cultural factors on young people's access to higher education based on their gender. In addition, it is important to establish an approximate gender balance in the sample, in order to observe the influence of the various social contexts on both genders. One major reason that led to the decision of respondent's age restriction (18-28) was an attempt to ensure that they would be relatively independent in deciding on their own whether to participate in the study or not, without the need for the researcher to further seek parental approval.

With regards to the out of university respondent's, the purposive and snowballing sampling methods were utilized in selecting participants for the in-depth interviews. For the in-university young people on the other hand, the purposive sampling was further employed in selecting the age range of 18 to 28 for the study. The university administrators in each institution consulted students' records to select the classes or departments of students within the age range targeted for the study. However, in order to minimize the biases associated with purposive sampling technique (Mason, 2002); probability sampling techniques in the form of cluster and simple random sampling was used to select the actual number of

respondents that participated in the survey (questionnaire administration). The cluster sampling of classes was undertaken for each level where the age range of students was within the targeted range within the classroom as the unit of sampling. From this stage, the researcher was able to randomly select a manageable sample size of 40 for the questionnaires, 20 in-depth interviews and 20 FGDs being a representative of the population of each of the three institutions respectively.

In sum, non-probability sampling techniques was adopted for FGDs and in-depth interviews in order to reach the target sample quickly while probability sampling was adopted for the survey (questionnaire administration) in order to enhance more objectivity in the selection process.

The section that follows discusses the considerations given to sampling, the criteria, sampling frame, sampling size and sampling methods.

4.9 Sample Size of the Study

The targeted young people according to this study are 18 to 28 years that are in-university and out-of University. A total of 300 participants were recruited for both quantitative and qualitative methods adopted for this study. For the quantitative method, 120 questionnaires were administered among the in-university participants (consisting 40 participants from each of the three universities). For the individual in-depth interviews (IDIs), a total of 120 respondents were selected: this consists of 60 respondents from in-university (20 respondents from each university respectively), and 60 respondents for the out-of university comprising 20 respondents from each each university. Further, the FGDs comprise 60 respondents selected for the sessions: 2 FGDs from each university consisting 10 male and 10 female respondents making 20 respondents for each institution. In the administration of questionnaires and in conducting both the IDIs and the FGDs, the researcher considered gender fairness of respondents.

Arguably, a number of researchers have maintained that studies on qualitative methods in generating data should not be based on required number (Patton, 2002; Ezzy, 2005). Such principle of non-existence of sample size requirements in qualitative research suggests that researchers should not restrict the sample size to a specific number but should limit it

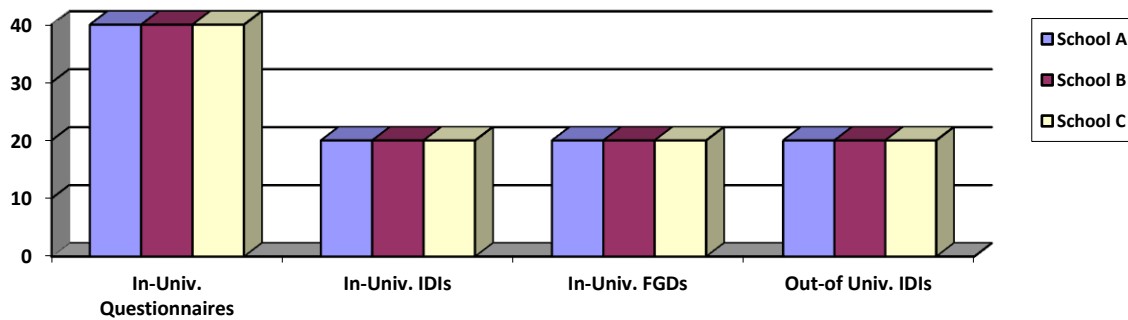
through a process of saturation. This means that data collection should only be terminated at a point when no new insight can be obtained (Lofland, 1995; Bryman, 2004). As with the qualitative research approach, quantitative research also demands to have a representative sample, which could provide a probabilistic foundation of statistical findings and formulation of theories (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Lemeshow et al., 1999).

The present study has been guided by the proposed sample highlighted above. The rationale for proposing this sample size was due to the time frame and limited resources available for the research. This implies that studying a larger sample might require more time than that allocated to the fieldwork and might also generate more data than a single researcher could handle within the time allowed for the study. This can simply be represented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the Number of In-University and Out-of University participants

	In-University Questionnaires	In-University (IDIs)	In- University FGDs	Out-of University (IDIs)	Total
School A	40	20	20	20	100
School B	40	20	20	20	100
School C	40	20	20	20	100
Total	120	60	60	60	300

Figure 2: Distributions of Participants as Per Methodical Categories



4.10 Criteria for Selecting Respondents

The criteria considered in selecting respondents for this study was based on what would assist the construction of a more suitable sample population for the study, such as age, gender, location and educational status:

- i) **Age Range:** Respondents were restricted to ages between 18 and 28 in an attempt to ensure that they would be relatively independent and thus be able to decide on their own to participate in the study, without the need for the researcher to seek parental approval, which might reduce respondent's freedom to communicate. Another reason for proposing to select young people in this age range is that they are generally considered to be more vulnerable to the various problems associated with dropping out of institutions of learning and lack of access to formal education in Nigeria (Africa Union, 2014). Apart from the fact that this age group has the highest reported levels of those who never attended university or dropping out of it, they have increasingly been reported as those group or population with high records of other socially related problems such as crime rates, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and so forth (the National Literacy Survey, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; UNICEF, 2012).
- ii) **Geographical Location:** The fieldwork was conducted in three geographical areas, (Kabba, Okene and Lokoja) in Kogi States, Nigeria. The rationale for selecting these locations are: First, Kabba is an agrarian community where the

dwellers are engaged predominantly in farming activities and the only town with a higher institution that specializes in Agriculture (Ahmadu Bello University College of Agriculture, Kabba Kogi State), (*See 4.3.1 on the description of Kabba*). It was important to know whether the agricultural orientation of the community was a part of the factor that shaped young people's education in terms of their access and choice to attend a higher institution of learning. Secondly, Okene is observably known to be rich/ dominant in cultural and traditional practices coupled with strong religious affiliations (*See 4.3.2 on the description of Okene*). It also hosts one of the higher educational institutions under study (Federal College of Education), Okene, Kogi State. For this reason, important links between the characteristics of Okene and the purpose of this research as to whether such features influence young people's access to higher education can be found. Thirdly, the criteria for selecting Lokoja were based on the fact that Lokoja is the centre and capital city of Kogi State, where economic activity was at its peak. (*See 4.3.3 on description of Lokoja*).

Finally, the geographical location of young people was also used to select participants who were born or had spent many years within the selected communities. It was envisaged that such respondents would be familiar with the culture and some other factors that may be connected with their access to higher education.

- iii) **Gender:** Although this study is not a comparative gender study of young people, the study found it important to establish an approximate gender balance in the sample. Both genders comprising equal number of males and females were sampled for the study.
- iv) **Educational Status:** In the bid to consider areas of similarity and difference between those in-university and out-of university groups, it is also one of the criteria/reason for proposing to include respondents both in and out of school. More so, another need to be addressed by this study arises from the fact that most studies on issues related to Nigerian young people's education have been conducted among those enrolled in formal educational institutions. It is part of

the aim of this study to understand the opinion of those who are not currently enrolled in any higher educational institutions.

4.11 Methods of Data Collection

Three different methodological approaches were used to collect data that is, the questionnaire, individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) and the focus group discussions (FGDs). In each category of methodological approach the research respondents had to sign a consent form showing their approval and willingness to participate in the research. This was done in order to ensure a free and conducive atmosphere for the collection of data.

At the beginning of each questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group session, the researcher elicited biographical data about the respondents before moving on to the open-ended questions and group discussions. The structured questions were used to produce information such as age, gender, place of birth, and so on.

4.11.1 Questionnaires

The design of the questionnaire was based on guided questions set for the quantitative data. Questionnaires are used to convert information obtained directly from a person (respondents) into data (Creswell, 1998). In order to answer the questions posed in the study, 29 questions were constructed for the questionnaires. The questionnaire has been viewed as advantageous due to its relative cost effectiveness and time saving features. However, its major weakness lies in the fact that it cannot be used to probe deeply into respondents' beliefs, attitudes and lived experiences (Gall et al., 2007). Bearing this in mind, the study did not rely solely on questionnaire responses but used it as a supplementary tool alongside the qualitative methods of generating data. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section one consisted of 10 questions which set out the demographic profile of respondents in terms of their age, gender, educational level, religion, and parents' highest level of education. The second section comprised five

questions on the respondents' general knowledge on what influenced them to access higher education. Eight questions were asked in section three on issues related to specific accounts of respondents on access to higher education. In section four, seven questions were asked based on respondents' socio-cultural context and access to higher education, where the respondents were expected to respond by yes, no and don't know responses. Lastly, section five raised eight questions based on the respondents' exposure to poverty and its effects on respondents' education. Respondents were expected to select yes, no and don't know responses. The questionnaire was designed in a way that respondents were able to complete them between 15 and 20 minutes with relative ease.

4.11.2 In-depth Interview (IDIs)

The in-depth interview was well established as an effective instrument for providing a clear understanding or detailed personal account of a particular phenomenon within the socio-cultural context in which human interactions occur (Kamuzora, 1989). This study considered the use of in-depth interviews for generating data through 120 respondents based on one-to-one interviews, (representing 60 respondents from in-university and out-of university respectively). It elicited individual experiential accounts of respondents' idea, and general practices in their local context, the challenges related to their access to formal education, and of how individual access to education especially higher education were influenced by certain norms, beliefs, cultural values and socio-economic factors. More importantly, the use of individual in-depth interviews was used as a tool for generating data on respondent's experiences. This was also used to explain how and why young people's access to higher education was often shaped by their social and historical contexts.

Moreover, the use of in-depth interviews was considered suitable for this study, as interviews were generally oriented toward the interviewee's knowledge, feelings, recollections and experiences. They also enabled the interviewer to reveal participants' meanings and interpretations, rather than impose the researcher's understandings (Charmaz, 2006). Equal numbers of females and males both in and out of university were selected. Also, the out-of university individual interviews included those who were found to be

engaged in various forms of income-generating activity, such as petty trading, being unemployed or those involved in various forms of apprenticeship. Moreover, since the study aimed to provide adequate understanding of the factors that might influence young people's meanings and practices, it became necessary to examine the various groups of young people in relation to their age, their social, economic and educational backgrounds, and how these factors have hampered their access to higher education.

4.11.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In sociological perspective, the aim of FGDs is to establish a 'synergistic group effect' where participants draw from one another in a process of interaction or collective brainstorming (Berg, 2001). Therefore, interaction is the key to the method, giving the method a high level source of face validity (Krueger, 1994) because what participants say can be confirmed, reinforced or contradicted within the group discussions. Similarly, this method allows the researcher to understand the feelings of a group and how they value their culture (Carter and Henderson 2005). In addition, FGDs generate conflicting ideas, and can be more naturalistic than individual interviews, reflecting on the idea that people make sense of their world in interaction and not as individuals (O'Reilly, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, FGDs was conducted within the in-university respondents in gaining understanding of their collective accounts, of their knowledge and information available to them on issues relating to higher education and their access to it. Also, this unfolds the young people's challenges with respect to the various factors impacting on their access. In addition, the FGDs were also employed to examine knowledge and the various dimensions in which poverty and socio-cultural contexts have facilitated or limited young people's access to higher education.

Another justification for the use of FGDs was that they could be more naturalistic than individual interviews, reflecting the idea that people made sense of their world in interaction and not as isolated individuals. As it relates to studying young people's access within the socio-context of the selected community, the FGD was a valid methodological

tool because it encouraged the group interaction in a process of ‘collective brainstorming’ (Krueger, 1994).

Importantly, the FGDs were conducted among the in-university respondents at different times. The researcher invited them to join in an identified popular location within their campus on a specific time conducive to them. This enabled the researcher to meet potential participants for the FGDs and individual interviews. In one of the selected universities participants suggested that FGDs be conducted on the school premises after lectures. In this case, the FGDs took place in one of the lecture venue. A similar arrangement was also replicated in the second and third university. For the in-university young people, in total two FGDs were conducted in each of the institution comprising 10 males and 10 females, making a total number of six FGDs, amounting to 60 respondents in all.

4.12 The Research Process –Interviewing Process

Consent for the use of a tape recorder was solicited from all respondents in the study. The researcher also reminded them about the confidentiality of their conversations; the study was for academic purposes only and assured them that their identities would be protected.

All interviews (in-depth interviews and FGDs) were conducted in English, recorded and transcribed. While those sentences expressed in local languages were translated into English. Each session lasted between 55 minutes to an hour. At the end of each session, participants were offered light refreshments by the researcher.

4.13 Data Analysis

Different methods were adopted for the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. This is discussed in much detail in the sections that follows.

4.13.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

In analyzing the quantitative data, three important steps were taken. The first step was editing. This involved thorough examination of returned questionnaires and field notes, and other important information gathered from the field.

Following this suggestions, all code decisions were systematized into coding system to guide the actual coding operations on each of the returned questionnaire. This made it easy for the researcher to prepare and transform variables created from survey before subjecting them to further analysis.

Descriptive statistics was utilized to draw out important findings from the study. The descriptive statistical analysis was focused on careful selection and organization of data into summary tables.

4.13.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The use of open-ended questions tends to produce a large volume of data. This necessitates the reduction of the data into meaningful units (Giorgi, 1985). The interviews (in-depth and FGDs) was transcribed verbatim from the audio recordings. The data analysis followed a set of five stages to ensure an adequate analysis. These steps are familiarization, identification of thematic framework, indexing and coding, charting and mapping, and interpretation (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). Each of these is examined in briefly.

Familiarization: This entails the reading of transcripts, research notes and their translation. The audio recordings of the interviews (in-depth and FGDs) was transcribed verbatim. Thereafter the transcripts was reviewed and typed to provide raw data for analysis. This enabled the researcher to identify the key themes and ideas.

Identification of themes: This concerns the notification of major themes. The themes were identified from the data collected and used to examine that data. In other words, new themes that emerged in the interviews were added and examined in relation to the research questions.

Coding and Indexing: At this stage, the researcher applied the thematic framework to the data. Each section of text in the interviews was marked with appropriate themes and coded with particular numbers or short phrases.

Charting: The data was re-arranged, according to the themes identified, under main headings and sub-headings. All statements belonging to a specific theme were arranged into a single file (Microsoft Word). This was used to differentiate or note the similarities between the responses of the in and out-of university respondents.

Mapping and Interpretation: At this final stage, the range of responses, central themes and shared perceptions as well as dissenting viewpoints were condensed and interpreted. Significant quotes expressing the themes were noted and highlighted.

4.14 Ethical Issues

As a starting point for the ethical considerations affecting this study, the researcher followed the Ethical Guidelines for Postgraduates as outlined in the guidelines stipulated in the School of Social Science website. Steps were followed in ensuring that the ethical considerations were followed. First, the researcher addressed the principle of informed consent by explaining the research topic and the aim of the study to the respondents to ensure that they understand the nature of the study. This allowed them to decide freely whether they were willing to participate in the study. The respondents were made to understand that participation was strictly voluntary and that they had the right to renegotiate consent during the research process or to ignore particular questions without giving an explanation and they might withdraw from the study at any point. The researcher also encouraged respondents to ask any questions they wished in relation to the study. Respondents in the study were provided with written consent forms to be signed and given to the researcher (*see Appendix D: Participants' Consent form*).

Secondly, the privacy and confidentiality of participants was respected before, during and after the fieldwork. The study did not reveal personal details such as the names of participants. All names used in the analysis chapters were pseudonyms and all interviews

were conducted in environments preferred by participants. In the process of interpreting and presenting the data, it did not reflect the identity of respondents. All data generated were kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes only. Both the tapes and the transcribed text were stored in a location which is only accessible to the researcher and the supervisor for at least five years, which is in line with the University of KwaZulu-Natal's ethical guidelines.

Thirdly, the issue of harm was considered as the use of physical devices could illicit emotional distress whilst in the process of conducting and recording interviews. In this study, the researcher negotiated the use of the tape recorder with respondents. The researcher further assured them that the tape recordings would be discarded after the transcriptions have been completed. Given the nature of this study, it was envisaged that some participants could become emotionally embarrassed, especially when relating unpleasant experiences. The first step was to organize the interviews in such a way that the conversation moved from relatively general issues to more focus and deeper matters. In addition, the researcher was also aware of his social identity as a sole male researcher interviewing young women and wanting to minimize the gender-differential effects. In this way, the researcher maintained focus on the subject of discussion and at times shared from his own life experience. This really enhanced some degree of reciprocity in the process.

4.15 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined the methodological and research design for this study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were considered the most suitable methodological framework for meeting the purpose and aim of the research. The quantitative approach attended to the descriptive aspect of the research while the qualitative approach from a constructivist view point, focuses on the in-depth account of young people as it relates to the various contexts that impacted on their access to higher education. A range of random and cluster sampling techniques were considered to select potential respondents for the quantitative study, while purposive and snow-balling sampling techniques were utilized to generate young people's account of the various factors that

influenced their enrollment and retention in university in the qualitative part of the study. This chapter also emphasized the ethical consideration of the study in ensuring that the principles of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were upheld throughout the study. Further, this chapter considered the issue of reflexivity for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. In sum, this chapter has dealt with the discussion and justifications of the methodological issues raised by the literatures reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter has also been employed to outline the broad ‘social constructionist’ theoretical positions that guided the study and sets out methodological strategies deployed in carrying out this research. In the following chapters, the researcher discusses and describes in detail the emerging themes and their related sub-themes generated from this research process.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA: PART 1

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of the two chapters dedicated to the findings of the study. It deals specifically with the presentation and interpretation of data from this study. This chapter is structured in two sections. The first section presents results from the demographic variables which are presented in tables. In each table, there are numerical values attached to every response derived from the respondents. The second section of the chapter centers on the discussion of the various influences encountered by young people within their local context in which poverty, cultural norms and values as well as gender were found to be important factors within which young people negotiate, juggle, or became subjected to certain conditions that determine their access and retention in higher education.

This section illuminates how young people's accounts are intertwined and deeply embedded in an environment of dynamic change and inconsistent social norms characterized by low economic backgrounds. For instance, in analyzing the IDIs and FGDs data, this section exposes the prevailing norms and ideas among youth that constructs higher education as being prestigious. The respondents were generally influenced by their peers, family, household and community members on the existing norms that view higher education as a major cultural capital. Thus, despite the low level of their parents' socio-economic background and educational attainment, the young people were still desirous to attain higher education through various complex ways. However, in most cases, the response to such influences varies, for some; it provides them with opportunity and choice while for others it means a struggle for survival.

In analyzing the findings, this chapter considers Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical and conceptual arguments of social and cultural capital and Oscar Lewis' culture of poverty in explaining the influences of poverty and socio-cultural factors on young people's access to higher education. Both theories provide understanding of young people's access as not

inherently based on individual rationality but shaped within their socio-cultural milieu and other relational conditions such as poverty. In particular, the data provides an understanding of different ways in which the young people’s access was mediated by their parental socio-economic backgrounds, religious affiliations and gender based-expectations.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

A total of 120 questionnaires were administered and received from the in-university respondents in the three selected higher institutions. Table 4 presents the demographic variables of the respondents.

5.2.1 Characteristics of Study Population by Gender

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	60	50.0
Female	60	50.0
Total	120	100.0

In terms of gender representation in the study, respondents were equally distributed. In the survey, a total of 60 males and 60 females, making a sum of 120 participated in the survey. It is important to note that even though this study was not a comparative gender study of young people, it was found necessary to include an approximate number of males and females in the sample to avoid the domination of opinion over each other.

5.2.2 Characteristics of Study Population by Age

The defined study population consisted of young people aged 18 to 28 who are currently in one of the higher educational institutions within the study area.

Table 5: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-21	61	50.8
22-25	40	33.3
26-28	19	15.8
Total	120	100.0

From Table 5 it can be observed that just over half (50.8%) of the respondents were between the ages 18 to 21 and about a third (33.3%) were between the age ranges of 22 to 25, while the remaining 15.8% of respondents were between the ages 26 to 28 years. This wide age distribution of respondents suggests that the study was well represented in terms of age. Considering the fact that all respondents are eighteen and above the age range helped to overcome the issue of informed consent as they may need not have the prior permission of their parents or guardians to participate in the study.

5.2.3 Characteristics of Study Population by Religion

Table 6 depicts the religious orientation of respondents in the study. It will be noted that an overwhelming 78% of the respondents belonged to the Christian faith whilst approximately 22% to the Islamic. This trend is close to the national population characteristic of Nigeria.

Table 6: Characteristics of Study Population by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Christian	94	78.3
Muslim	26	21.7
Total	120	100.0

This data reflects the strength of affiliation to Christianity as a religion. This is so because the study area falls within the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria which is mainly dominated by the Christian religion. It is unlike the Northern part of the country where Islamic religion is practiced mostly. Another contributing factor for the overwhelming number of Christian respondents in the study has to do with the colonial history of Nigeria where the local communities were proselytized to Christianity.

5.2.4 Characteristics of Study Population by Parental Level of Education

Respondents were asked about their parents' level of education. The results were grouped into a single Table in order to compare the father and mother's educational level.

Table 7: Distribution of Parents Level of Education

Educational Level of Respondents Parents	Frequency		Percent	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
No Formal Education	44	84	36.7	70.0
Primary Education	33	17	27.5	14.2
Secondary Education	28	9	23.3	7.5
Tertiary	15	10	12.5	8.3
Total	120	120	100.0	100.0

It is noted that 36.7% of respondents' fathers had no formal education, a large number (27.5%) of them had obtained at least primary level of formal education. 23.3% had secondary level education whilst tertiary level education was made up of 12.5% of the sample population. In contrast, for the respondents' mothers' level of educational attainment, the distribution shows that a large number of them (70%) had no form of formal education. Only 14.2% had primary education whilst 7.5% had secondary education and 8.3% had attended a tertiary institution. This distribution shows a very marked difference between fathers and mothers' level of education. Evidence from young people's account from the IDIs and FGDs also reveal that most of the participants' mothers had lower level of education compared to their fathers. Qualitative response to the level of parental education is captured in the excerpts that follow.

*...my mother told me that she never attended any school¹ as against her wish...but my dad was lucky to be his dad's favourite... so he had an HND...
[FGD, in-university: female, aged 19]*

...I had three elder sisters who had completed secondary school, but not in school anymore...my dad believed that should be the peak of girls' education...only two of us that are boys are in higher education now...[IDI, in-university: male, aged 20]

The unequal access to education might be attributed to the fact that Nigeria as in other African nation states is a male dominated society, where the male child is provided with greater socio-economic benefits and prioritized over their female counterparts. Similarly, previous studies (Fapohunda, 2012; Duze and Yaz'ever, 2013; Amadi, 2014; Osagiobare, et al., 2015) across African societies have identified gender differentiation as a major determinant in gaining access to higher education in most African societies.

In addition, for decades before and even now, the literature predominantly explicates implicitly and explicitly that the practices of gender inequalities are embedded in most African cultures and manifested in various ways that equates access to formal education with men. Consequently, women are generally excluded from formal education and in most cases considered as second class citizens (Bakari, 2001) or as merely a man's property or object "meant for producing children" (Duze and Yaz'ever, 2013: 203; *see also* Okpukpara and Chukwuone, 2005; Onochie, 2010; Temba, Warrioba and Msabila, 2013; Ogunniyi and Dosumu, 2014; Aja-Okorie, 2015). The inequalities observed from the trends in this study is a starting point for the analysis of young people's accounts, as it is important to know whether there is a generational trend of unequal access between genders in respect to access to higher education.

¹ Reference to the concept school is made without regard to the level of education. It is a term used by respondents to make reference to any level of education without distinction. In some instances the term is interchangeably used to refer to primary, secondary and university level of education. In order to maintain the originality of the narratives, the concept school is retained and the narrative needs to be read in context.

5.2.5 Characteristics of the Study Population in Respect to Parents' Occupational Status

An analysis of parents' occupational status as depicted in Table 8 reveal a variety of occupations occupied by them. When asked about the type of occupation that parents hold, it revealed that a significantly large number were unemployed and could not be categorized into an occupation type.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents Parents Occupation

Occupation	Frequency		Percent	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
No Job	42	63	35.0	52.5
Farming	39	20	32.5	16.7
Petty Trading/Artisan	18	30	15.0	25.0
Employed/Civil Servant	21	7	17.5	5.8
Total	120	120	100.0	100.0

More than a third (35%) of respondents' fathers and more than half (52.5%) of mothers were without any job. Only 17.5% of respondents' fathers indicated that they were currently employed in one form of job as compared to 5.8% of respondent's mothers. In addition, about 32.5% of respondents' fathers and 16.7% of mothers were engaged in some form of agricultural activities to eke out a living. Narratives from young people's account in the qualitative aspect of this study further reveal that many parents are engaged in farming activities and in most cases mainly subsistence farming or having little plots of land for commercial farming. Apart from the occupational categories analyzed, the IDIs and FGD revealed that parents were engaged in dual or multiple income activity. For instance, some participants revealed the following:

...ah for many of us to survive and go to school... most of our parents have to combine different jobs with farming... (others nodding in agreement) [FGDs, in-university: female]

...my parents are farmers, at the same time my dad works in the Local Government as a security officer, he opened a shop for my mom where she sells different items...so most time we're either on farm or shop to assist them...so, that is how we survive as family...[IDIs, in-university: male, aged 18]

...my father works in the Ministry and also has a farmland, so most of the weekends, we are all in the farm... but I'm still planning to do more works on my own and save towards my higher education... [IDIs, out of university: female, aged 24]

From these responses, one could observe that the levels of income or economic generating activities in the study locality are generally low and insufficient to see their children through higher education. This is evident by such responses in the IDIs where a female participant, aged 24 expressed her intention to seek further employment or income generating activity to be able to achieve her desire in obtaining higher education. Such comments are typical of many young people's accounts in this study. For example, a number of in-university young people were found combining economic activities with their studies, while some of the out of university were found engaging in various income generating activities which confirms their enthusiasm to save towards their education.

5.3 Poverty and Young People's Access to Higher Education

Having established the demographical variables of respondents' socio-economic and religious background, this section attends to the important question of poverty and young people's access to higher education within the study. The research questions are listed in Table 9 together with the responses.

Table 9: Distribution of Reported Influence of Poverty

S/N	Variables	Yes (%)	No(%)	Don't Know (%)
21	Are there financial supports you received from your government or other agency to achieve higher degree?	0.0	96.7	3.3
22	Are your parents directly responsible for your funding/sponsor?	69.2	30.8	0.0
24	Has the financial support been consistent and adequate for you?	31.7	67.5	0.8
25	Would you say that financing your education is a concern to you?	87.5	11.7	0.8
26	Do you think that your financial status is affecting your academic performance in a way you don't like?	81.7	18.3	0.0
27	Do you have siblings or other relatives that could not attend higher institution due to financial hardship?	68.3	31.7	0.0
28	Would you have preferred to be in another school if not for financial reasons?	89.2	10.8	0.0
29	Have you been involved in economic generating activities while in school in order to raise money for your schooling?	60.8	39.2	0.0

From Table 9, it will be noted that almost all respondents (96.7%) indicated that they do not receive any form of financial assistance from either private or public institutions or agencies to pursue their education. It can be further observed that parents are the main sponsor (69.2%) of education for most young people within the study. When similar questions were posed to participants in the IDIs and FGDs, their narratives further confirm that parents are the sole providers for their children's education. The following comments affirm the statistical findings:

... even though I work for people to make additional money...I still depend on my Dad for tuition and feeding allowances...the money I make on my own only cater for my clothing, transport within school and some other small expenses ... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 24]

...we have a big shop where my father repairs shoes, umbrella and stuff like that...that's what we rely on for our upkeep and schooling... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 21]

...my Mum's business outfit is the main source of income for our family...then because his income is not regular, sometimes my mom has to go out to borrow money to pay for our school fees... my dad is just a farmer so he doesn't have much to add... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 19]

...none of us here are under any social benefits or government funds...we only rely on God and our parents and money from our hustling... [FGD, In-university: male, aged 23]

Previous studies have affirmed that Nigeria's latest population figure is about 167 million people which make Nigeria the seventh most populated country in the world (Ololube and Egbezor, 2012). The continuous increase in Nigeria's population has been recognized to have placed pressure on the natural and financial resources of the country which limits the extent to which government can implement policies that would assist poor youth (Adedokun and Oluwagbohunmi, 2014). One of the implications of the above findings is that the lack of financial support experienced by young people could exert negative influences on them resulting in frustration and challenges.

Having established from the findings that parents are the major source of funding for young people, the study further probed whether the financial support from their parents was consistent and adequate. While only 31.7% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied by parental funding, more than two thirds (67.5%) in the survey reported that they were not having consistent and adequate funding from their parents. In the case of the latter, 87.5% of the respondents viewed financing their education to be a major challenge. Concomitantly a number of young people in the IDI and FGDs lamented on the pressure they undergo in

relation to funding their higher education. This economic strain experienced by respondents is presented in the following statements:

...well, we even thank God that we are able to make it to be in school... but many of us are just struggling to survive on campus... but we know that God will see us through...[FGD, in-university: female]

...ah it's not funny o... last week my dad sent me some money, but I still need more to make up... I'm even trying to ask money from my Uncle... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 25]

...Em, well, I still thank God for everything...because I'm coping... my parents are trying their best, but the money they send to me is not enough, but my boyfriend has been helpful...most time I depend on him to support my schooling...but you know, when one begin to depend on boys for money, it's not usually funny... so I'm still not happy as I should... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 23]

...I just went to call my mum to send money for my project...I'm supposed to have submitted the project ... even now I'm still battling with how to raise money to sort it out... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 21]

It becomes clear from the above excerpts that many young people acknowledged that they were undergoing financial strain in meeting up their needs while at university. One of the implications of economic difficulties encountered by young people is that they may become vulnerable to dropping out or having low academic performance. Evidence from available studies (Mudzielwana and Maphosa, 2013; Mwenda and Mwenda, 2013) has attested to the fact that formal education is an important way of improving young people's capacities for economic development. This can be most observed in Nelson Mandela's assertion that, education is the gateway to personal development and a major process through which *"the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the president of a great nation"* (McCullum 2005:1). However, such an assertion by Mandela becomes problematic among young people in the present study as most parents cannot afford to train their young ones through higher education due to their economic condition.

Moreover, scholars have also established that in spite the progress made in advancing the educational system in Nigeria, socio-economic status play a major determinant role in the unequal distribution of access to education among different social classes in Nigeria (Maqsud, 2011).

In similar vein, when the young people were further asked whether their financial constraint had any implications on their academic performance, the following comments are compelling to take note of:

...you know sometimes, I won't even have money to buy textbooks, make photocopies...and many times we're asked to do some online assignment, I kept needing money most time to fix many things in school... but I know God will see me through [IDI, in-university: male, aged 18]

...like in my first year, I was in the upper class, but now I'm in lower class due to the fact that I cannot afford some materials that were recommended and ... even now I have to combine my school with some petty jobs to make ends meet... the painful thing is that my grade has dropped because I'm not concentrating enough... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 27]

...in fact, I left school at a point when I couldn't cope again...I kept needing to pay this and that...and no hope from anywhere...I had to take time off to look out for money...even as I'm in school now, I still go out to do my business so that I can survive...so, we're really struggling to get through... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 28]

These qualitative responses provide insights to some of the barriers faced by young people in institutions of higher learning in sustaining their enrolment and performance. It confirms that a number of learners struggle for economic survival which has a direct impact on their academic performance. In the survey a vast majority of respondents (81.7%) affirmed that their performance in school have been negatively affected due to economic constraints. Such findings corroborate with existing literature across Africa that young people are

vulnerable to the effects of poverty, resulting in a large number dropping-out of university (Ogujiuba et al., 2011; Hervish and Clifton, 2012).

A further analysis of the findings suggests that young people face different levels of constraints due to economic factors. In particular, a considerable number of respondents (68.3%) attest to the fact that some of their relatives or siblings could not negotiate their way to higher institutions of learning as they were economically constrained. Also, the accounts of young people in the IDIs and FGDs revealed how participants recalled their relatives and peers dropping out of university resulting in some not making an attempt to seek admission due to financial constraints:

...most parents want their children to be great, as in to get good job, become a doctor, lawyer and the rest...but most times their wishes for us seem to be cut short when it comes to money... [FGD, in-university: male]

...we thank God that at least we're in school now...many of our mates are wondering about at home still hoping to raise money for their school...even some have dropped out because they couldn't cope...[FGD, in-university: female]

...because my parents wanted every one of us to be in school, they encourage us to learn how to manage the little money they're able to give us...so I'm coping well, but my elder sister left school at a time because she was angry that her allowances always insufficient... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 18]

...one of my cousins that we were both planning to be in same school is now doing tailoring, because her parents couldn't sponsor her to the higher education... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 26]

Those excerpts exemplify the accounts of young people both in the IDIs and FGDs on the ways in which financial constraint have limited their peers, siblings and relatives from gaining access to higher education. Even though the young people generally view higher education as giving them a sense of pride and strong identity, these findings confirmed that many young people might be left within the same circle of poverty as argued in the works of Lewis (1969). One could observe from this finding that many parents who are economically constrained could not afford the cost of financing their children in higher

education. A major implication of such condition is that such parents of low economic status may transfer these values to their next generation since education is generally recognized to guarantee a brighter future for youth or as a way out of poverty (Durstun and Nashire, 2001; Ucha, 2010; Adedokun and Oluwagbohunmi, 2014).

Another remarkable account drawn from the young people's responses on financial constraint was whether they would have preferred to be enrolled or admitted into another higher institution other than that in which they were studying. Unsurprisingly, 89.2% of the respondents indicated their preference for another form of higher institution which they believed was more prestigious and of greater quality than that in which they were studying. Similar responses were made in the IDIs and FGDs where a number of participants commented that they preferred private higher institutions as compared to public ones which have relatively stable academic calendar and better infrastructures. The following narratives demonstrate circumstances that constrain their choices of higher education:

...ah, even me I left the university admission due to financial problem...I couldn't afford the school fees... [FGD, in-university: male, aged 21]

...not easy at all...the money for University education is higher than what I'm paying here...I made a choice to be here to avoid financial frustration...at least I can still get a job with the certificate I'm pursuing now... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 23]

...of course... supposing my parents could afford the cost of university education that would have been my best choice... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 21]

...I had already gotten an admission in the university, shortly after that I lost my dad in a motor accident...my father's family dominated all his properties and abandoned every one of us... so I couldn't go to resume...I began to follow my mum to make sales in her shop...later, my mum advised that I seek admission into a less expensive higher institution... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 25]

...I made a choice of coming here because two years of obtaining ND certificate, I'll be able to work for some times and save enough money before proceeding for HND certificate...but you know university education is run at a stretch so you don't have long break to do serious work... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 28]

These comments constitute a common explanation from the young people regarding their economic capacity as a major influencing factor on their choice of pursuing higher education. However, despite the general view of higher education especially university education which is the bedrock or citadel of learning and most admirable for most people (*see also* Aluede, et al., 2012), this study affirmed that the low socio-economic background of many young people in this setting act as a major barrier to their enrolment and retention in the university education system. Additionally, existing studies have demonstrated that the differences in the cost of attending higher educational institutions varies from federal, state and private universities particularly when considering that many Nigerian families are of poor socio-economic status (Esomonu and Adirika, 2012). In the same vein, other studies across Africa have found that the working and lower class young people are more likely to attend government schools than attending private universities compared to their peers from families with greater access to economic resources (Hearn, 1990; Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer, 2009; Rosenbaum, 2004).

Even though a number of young people from this study could not make informed decisions to attend their desired choice of higher educational institution, a further probe on the extent to which poverty have affected them revealed that a considerable number of them had to combine studying with income generating activities. This is particularly true since a number (60.8%) of respondents from the survey show that in-university young people had at one point in time engaged in various types of income generating activities for their survival. Participants' accounts in the IDIs and FGDs illustrate how young people were economically constrained and had to negotiate access to higher education through their involvement in economic activities and other sources that could generate monetary rewards for them. The following responses are representative of most participants.

...many times we do businesses that fetch us money while on campus...some do different part-time works like barbering, photography, plating of hairs, okada rider, tailoring and so forth... so we don't wait for our parents to fix everything from their little incomes...[FGD, in-university: female]

Umm... as a young boy I'm very responsible and committed to anything I want to achieve...since I decided I wanted to go to school I started okada business (motor

cycle) for transportation on commercial basis...even though it's a risky business ...it helps me to raise some money before I got the admission that got me here... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 26]

...I don't stress my parents any more for tuition or maintenance...I have mini cabs (locally referred to keke maruwa or napep) I used to transport people at my leisure and during weekends... recently I added another one which I rent out for returns (money)...I have no regret going into transport although there was a time I had an accident while returning from town and couldn't walk for about 2 months but thank God I survived it... the money I realize here on this campus is enough for me...sometimes I even assist some of my friends and younger ones in need... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 28]

...before coming to this school, I had learnt tailoring...so I came to school with my sewing machines... leave off campus, so am able to relate with many people that patronize my service...I have an album where my customers can select their styles and many people patronize my service...doing tailoring has really sustained me on campus but consume much times (Interviewer: How?) you know people can bring their clothes and expect you to complete the work in few days, so many times I miss my lectures because I don't want to lose their patronage ...(But don't you think such can affect your grade?)...well, I know...but I need the money to survive for now... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 26]

...well, I was able to raise some money during my IT (Industrial Training)² ...they still call me occasionally to come and help them do one thing or the other and pay me some amount of money... [IDI, in-university: male, aged 26]

...I plait hairs for other students and they pay me in return...I use this money to settle my hands out and other small expenses... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 25]

Yeah...I decided to go into modeling about 2 years ago...I model for some companies and they pay me very well...the only problem I have is timing of their events because sometimes they want me to come when I should be in school...it clashes a lot with my lectures and sometimes my exams...many times I also work

²This is a one year internship programme usually a prerequisite for HND programme in the polytechnic

with advertising agencies to showcase some products for different companies...that's how I make some money... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 25]

Additionally, young men in a particular focus group session recounted how their male and female peers engage in sex for money:

...well, people survive somehow while on campus...some of our girls are into aristo³ business or sugar daddy...they make money by going out with rich men that come to pick them for weekends...we also have big boys that make money by arranging those girls on campus for those rich men... [FGD, in-university: male]

These excerpts are representative of the narratives of most of the young people which reveal the social context in which they negotiate their access to higher education. The above data covers a wide range of economic activities such as trading, tailoring, transporting, hair dressing, modeling and including sex work as coping strategies for many in-university young people. As revealed earlier in this section, while young people may be expected to be economically dependent on their parents to a large extent, 'full' parental support seems to have been limited by the low socio-economic status of these communities and the relatively poor standard of living of most of its members which is common in many other communities in Nigeria and other parts of Africa (Oyefara, 2009; Yakubu and Aderonmu, 2010; Ogujiuba et al., 2011; Ojimba, 2011).

As observed in the excerpts, young people in this setting were engaged in different forms of economic activities to support their education and material needs. Such accounts, especially those of young people who engage in businesses that conflict with their lecture hours demonstrate the level at which the respondents were economically disadvantaged or affected by the poor economic status of their parents. Moreover, the cases of young females engaging in activities such as modeling and tailoring often clash with their lecture hours further provide an understanding of the impact of poverty on the educational achievement level of respondents. Importantly, one could then argue that such local economic realities appear to have significant implications on their psychological wellbeing. For instance, a particular young on campus male was involved in a road accident whilst undertaking his

³A term commonly used to describe young girls into sex-for-money relationships

transport business (mini cab) while another male described his *Okada* (motor cycle) business as ‘a risky one’.

In a FGD with male participants, a number of them recounted that some of their female colleagues would often negotiate contact with men they view as rich or relatively buoyant with whom they would start ‘dating’ relationships. Also in some of the IDIs with females, some on campus females made reference to their male partners being a source of additional income that supplements their economic survival. In a similar vein, other researchers have reported cases of women transacting sex because of their poor economic status. For instance, Bene and Mertene (2008), in an in-depth analysis of sub-Saharan African fishing communities, observe that transactional sex between fishermen and fish sellers is a well-recognized practice. In particular, widows and economically disadvantaged young women were commonly found to engage in such transactions as a means of survival, because of lack of sufficient funds to start a fish business conventionally. In many such African communities, according to Allison and Seeley (2004), Kissling et al., (2005), and Seeley and Allison (2005), it appears that this pattern of sexual practice has remained a means of livelihood for women of low economic status, despite the stigma of being seen by others as prostitutes. An important implication of such pattern of relationship is that apart from the existing gender power relations in sexual relationships, women who are tied or committed to their relationships for financial gains are often not in a position to fully negotiate their sexual desires, feelings and safety (Wojcicki, 2002; Kaufman et al., 2004; Langen, 2005). Moreover, considering Connell’s (1995) arguments, a ‘pure relationship’⁴ cannot be easily achieved within economically motivated relationships. As such, he further argues that such relationships often widen the gender gap between women and men.

In addition, although this study did not engage participants’ on their sexual safety and wellbeing, evidence from studies that examines the factors which includes increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS in most countries across sub-Saharan Africa have identified economic factors as a major influence on the women’s sexual negotiation power for protected sex because women often lack the capacity to negotiate protected sex when involved in

⁴ A term which Connell used to describe relationships where a considerable level of sexual and emotional equality exists (Connell, 1995)

transactional kind of relationships (Stoebenau et al., 2011; Macpherson et al., 2012; Tiruneh et al., 2014).

In summarizing this section, it is worth noting that data from the on campus respondents illustrate how they became economically active actors. For instance, analysis of their narratives reveals how they were actively involved in negotiating access to higher education in the form of accepting the local norms of their community that accorded prestigious status to educated individuals and the believe that education guarantees their access for brighter future. This was demonstrated by a number of them placing conscious efforts such as engaging in income-generating activities, seeking admission into the kind of institution their parents can afford rather than insisting on their desired type of educational institutions such as private universities. In addition, a number of them were also found to spend some time engaging in ad hoc businesses such as *okada* transportation and apprenticeships in skillful works which will enable them to render some services for which they will be remunerated to fund access to tertiary level educational institutions.

Within sociological discourse, Lewis (1964) emphasized the distinctive lifestyle of the poor which grew out of the experience of poverty. He studied the culture and ‘subculture’ of the urban poor in the western context as constituting shared ‘deviant’ cultural traits characterized by helplessness, inferiority, dependency and so forth. Thus differentiating them from the rest of society and as such maintained them in a position of poverty. Importantly, as Lewis observed, one of the characteristics of African-American urban poor is that their young people were less interested in formal education and thus remained in the cycle of poverty passing from one generation to another (Lewis 1969; *see also, Eitzen and Baca-Zinn, 1994:173; Long, 2011*). While Lewis argument appeared to be particularly true for the urban poor in the western context, evidence from the present study reveals that the local norms expressed by on campus young people appear to be in contrast with Lewis’s arguments. For instance, this study has highlighted that despite the absence of social benefits or scholarships for young people, formal education especially at higher educational institutions is generally desirous by young people since most parents aspire to see their children becoming graduates. It is also observed that many young people strive hard to ensure their access to higher education and secure their retention. Arguably, one could

conclude that the attainment of higher education may transform the lives of the younger generation who gain access to higher education and hence develop a competent workforce, thereby making them to break away from the cycle of poverty as opposed to Lewis's conclusion. Moreover, Bourdieu (1977) has argued that young people who have educational cultural capital are rewarded in terms of educational qualifications and a better future life as opposed to young people without educational capital. However, taking a critical view at Bourdieu's (1973; 1986) arguments on the different forms of capital which include economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital, it could be affirmed that acquiring one form of capital reinforces another. As revealed in the present study, many young people have limited access to economic capital, which is the financial resource -a prerequisite for gaining access to higher education that would have invariably lead them to acquire cultural capital such as the required social networks, knowledge and qualifications that guarantee their access to wealth and high level of recognition which are highly desirous by many young people in this study.

Furthermore, it is observed in this study that, many young people dropped off campus which may be attributed to socio-cultural factors which is the focus of the next section.

5.4 Reported Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on Access to Higher Education

The development of sociological discourse and research have focused attention on social issues from one that is primarily concerned with individual rationality to an explanation of cultural norms, values, religious beliefs and practices that places individuals within their social context. Evidence from this study suggests that the capacity for securing access and retaining their enrolment in higher educational institutions is not entirely determined by the rational considerations of individuals, but principally depends on the socio-cultural context in which certain beliefs, norms and values take place. Participants' comments from IDIs and FGDs present the influence of some existing norms on young people in relation to their negotiation or non-negotiation of access to higher education in the research setting.

Table10: Distribution of Reported Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on Access to Higher Education

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agree(%)	Disagree ((%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Agree (%)
1	Young people in your community generally want to pursue higher education?	85	1.7	5	8.3
4	Achieving higher education accords some respect among friends and community members	91.7	2.5	0.8	5
		Yes	No		
6	Did somebody influence your decision to pursue (or not to pursue) higher education	80	20		
16	Do you think that people with higher education qualification are likely to become more successful in life?	86.7	13.7		
18	Are there traditional practices within your family or community that discourage people to pursue higher education?	48	52		

As indicated by the on campus respondents, a high percentage (85%) of them strongly agreed that young people generally want to pursue higher education in their communities. It was also confirmed by a significant majority (91.7%) who having achieved higher education are accorded some respect among friends and community members. As revealed earlier, a number of on campus young people in a FGD session also attest to the fact that education was a priority for most young people and it was giving them reasons to be proud among peers, representing their hope to securing a brighter future. The following FGD data illustrates their comments starting with the on campus females:

Facilitator: Let's talk about individual hopes and aspirations...

...well, now that I made it to higher institution [] I want to pass all my exams so that I can become someone of high reputation in life... it's good to be well educated, apart form the fact that it is highly prestigious in our place, I will also be able to get a good job and

excel above those that didn't go to school... [others nodding in agreement]

...yes, it's prestigious to be highly educated, especially in our town here...nobody will look down on you when you're educated...people will just have to respect you when you talk in public...that's why even if your parents [cannot afford] to pay your school fees, you will want to do anything to get money on your own to go to school...so that in future you will have opportunities to get good job, good life and so many other good things ...

...in fact as a woman, men of high caliber cannot ask you for marriage if you're not educated... (How?)...ah because generally men want educated women even when they're not educated...so if you're not educated as woman, only lower cadre men will be after you...[others nodding in agreement]

And for the male in-university participants in one of the FGDs:

*...it is only after completing your higher institution you can get good jobs, and live quality life....it will also make your parents proud...
...nothing good is easy to come by, so most of us try hard to do all that is possible to do well in school...just because of the future benefits...*

In another FGDs with males:

...anything you want to do in life requires education... with your certificate life is easier...I went to Lagos to visit my elder brother during our last holiday...he has a car, beautiful rented apartment, and doing a nice job...and I just love it...

Yeah....like my father would say, if you don't want to end up a farmer like me then you have to be studius and get all the marks....personally I love to do sophisticated jobs...you know, good office work...and I hate to be the odd one out of my peers...

As mentioned earlier, many respondents in the study appeared to have been socialized or highly sensitized towards western education as a gate way to brighter future and psychological wellbeing. Thus, acquiring higher education is of key importance among young people in this setting. As revealed in the above quotations, both young males and females consistently noted the importance of achieving higher education as a concept of success and prestigious social status within their social circle. Even among the out of campus respondents in the in-depth interviews, higher education was viewed as admirable. One female interviewee currently out of campus said:

“...my dream is to be a lawyer. We’re two girls and two boys in my family... my elderly ones are all in higher insituions, and one had just finished... so I don’t want to be left out, I’m praying hard to pass my JAMB this time around so that I can achieve my dream by going back to school...” [IDI, out of university: female, aged 22]

And another (male):

...well, I thank God because my business is growing bigger and bigger, I have money to spend and care for my family... so I’m not losing both sides... (Interviewer: How do you mean?) ...ah you know in our area people always mock or look down on people that didn’t go to school...even educated girls will tell you they can’t marry you if you don’t go to school like them...they think they have many advantages over you...but I have money that some of them that are well educated did not have now...I have about 5 people working under me now...am even planning to go back to school soon...I want to start a part- time study for ND certificate... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 26]

...em []...I’m an apprentice at the moment...I’m just doing it to avoid being idle...I plan to further my education...but I need to retake my WAEC exam and Jamb...the whole thing look imposible to me but I pray for God to help me pass my Maths and English...even when I become fashion designer I still want to go school...I don’t want my secondary school mates to start seeing me as inferior to them...then people don’t really respect you when you speak in public like the educated ones...then going back to school will make my parents proud...[IDI, out of university: female, aged 18]

Another out of campus respondent commented that:

Umm.. I've failed the entering exam three times now and I've given up furthering my education...even though my father kept encouraging me... my mom also kept pestering me that my sister is now ahead of me that I should keep trying...you know, they both kept asking people to talk to me...my friends and other people around would not let me be...so I've decided to go for another trial... [IDI, out of university: male aged 21]

From the data information, it became clear that even when the young people have no stable financial income or are relatively buoyant, they still prefer to pursue higher education to 'build' their self-esteem or personalities which accords respect in their societies. A typical example is the young man (aged 26) who was ready to negotiate access to campus by enrolling in a part-time study to obtain a higher degree certificate. Also, a good number of participants regardless of gender made reference to their religion or some of their religious groups as a motivating factor for their decisions to further their study at a higher educational level. The following comments allude to the Christian religion being a dominant influence on young people's interest in pursuing higher education:

...well, I already know the importance of education...then everything is changed now...you need your certificate to do many things...even before you can go to seminary school to be a Reverend father, you must first complete your higher institution...[IDI, in-university: male, aged 27]

Ah, we pray daily for God's provisionabout 4 of my home cell⁵ members in my church are now working in Abuja after their service year (NYSC)⁶ ... no body want to be the left out...our pastor is also helping people to raise money especially if you are known as serious member of the church.... [FGD, in-university: female, aged 23]

⁵ Home Cell: Members of same church living within same area performing some religious functions outside church hour and vicinities.

⁶ NYSC: National Youth Service Corp

...our pastor encourage us a lot...they inform us during church announcement whenever the Jamb form is out/open...they encourage us to pass Jamb and gain admission to higher institution... we have been made to understand that we cannot even spread of our Lord's gospel if we're not educated...to evangelize, do soul winning works requires high level of education this days... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 24]

And another:

...like our pastor used to say in our youth group...that without education, how can we get a good job or money to serve God better?...then we have been made to realize that education will provide us gainful employment for us if we can serve God, and help the less privilege...[FGD, in-university: male]

....then if we look at the Bible some of the disciples of Jesus was well learned...Luke is Doctor even Paul is a lawyer... {all laughed} [FGD, in-university: male]

...one of my source of encouragement is my youth leader in church...many times they organize extra moral classes for us as youth in the church...whenever we're writing exams the pastor calls for group intercessory prayer to pray for us so that we can have remarkable success...honestly, our churches encourage every one of us to do well in school...they also pray for our parents' businesses to prosper so that they can have sufficient money to pay our school fees... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 20]

From these quotations, a major reason drawn in favour of western education is the domination of Christianity in the region. Most of the participants in this study are Christians; hence a number of them mentioned their religion as an important factor that encourages them to go university. References were made to their pastors, church group leaders, and peers in church who have influenced them in different ways to further their education. Essentially, one of the empirical studies that utilized nationally representative data to study educational achievement in Nigeria have observed that young people belonging to Christian households are five times more likely to embrace formal education and attend school than children from Muslim households (Kazeem et al., 2010). This

corroborates existing literatures which argues that some cultures might be academically advantageous to formal education than others (Thernstrom, and Thernstrom, 2003).

Another related study conducted in North-East and North-Western Nigeria have also affirmed that the majority of young members from Islamic households in these regions have negative perceptions about western education and are least likely to attend formal education (Lincove, 2009).

In addition, it could also be observed that the spread of western education came with the British colonial domination in most parts of Nigeria. With the exception of the Northeast and North-western region where the use of indirect rule gave power to Northern religious leaders to prohibit western education in their regions, Christian missionaries exploited the colonial period to spread western education in other parts of the country (Aguolu, 1979, Aluede, 2006).

As revealed earlier in this study, the research area was formally a geopolitical unit and province under the British administration during the period of colonial government in Nigeria (Koseeds, 2004). During the colonial epoch, only a few people had attained formal education and educational credentials were used as instruments to confer power and dominance (Smythe, 1958). Several missionary schools were established in their geographical locations throughout the colonial era and early periods after colonialism⁷ which added a dimension to the studied communities in terms of their exposure to formal education. Similar to some Nigerian communities, education is generally valued and viewed as a tool to success in human capital and economic advancement. Thus, apart from their centeredness on religious and other traditional values (such as music, diet, dress, songs, rituals, dances, folklore, beliefs which are entirely strictly bounded by their cultural and historical contexts), the study locality is also known for their strong interest in formal education. Families with a large number of well-educated members are highly respected in the study setting.

At a theoretical level, the present findings corroborate Bourdieu's arguments on *habitus* in explaining the interplay of the social and cultural values that shape young people's access

⁷Nigerian government built upon after independence with the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) across the nation (Bray 1981).

to higher education. In line with his analysis, this study found family as primary agent of socialization that inculcates the young members with cultural values and religious beliefs which construct educational systems as a valuable or desirable 'asset' for a brighter future.

Thus, despite the limited economic conditions of most families and the low literacy level of many parents, they were able to transmit the idea of formal education as an acceptable value to their younger generations.

Meanwhile, analysis of '*habitus*' emphasized in the work of Bourdieu, (1984) as a form of cultural inheritance which makes only the elite's capital to be valued and recognized in society is also significant to the findings. In this study, the elites represent the British government who colonized Nigerian society at a particular epoch while the valued capital is the western educational system that was introduced to the colonies. Such educational culture was highly valued and individuals that acquired the elite culture (education) were generally at an advantage (such as to be employed for white collar jobs and other accruing benefits). As this study has revealed, the research communities were exposed to western educational culture as a form of elitist capital, which attracted more prestige or value above their long existing farming activities. Hence, the introduction of western education appeared to have transformed their local culture from one previously without formal education and basically an agrarian society to a society where western education has become a desirable capital. Thus, despite the fact that the older generations (such as participants' parents) lacked higher education, their consciousness of the essentials or highly valued elitist capital (formal education which places some individuals over others who are non-literates) normalized formal education as an essential capital to be desired for their children and younger members of their society. This provides understanding to one of the narratives by a male out of school interviewee illustrating how his father continuously advised him to keep writing JAMB exams to be able to secure access to higher education even though he could not pass (make) the required grade on three previous attempts.

Meanwhile, respondents were asked in the survey whether there are existing traditional practices within family or community that discourage people from pursuing higher education. A considerable number of them (52%) indicated that there are no traditional practices that discourage their access to higher education while about 48% believed that

some traditional practices discourage young people's access.. Given the structured nature of the questionnaire, it was unclear in the survey as to what aspect of their culture is a barrier to young people's access to higher education. However, a further probe on similar questions in the various IDIs sessions and FGDs revealed the existence of gendered ideologies, which often act as barriers for many young females in gaining access to higher education, was one of such. This shall be discussed in the section that follows on gender discrimination and access to higher education.

5.5 Reported Influence on Gender Discrimination and Access to Higher education

This section examines the ways in which young people's access to higher education was constructed in the context of gender differences. This was accomplished by analysis of their accounts which examine the links between access to formal education and the notion of being male or female. This examination yields important findings regarding the social processes that facilitate gender practices that in turn shapes access to higher education for many young females. As revealed in this section, the gendered meanings attributed to higher education have serious implications on how female's access and how retention in higher education were impacted. Table 11 presents the responses for gender classification questions that were presented in the survey.

Table11: Distribution of Reported Influence on Gender Discrimination and Access to Higher Education

S/N	Variables	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know(%)
14	Does being a man or woman affect your decision to obtain (or not to obtain) higher education?	75.8	24.2	0
15	Is it equally prestigious for a woman to attain higher education like men?	38	62	0
16	Do you think that people with higher education qualification are likely to become more successful in life? (If yes, go to 17).	86.7	13.3	0
17	Is this equally true for both men and women?	34.2	65.8	0

Results from the survey illustrates that most of the on campus respondents (75.8%) indicated that being a man or woman affects their decision to pursue higher education. Only 24.2% did not view their gender as an influencing factor to their access to higher education. Another important question that attests to the existence of gender imbalance in the research locality was when respondents were further asked whether it was equally prestigious to attain higher education for women and men. It was surprising to find out that only 38% of on campus young people indicated that attaining higher education attracted equal levels of prestige for both women and men. When similar questions were posed to participants in the FGDs, the following opinions were expressed:

...well, every parent want their children to go school...it is only when they don't have enough money that the girls are somehow not given a chance, because the female will marry and leave the family while boys remain in the family, so every parent, even mothers will support the boys first... [FGD, in-university: male]

{Nodding in support}...I think everybody want to be in school and our parents generally want us to be well educated whether male or femalebut when money is not enough...the girls might need to step down or wait behind till time they can raise enough money.... then most times, the joy of most parents is to see their daughters successfully married to a wealthy and responsible man....because the son-in-law will eventually take good care of them...the sons are the one to acquire education, good jobs, and work hard to make them proud...[FGD, in-university: male]

.... everyone is expected to go to school at least up to secondary school...but when it comes to university education...you know it requires a lot of money...if the family is not having enough money...they ask the girl to wait...but if a girl eventually made it to higher institution, the parents will also be glad that their daughter is now a graduate... [FGD, in-university: male]

And in another male focus group session the responses was as follows:

...Some women become excessively proud once they are well educated...some will find it difficult to stay in their husband's house or take care of their family because they are already feeling equal to men...[FGD, in-university: male]

Yes I've seen cases that some women find it difficult to respect their husband or stay home to take care of their children because of their career....that's why people don't really count much on women's education until they are able to manage their lives (Facilitator: how?)...as in to be able to remain responsible wife and mother...that's when a woman is complete... [FGD, in-university: male]

...well for my parents they want my sisters to go school but they don't stress her much like they do to me and my brother...my father said if she decided not to be serious they will be married out soon and become burdens to their husbands and not him... then my mother believe women should marry early, she said when a woman dedicate too much of her time studying.. She may lose some suitors who would have married them...my mum believe that women can continue schooling to any level after marriage.... [FGD, in-university: male]

Analysis of these accounts from FGDs reveal two major ways in which female's access to higher education were constituted as 'subordinate to their male counterparts' within the cultural framework of the research settings. First, the female-child's education was constructed or generally agreed as a socially approved way of life especially where there is available fund. However, in the context of limited financial resources, access to tertiary level education becomes a male-dominated activity. It is important to recognize that evidence from literatures has also found that in most cases, the reasons for females' poor access to tertiary level education are related to religious or cultural norms. Interestingly, poverty is often a factor for the girl child to go to a tertiary institution. It has been observed from the viewpoint of African patriarchal society that families with limited economic resources prefer to enroll their male children in tertiary institutions before the females, because boys will continue the family lineage (Okeke et al., 2008).

Second, taking a critical look at the young males' accounts, they were surrounded by contradictory discourses on higher education and womanhood. For instance, while dominant discourses emphasize both genders to be educated up to higher educational level, as required by their societal norms and cultural values, it places greater value on male's access as part of the traditional discourse that view males as the hope for family continuity. A number of young males have assumed that access to higher education is naturally within the framework of gender norms and practices which attributed male identity to dominance

and superiority, while females are associated with inferiority, submissiveness, wifehood and motherhood. This was remarkable in almost all the quotations where male discussants believed that “women become excessively proud once they are well educated” or “women find it difficult to respect their husbands or stay at home to take care of their children because of their career”. Another male discussant recalled the words of his mother relating to female access to higher education. “She (females pursuing higher education) may lose some suitors who would have married them” and the belief that women should only enroll at tertiary institutions after they are married. Unsurprisingly, when respondents in the survey were asked whether educated people are most likely to be successful, a majority (86.7%) signified yes. However, when they were further asked whether it is same for women only 34.2% said yes. These findings substantiates with other existing studies that the cultural socialization of young people in most African communities aimed largely at training the males to see themselves as heads of household and breadwinners, while the young females are socialized to adopt maternal and matrimonial roles, to be faithful, loving and subservient wives (Izugbara, 2004). The implications of such findings are discussed in chapter six of this thesis.

Furthermore, there emerged among the young females a general construction of formal education as primarily a male domain. As we have seen from earlier analysis, most young males in the study believed men have more access to higher education compared to their female counterparts.

Similar comments were illustrated by a young woman in the FGDs:

*...you know that men are generally giving preference...there was a time my brother failed and had to repeat JSS 3, my father made me to repeat with him even though I didn't fail...I didn't understand why he did that...but now I know that he was only protecting him as the first son so that I don't pass him to enter higher institution...
[FGD, in-university: female]*

...my own story is a bit different, I was told after my secondary school to put in for ND, so I told my Dad I wanted to go to University, but because he said he could not afford it and I opted for ND, a year later my brother finished his secondary school

and was waiting for his result...my Dad went for cooperative loan and insisted that my brother must go to University... [FGD, in-university: female]

...I think it's just a general idea...our parents want anything good for us, both male and females...but when it comes to money issue....especially choice of school or the course they want you to pursue....they want the males to take upper hands...[FGD, in-university: female]

{Nodding} exactly, they are only neutral when they have enough money that covers all the children's needs... [FGD, in-university: female]

This focus group is representative of how young women emphasized the manner in which some parents show male preference in relation to access to higher education. Interestingly, one of the female discussants who had intention to gain admission into higher institution could not get the support of her father based on limited financial resources. However, the father was able to take a loan when the male child was able to study at a higher education institution. Such narratives demonstrate how parents can prioritize their male child by placing them in an advantaged position over their female children.

It should be noted that a few of the young females appeared to be powerless or constrained in terms of their parents low economic status, obliging them to exploit various other means to negotiate access to higher education. The following comments were emphatically stated in a short interview with three young females who are currently out of school:

...yes, I've completed my secondary school... I've come here to work so that I can start a big business...(do you have younger ones in school)...yes, I also have a younger brother in Polytechnics...(who is responsible for their education?) my Dad and Mum...then they often request for money from my uncle in Abuja...(do you like to further your study?)...ah I've given up on that...you know, my father is only desperate for his sons....he wanted to send me to his sister living in the North but I refused...his sister has a restaurant and I refused to go to her because I don't want to be a sales girl like one of my friend...so I will save my own money here and continue my life... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 28]

My boyfriend is the one responsible for my school fees...anything he tells me to do, I just have to comply...so he'll not be annoyed and stop it...I couldn't stop him from

whatever he wants...I give him any time he wants sex...can't say no...as a matter of fact, he hasn't used condom before, he does skin to skin... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 23]

...I was doing my own business when I met this man...we started dating...I was so happy when he told me that he will sponsor me to higher institution, so I've taken JAMB form and reading for the exam... [Are your parents aware of this man and his intention to train you in school?] Ah, yes they know that they can't afford to train me to University, so they're praying for him...but the funny aspect is that they went round to look for money to put my brother in University, he's now in year two...am not angry at them because my elder brother is the first...and he's a man... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 25]

...I finished secondary school about 3 years ago but my result was not really good... I tried another attempt but it didn't work out again,...I didn't pass English subject...then, my father was upset that I'm wasting his little money so I just decided to relax about school and look for other things to do...recently I got a job...through this man I met sometimes ago...He was working at that company as one of the top officers...we just met by chance and he seemed to like me, so I didn't hesitate to move closer to him...because I knew he would be able to help me regarding a job and even for my brother...he was able to use his influence to secure this job for me and promised to assist my brother ... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 24].

These narratives reveal volumes on how young women's access to higher education was negatively impacted. One set of data reveals how young women negotiated sexual relationships with their partners who could support them economically. Such narratives of her parent's awareness and support also indicate how poorer parents may support the engagement of their daughters in this form of relationship, as opposed to the traditional norms and moral discourses that condemn transactional and premarital sex in this community. In the African context, it has been argued that despite the trends towards a more global culture often accompanied by a shift to western ideas and values, such as on western education, evidence from this study have shown that young people are influenced by dominant gender norms and their economic circumstances. In this study, a number of females were found to be actively involved in negotiating access to higher institutions in

various complex ways such as the young woman negotiating access through her male partner. However, some of the young females like the second and third female participants illustrate that some of the deprived young females had accepted their limitations and would not negotiate other means to enroll into higher education.

By way of inference, studies have revealed that patriarchy is a system of practice that dominates and subordinates women, particularly on the basis of religion, economics, ethnicity and socio-cultural practices (Shoveller et al, 2006). The unequal social and economic power relations between young women and their male partners often limit women's exercise of their sexual agency and safety, such that young women like those quoted earlier were unable to negotiate sexual pleasure and safety such as to insist on the use of protective condom in their relationships.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the analysis of the young people's accounts, which reveals three major ways in which their access to higher education was mediated within their socio-cultural domains. First, one of the prominent themes that emerged from the narratives of the young people is that their access to higher education was predominantly constrained by poor economic conditions. The analysis of their accounts reveals the complex and subtle contexts in which young people of all ages (both male and female) were involved in all manners in income-generating activity to negotiate their access to higher education.

Second, the young people were surrounded by discourses that view formal education as socially approved way to attaining a brighter future. For instance, a number of them illustrated how they were encouraged by their religious groups which often emphasized their need to pursue formal education up to tertiary level. Their societal norms and cultural values were also found to have been dominantly influenced with the introduction of missionary schools during the British colonial administration in the region. The findings revealed that the research setting was a Christian dominated area and coupled with the

introduction of white collar jobs for the few educated individuals during the colonial era normalized formal education as prestigious and elite capital which many desired to pursue.

Third, the young people were surrounded by contradictory discourses on gender-based expectations in which their access to formal education was constituted as 'culturally appropriate' within a patriarchal framework. For instance, while dominant discourses emphasized young people regardless of their gender to pursue higher education as required by their societal norms, cultural values, and religious standards, it also places greater values on male's access in situations of limited economic capacity. Thus, access to higher education was highly constructed as a kind of male-dominated activity while the young females were viewed from a dimension of achieving socially recognized status of wifhood and motherhood.

Clearly, socio-cultural and economic factors including social norms, religion, as well as gender-based expectations remained a major influence on young people's access to higher education in the research locality. In the next chapter, this study considers more in-depth how such influences and other social contexts are mediated on young people's capacities in negotiating access to higher education.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis and Interpretation of Data – Part 2

6.1 Introduction

This section focuses mainly on the thematic aspect of the research findings. Evidence from both the literature and the study has suggested that young people are confronted with various normative and social constraints with respect to gaining access to higher education. For instance, as observed in the study the gender norms that limits female access to higher education was often in conflict with other expectations widely held in the respective communities. As consequence, most young people in the study claimed to have been constrained in many ways. Based on these findings this section specifically, explores the various contexts that facilitate or reduce their access or retention in institutions of higher learning and the implications that these complexities have on the different aspects of their lives. In essence, this section makes an analysis drawing from Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction which focuses on family, education and social class. This approach explains how education becomes a form of cultural capital that are rewarded in terms of educational qualifications and a better future life which young people without educational capital have to bear as penalties in their future (Bourdieu, 1977). Essentially, young people who lack cultural capital face the penalty of remaining in poverty or lower socio-economic class/status.

6.2 Discussion of Emerging Themes from the Research

By analyzing the in-depth interview (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) data in more details, this study exposes the subjective experiences of a number of young people as

factors that limit their access to higher education in the respective research communities. Such factors emerged from at least five overarching themes from the narratives. These include: (1) young people as key contributors to family survival; (2) requirements for entering exams into higher institutions (young people's capacity to meet up with admission criteria); (3) the different practices/routines associated with admission process (which includes the need for personal influence to secure admission); (4) the cultural context of unemployment; and (5) the effects of non-negotiated relationships leading to drop-outs.

6.2.1 Young People as Key Contributors to Family Survival

One of the reoccurring themes emerging from this study of young people's access to higher education is the significant economic roles that young people have to play and the impacts of such economic performance on their social lives. It was revealed from the young people's accounts that they engaged in economic or income-generating activities, or at least helped their parents to conduct family businesses such as farming and trading from their teenage life course. This was evident in their responses to the general question posed at the start of the IDIs and FGDs, asking young people to explain how they spent their leisure time. Surprisingly, many participants began to recall what they regarded as leisure from their teenage life, what they did after university and during vacations. This question led to a number of them recalling how they engaged in all sorts of income-generating activity as part of leisure. The following responses were typical for most female participants.

Okay, most of our leisure is spent with our friends....unlike our secondary school dayswhen leisure time was church time or hawking time... [many laugh]those times most of our free times were after school which we spent to help our parents in selling in the market, shops or do hawking around... now we have more space to plan for ourselves...[FGD, in-university: female]

Well, I use my leisure to visit friends, read novels or sleep...at least now that am in school....[interviewer: so, is it different now from what it used to before you resume higher institution?]ah, very well....those times at home as a small girl I stayed with my mum at the shop to sellleisure was a time after school

...then, all I did every day except Sundays was to stay in to sell akara (hot food) before school... then after school I stay in the shop to join mum to sell, wash and clean up before evening time ...that we go home ... I only have Sunday evenings to play with my friends....it's better now at least...though you still go out to work here but you can plan for leisure at least... [IDI, in-university: female, aged 26]

Leisure? {thinking} ... may be during the weekends...no much leisure...before now, my leisure were spent in daddy's shop to assist him... and play around in the shop area...sometimes I do the normal hawking for my mum with her petty trading too...a times I go to my friend's area to play and relax... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 22]

The young men gave similar responses:

Emm, most times, my own leisure time is spent with my dad in his shop...we have a big shop where my father repairs shoes, umbrella and stuff like that... I always go there after school to learn and work with him... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 19]

Ah! My leisure is my night time...when I sleep...I'm actually studying for my Jamb⁸, so I spend most of my time at this computer centre to learn how to use computers... because my father owns this place... I don't have to be playing around or sitting idle....most times I'm responsible for attending to customers that come here for internet browsing.... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 23]

...well, I do have time to relax but my mind is always on what I need to do...I work out here a lot on my transport business to assist mum ...especially since we lost my dad...then you know... schooling, feeding, taking care of my younger ones is a lot...so, I've got little leisure but I still take time out somehow...to relax with friends, families especially on Sundays... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 22].

Oh, I help my mum to sell in her shop...so she can assist me whenever I'm going back to school...[IDI, in-university: female, aged 22]

⁸Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

These data reveal the common ways in which young people spend their leisure time. It was surprising to see that many young people recounted leisure alongside wide range of economic activities, which they performed since they were young, or in their secondary school days. Their accounts further reveal farming, trading, transport and hawking which a number of them carried out. As mentioned in chapter five on how young people in the research setting could not depend economically on their parents for ‘full’ financial support due to the relatively poor standard of living of most parents, the present data affirms that young people also serve as major contributors to the economic survival of their families. From the young people’s accounts, a number of them engaged in hawking a variety of products before and after campus hours; their leisure were generally viewed in line with the hours they spent with their parents to generate additional income or render services in their parents’ businesses including rendering assistance in farming activity.

The finding also allude to the fact that young people lack economic capital which is considered as an important form of capital that often determines their status or social position in society. Economic capital is a necessity for eliminating poverty, generating other forms of capital (such as using economic capital to gain access to formal education) to improve one’s economic, wealth or aid development. Empirically, it is worth noting that a number of studies have analyzed the impact of parent’s socio-economic status on children in many African communities. They have demonstrated how young people from low socio-economic backgrounds are often subjected to deprivations, lack of basic materials or financial capital or oriented into economic generating activities at a tender age with little consideration of the effects this might have on their health and academic performances (Akin, 2013; Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013; Oribarbor, 2014).

One of the consequences of young people’s poor socio-economic background is that many of them had to combine education with economic activities even at an older age. This was apparent from the way in which a number of them maintained active positions in contributing to the survival of their families. Another important implication for young people’s participation in economic activities is that they might not be able to give adequate attention to their studies, widen their capacities through extra lectures, or study time. This would most probably have impacted positively on their capacity or perform with

excellence. In addition, it also appears that the inability to acquire good educational performance is a setback.

6.2.2 Entry Level Examination into Higher Educational Institutions

Another emerging theme is the accounts of young people who assert that the entry requirement for higher educational institutions as being difficult. Entry requirements takes the form of examination usually known as JAMB examination which is a standard requirement from the National Universities Commission (NUC). This often requires that candidates must achieve a remarkable grade in the JAMB examination in order for them to qualify for admission. It is observed in the study that , most respondents were unable to score the minimum required grades in the JAMB exam which precluded them from gaining admission to a university. In addition, respondents lamented that they were unable to score the minimum required grades in Mathematics and the English language at the secondary examination level which is an additional criteria (apart from obtaining acceptable scores in the unified JAMB⁹ exam) for any candidate to gain admission into the university education system. A number of them recounted how they have made several attempts and failed before settling to go for another educational programme starting from Pre-ND, Pre-NCE

⁹ JAMB is the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board Examinations that prospective students must pass to a required standard in order to qualify for admission into any higher institutions in Nigeria. Before JAMB was introduced in Nigeria, each university handled its admission process independently. Consequently, there was marked difference in the criteria set up by each university for admission requirement. However, based on the need to harmonize admission process through a more standardized and organized body led to the establishment of JAMB and the first unified matriculation exam was conducted in 1978. This resulted in the use of cut-off marks. Candidates who obtain the cut-off mark for a particular course is then qualified for provisional admission. More recently is the use of post-JAMB, which is another level of assessment in which candidate write another entrance exam in the respective institution where they have applied for admission. Following this, successful candidates are offered unconditional admission. Finally, the institution confirms whether a candidate obtains required grades in the prescribed subjects at the end of their secondary school education. Two major types of results acceptable in Nigerian institutions are West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO).

and so on. In addition, the use of quota system was also identified as a barrier as some respondents could not gain admission even after they had made the requirements. The following are representative accounts of young people's comments starting with the FGD sessions:

...apart from the money issue...it is always difficult to meet the requirement for university exams...first you must have passed maths and english at O'level, then pass Jamb with high score....so, by the time you try twice or three times....one gets tired and look for another option...that's why many of us have to come to Poly and start at Pre-ND then gradually we will have our HND...{others nodding in agreement} [FGD, in-university: male]

In fact..I wanted to study mass communication in the University...but couldn't gain admission due to low Jamb score...I had to change my mind for NCE...I'm now doing social studies here...[FGD, in-university: male]

And female in-university FGDs:

...I think if not for finance and the difficult entry exams, most of us would have been in the University...we love to go University...it's the best option...but to pass maths, english, and minimum required score for Jamb is not easy...you made several attempts and still fail..very frustrating...many people change their mind for other options like going for NCE, Polytechnics etc to avoid been idle...[FGD, in-university: female]

...we don't even know whether it has to do with computer errors or something else...they keep send failure results no matter how much you try hard...[FGD, in-university: female]

Similarly for the out of university respondents:

...ofcourse I plan to go to higher institution, I'm trying to gain admission into University to read Economics...but my maths and english is not good enough....so I'm preparing for a retake...[IDI, out of university: male, aged 23]

.... my brother advised me to come to Poly but I still want to try one more time before I gave up on JAMB...then the money involved is much...so, I'm taking my time... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 22]

...yes, am the owner of this shop... God is really helping me here...okay yes, I wanted to go to school but I was tired of writing those exams...the time and money I wasted on Jamb was a lot...I made three attempts and they said I failed...so I told myself I won't do Jamb again...I will concentrate on my work here...afterall, not that the money was really available... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 26]

From the foregoing narratives, it can be observed that meeting the requirement for admission to a tertiary institution is a major obstacle for many young people. There are three major examinations which potential candidates must successfully pass to attain access to higher institutions of learning. These include the secondary school examination certificate, JAMB or the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and the post-UTME. Taking a look at the responses made by participants in this study, a number of them view the entry requirement to higher institutions as a threat or severe obstacles with regard to their access to higher education. This was especially emphasized in relation to gaining admission to university education due to difficulties in obtaining the required grades. This was observed in the various comments made by participants to describe entrance examinations with comments such as: “by the time you try twice or three times....one gets tired and look for another option”, “couldn't gain admission due to low Jamb score”, “to pass Maths, English, and minimum required score for JAMB is not easy”, “very frustrating”, “I gave up on JAMB” and “I was tired of writing those exams”. Moreover, the majority of the participants confirmed that they had attempted university admission as their first choice but could not gain access and had to settle for admission into the Polytechnics or Colleges of Education.

It has also been observed that students' academic performance is dependent on the parental socio-economic situation. For instance in Nigeria, Oribabor (2014:152) has observed in a few selected secondary schools that many students who fail both the internal and external secondary school examinations especially in English language originate from the “extreme

lower-lower class” as they could not afford the cost of recommended seasonal textbooks for their children at school.

In an Ethiopian study conducted in Dessie town among secondary students attending their regional examinations, Amogne (2015) reveals family socio-economic conditions as a significant influencing factor for children’s academic achievement. It was found in the study that students whose parents have better socio-economic conditions performed better in the regional exams compared to their counterparts from families with lower socio-economic conditions.

In Lucknow city of India, empirical research has also affirmed the important relationship between parents’ socio-economic status and children’s academic performance in the context of secondary school setting. It was observed that the basis for the differences in the scores for students in their study setting was their economic positioning. Students with high scores originated from higher socio-economic background that were provided with the basic necessities such as access to health care, education and emotional needs as opposed to their mates from poor socio-economic class (Farkhanda and Ehtesham, 2013).

Taking a critical look at the findings of previous studies, as well as the narratives of participants in the present study, one might conclude that young people from lower socio-economic background have only ‘partial’ access to formal education. Such incomplete access to education neither improves their capacity for excellent academic performance at secondary school level nor affords them the opportunity to fully concentrate on their study to obtain the required grades for gaining admission into higher education. Additional implication of such findings is that participants are unable to break the cycle of poverty and deprivations which have been experienced by their older generations (parents) as postulated by Oscar Lewis (1964 and 1969). In a similar vein, Bourdieu’s (1980) argument on cultural capital (as discussed in chapter three of this study) concluded on the notion that obtaining educational qualification ensures access to cultural capital. In this respect, the roles of families as an agent of socialization cannot be underestimated for transferring cultural capital from parents to offspring, in a relatively vicious cycle. Thus, the meeting point for Lewis’s and Bourdieu’s arguments as observed in this part of the study is that, only a few parents appeared to possess the capacity for providing their children with educational and

cultural capital due to their poor socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, majority of their young members might not be able to obtain their educational goals and as such, may continue to sustain the cycle of poverty which Lewis emphasized.

Having discussed these findings on the difficulties encountered by young people in meeting with the requirements for higher education, the next section examines the various ways in which young people forge ahead or attempt to access higher education against all odds.

6.2.3. Different Practices or Routines Associated With Admission Process

While it has been observed that many young people could not secure admission because they could not meet the admission requirements, another dominant notion that was discovered among young people in the IDIs and FGDs, regardless of gender or educational status was that their access to higher education were negatively impacted by the subjective or unlawful practices that revolve around admission processes. Some of the young people narrated various forms of unlawful practices to include: favouritism and tribalism which are perpetrated by admission officials. These can be observed in the following narratives:

...in fact it's unfortunate, I lost my dad shortly before I finished my secondary school and begin to seek admission into higher institution...if my father were to be alive...he would have given me note (informal letter) to the admission officer and I would have gained admission irrespective of my Jamb score...my dad worked as a senior civil servant and highly influential...he has helped a lot of people in our community with his influence to gain admission...but died while I was preparing my final exam in the secondary school...so I had to stay at home for about four years before coming to Polytechnics... I was determined to go to higher institution even though I'm already into entrepreneurship... I had learnt how to make soap, yoghurt, and few other household materials...that's what I live on and use to cater for my junior ones...but I'm happy to be in school again...[IDI, in-university: male, aged 22]

... assuming my father has the money or know people in charge of admission in the University....I would have been in the university by now...my father was asked to

bring some amount of money when I was seeking admission...some of the people that contributed to the admission guy eventually got admission...but I couldn't raise that money...then, people who has 'long leg'¹⁰ or godfather easily get admission with their powerful positions....my neighbor told me how his friend in the University got admission with lower score because his godfather assisted him... [IDI, in-university: male, 21]

.... for me to get to this place...it was my brother's girlfriend in the ICT that assisted me...she works in their computer department and they compiled list of admitted candidates...she was the one that assisted me.... [IDI, in-university: male, 22]

...the most annoying part of admission process is that sometimes after you have managed to pass all the exams...they still tell you that they've gotten enough candidtates expected from your state... very fraustrating...[FGD, in-university: male]

...to gain admission to university is not easy at all...it demands loads of work including knowing people... [FGD, in-university: male]

Interviewer: How?

Another male discussant: ah, atimes you need to bribe your way there...or know someone to influence things...otherwise even when you think you did well...you may still not gain admission... [FGD, in-university: male]

And another:

[nodded in agreement]...then apart from that it has complicated procedures...and too much stress... [FGD, in-university: male]

Similar opinions were also expressed by the female discussants:

¹⁰Long leg is a local term that is often used to described any kind influence people are able to make to achieve ones aim , this could involve monetary, use of social status etc.

...I wish they could make application for university admission a bit easier....to reduce the ways we run around for internet café, buying scratch cards here and there.... [FGD, in-university: female]

...yeah, there is too much stress in the process ...not easy at all...still at the end of the day we still don't get admitted... [FGD, in-university: female]

The narratives are representative of the manner in which admission process at tertiary level takes place and subjected to corruption. Some of the participants reveal that they have met the requirements and qualified for admission but were denied access while other candidates with lower grades were admitted due to corrupt practices. In other words, the excerpts reveal that the admission process although complex in nature involved other forms of subjective practices such as ‘godfatherism’, (employing the assistance of influential individuals) or the use of ‘long leg’ described by participants which entails bribery, tribalism and various forms of unlawful negotiations exhibited by those seeking admission, their parents or guardians with the officials in charge of the admission processes.

The corrupt admission practices have been highlighted by Whawo (2015) who argued that there is a general perception among many Nigerians that admission process is not strictly entirely based on merit or academic qualification of candidates. Similarly, in another study that examines the effects of corrupt practices in seven selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria, observes that various types of illegal and corrupt practices such as examination mal-practices and extortion on the part of students and staff have become a dominant practice in many tertiary institutions which consequently leads to lowering of standards and increased number of incompetent (half-baked) graduates in Nigeria (Whawo, 2015).

Apart from young people’s comments on the unlawful practices associated with the admission processes, their accounts further suggest that a number of them found the admission process to be rigid and complicated. The comments from both male and female FGDs reveal how young people view the admission process as burdensome or cumbersome. A number of young people stated that admission process is often ‘loaded with too much stress’, ‘complicated procedures’, or what makes them ‘run around for internet, scratch cards’ and so on. Similar evidence from a survey among groups of educational stakeholders in Plateau, Benue and other states in North-central Nigeria have also affirmed that the

complexities associated with the processes of securing admission as ‘exploitative, expensive and strenuous’ (NAN, 2015:1). In addition, it has further been argued that candidates from rural areas might be excluded from gaining access to higher education due to the rudiments of admission process such as the need to travel long distances to examination centers for UTME and post-UMTC, purchases of scratch cards for online registration for UMTC, and post-UMTC for persistent checking of results (NAN, 2015).

The introduction of the quota system to the educational sector (Afigbo, 1989; Adeosun, 2011; Bello, 2012) was found to have given rise to another barrier, which limits young people’s access to higher education, especially in the government, established educational institutions in Nigeria. The quota system and federal character policies were intended for equal representation of admission candidates from various ethnic groups in order to reduce the domination of particular ethnic groups or states over another as well as to promote fairness or equity among Nigerian citizens (Anyawu, 2010; Okoli, 2012). However in the discourse of young people’s access to higher education, a major implication of such principle is that many qualified candidates may be denied admission (access) to higher education (Adeosun, 2011).. It explains why some of the young people like the young man in the FGD highlighted and used the terms ‘annoying’, and ‘frustrating’ in his descriptions of the admission process. A number of scholars have similarly concluded that while the quota system and federal character principles in the educational sector seek to ensure equal representation of the ethnic groups and across nation’s states, it stands as a major obstacle for many Nigerian young people in gaining access to federal institutions in Nigeria (Joshua, Loromeke and Olanrewaju, 2014). Moreover, as revealed in a study on the need to increase access to university education in Nigeria, only about 5.2% to 15.3% are admitted every year, leading to the denial of about 84.7% to 94.8% of those seeking admission on a yearly basis (Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe, 2012).

Essentially, various empirical and non-empirical studies have articulated the explicit roles of education especially at higher level institutions to be a major determining factor and panacea for tackling socio-economic problems and to contribute to national developmental goals (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006; Kolawole and Synder, 2008; Borode, 2011; Taylor, 2011; Oloruntoyin and Olanloye, 2011; Olojede, Adekunle, and Samuel, 2013;

Bloom, Canning, Chan and Luca, 2014; Mutisya and Nagao, 2014; Kruss, McGrath, Petersen and Gastrow, 2015). Additionally, in the literature review it was affirmed that people or nation's with lower literacy rates are highly vulnerable to increased poverty level, sustained complex cycle of poverty and extreme conditions or diverse effects of poverty (Adedokun, 2012; Ogunsakin, 2012; Yusuf et al., 2013).

Similar to Bourdieu and Lewis arguments, such practices and conditions which often lead to young people's denial of admission or limit their access to government owned institutions might discourage young people originating from the low economic level from pursuing higher education. Such implication may consequently deny them access to cultural capital as well as retain them or sustain their positions within the cycle of poverty (Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer, 2009).

6.2.4. The Social Context and Dilemma of Unemployment

Drawing on the empirical data retrieved from participants in this study, the capacity of young people to negotiate their access to higher education was found to be shaped by the social situations of their time. As such, some of the young people appeared to be discouraged from pursuing higher education due to the dilemma of unemployment. A few of the studied young people held this view and did not consider higher education as a necessity. For example, the following comments signify how a few of those in the IDIs were discouraged from pursuing higher education based on the circumstances of unemployment experienced by their close relatives and members of their communities.

...personally I'm very happy with the way God has helped me...I have no regret for not going to school...after all, those people going to school don't easily get job...they stay at home for so long looking for job...some of them even come back to learn one form of work or business to move on with their lives...after I finished my secondary school I was confused about what to do...going to higher institution was impossible...I have many younger ones..., the money was not there... so my mum told me that it will be quicker for me to make money and assist the family if I go and

learn work ...than going to higher institution because one is not sure of getting job after graduation ...she took me to her cousin, a fashion designer who trained me and I finished under her after three years...now I have my own shop, and married with children...you can see people who are apprentice under me now...by the grace of God I'm now helping my younger ones too... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 26]

...this pharmaceutical store is for my uncle...it's the biggest in this town...he's been training me on medicine since I was in secondary school...so after my O'level, he advised me that I don't need to go and waste much time in school, after all many pharmacists are looking for job in a place like this...so, I decided to stay with him to learn...he promised to open my own pharmaceutical store for me...[IDI, out of university: male, aged 24]

...Well, I've not decided what I want to do...I'm praying to God for direction...I've completed my secondary and now waiting for my results...although my parents want me to go to university...just that at times I get discouraged...you know, people suffer too much to study but may finish and not get job...my elder brother has HND for more than 3 years now but still looking for job ...he's just managing in our uncle's place in Lagos... I know a lot people looking like that...that's why I'm here to do computer training...though this type of business may require a lot of money but one can start something like this center... rather than staying jobless ... [IDI, out of university: male, aged 20]

In the above accounts, there emerged an impression of higher education as not entirely a guarantee for a brighter future, employment opportunities or in fulfilling their hopes and aspirations. Such accounts demonstrate how some young people may have little motivation to pursue higher education in Nigeria due to the prevalence of high unemployment rates. The participants were found to be pursuing alternative means of employment ranging from one participant becoming a fashion designer to another learning pharmaceutical services from an experienced relative, and the young male in a post secondary education still deliberating on whether to pursue higher education or not.

The literature suggests that attaining higher education especially university education has been universally recognized as a determinant of all aspects of change and a measure for graduates to ‘secure job from available employment opportunities and to be able to live above the poverty level’ (Ogege, 2011: 254, *see also*, Biao, 2014; Ukwueze and Nwosu, 2014). Surprisingly, and in contrast to the general expectations, studies have revealed that many Nigerian graduates continue to search for jobs and out of frustration eventually settle for menial jobs in order to meet their basic needs and secure their survival (Ogege, 2011; Oluseyi and Elegbede, 2012).

In relating this finding to an aspect of Bourdieu’s (1990) work on institutional form of capital, which views institutional recognition and educational qualifications as instrumental to achieving economic power, is contestable. Arguably, the participants in the study are found in a society with limited socio-economic resources, where only a few of those who obtain educational qualifications ‘the elite capital’ have access to economic resources or opportunities that could enhance their capacity for wealth or securing economic capital. Thus, Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural capital might not be universally applicable especially for those in the African settings as available resources are found to be limited to the masses.

However, in another dimension, findings from this study support Bourdieu’s (1990, 1993) analysis of reproduction of social and cultural capital. Bourdieu’s analysis appeared to be true for the young people from the dominant class (upper class) whose parents possess social, economic and cultural capital (elite power) which they transfer to their younger generations. Therefore, educated young people from lower-lower class whose parents lack economic power might not gain access to equal opportunities as those in the upper class would, leading to increased inequalities and widening the gap between children from the rich and poor backgrounds. A major consequence of such inequalities points to the fact that educated young people from the lower class may remain persistently poor hence retaining the cycle of poverty as postulated by Oscar Lewis.

Additional implication of young people's lower economic background is discussed in the following section which focuses on how some young females seek alternative ways to access economic capital but become drop-outs.

6.2.5. Effects of Non-negotiated Relationships Leading to Drop-outs

There emerged among the participants a dominant notion accentuated in a number of interviews and in particular FGDs discussions about how some young females were developing 'informal' relationships with relatively affluent partners who they believed could support them financially or take them as life partners. A number of females were involved in negotiating sexual relationships with regular partners who could support them financially, without viewing it as sex work.

At this juncture, it is important to mention that the present study differs from other existing studies on young people's sexuality and its effects, as it does not intend to problematize or judge the appropriateness of any pattern of sexual relations. Instead, it examines the different ways in which the participants were economically constrained to become sexual actors through negotiating power with the male counterparts, which consequently led to their dropping out of the educational system.

Evidence suggests that economically motivated sexual relations present some major implications for young females to maintain their sexual agency and also compromise their safety. For instance, one female participant commented that she could only suggest the use of a condom but could not insist on her partner's compliance, leading to an unwanted pregnancy and eventually dropping out. This was revealed in a short interview with one of the respondent:

...Well, [smiles], []...he was really good to me...my father married another woman after my mum left...his wife did not allow him to give us attention...so, myself and my two younger ones were left on our own...I'm from Bunnu but I decided to move down to Kabba to stay with my Aunt to face life and see what I could do to survive...my aunt encourage me to go back to school and enroll for my final

paper again...somehow I met this man...{smiled} He's been providing for my needs in school...I was about to write my final exams...until I realized that he was dating other girls around...then I tried to discourage him but he wouldn't listen...then he doesn't like to use condom...[Interviewer: Did you insist on condom?]...ah, I couldn't, I didn't want to upset him...but I suggested it...I thought of making things work []...hoping that we might end up with something good [marriage] ... but he dumped me and ended up with another girl...later I realized I was pregnant... I had to stop schooling for now...may be when I give birth, I will go back to school...my aunt is always upset with me...I find it difficult to survive now...I just start work in this restaurant a few weeks ago... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 24].

Another young woman told a similar story:

...I live with my grandmother... [] I lost my Dad some years back and Mum relocated to Kaduna...I was surviving well since I met this man...we were just friends initially, ...very nice to me.... paid my exam fee and many things... Along the line we became close and somehow we started dating... I tried to make him comfortable so that I don't lose him to other girls...I didn't even hide him from my grandmother, because our relationship has really been helpful for our survival...I thought it was going to be a serious affair not knowing that he only wanted to satisfy his sexual urges....He used me and ended the relationship on the day I told him that I was pregnant by him...The baby is two months old now, yet he still refuses to show up...he made me lose the opportunity to complete my secondary school, my mates are all still in school...they laugh at me when they see me...I'm just home...thinking of how to move on with life... [IDI, out of university: female, aged 25]

These narratives highlight the disappointments experienced by young women in a quest to meet their educational goals. These accounts reflect regrettable experiences of being exploited by their male counterparts. This is evident from the terms that some of the female

participants used to describe their sexual encounters including ‘he only wanted to satisfy his sexual urges’, and feelings of being ‘used’ and ‘dumped’. It also suggests that the participants maintained passive roles in their sexual relationships with men, even at the expense of their sexual safety.

From the above accounts, it could be said that some young women might be deprived access to higher education due to unwanted pregnancy resulting in dropping out of school at the secondary education level. It can therefore be concluded that female sexuality has been mediated through the economically constructed inequalities in their relationships with men leading to their inability to negotiate for protected sex and consequently unwanted pregnancy resulting ultimately dropping out of school.

In a FGD with in-university male, there was a general opinion that some older men are fond of dating their female counterparts as a form of transactional sex:

...everyone is struggling to cope with campus life...as a man, you just package yourself and move on...but some of our girls want so much comfort that they put their lives at risk with different old rich men...that come around during weekend to take them out... is a dangerous thing ... some of us are in the Anti-AIDS Club in our school, we know that some of these girls are already infected with HIV... [FGDs, in-university: male, aged 23]

Another discussant added that:

One of our students here died of AIDS sometimes ago....she was one of those girls... [FGDs, in-university: male, aged 20]

{Others nodding}...that was a very sad story to tell....she died of AIDS... [FGD, in-university: male, aged 22]

This focus group is representative of opinions expressed that young females are often found to consider their attractiveness to men by putting themselves in a position in order to augment their finances and meet their material. Moreover, it has been reported in several studies that economically motivated sex is mostly unprotected, contributing to the increased

transmission of HIV/AIDS among heterosexual partners (Selikow, 2004; Stoebenau et al., 2011; Macpherson et al., 2012; Tiruneh et al., 2014).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the second part of the findings in which five emerging themes were examined on the various challenges that constrain young people's access to higher education. Within the five themes, various social contexts were found to be dominant in influencing young people's accounts of how their access to higher education was mediated by the social conditions of their time.

The first emerging theme demonstrated how young people's access to higher education became dominantly influenced by their limited socio-economic circumstances, leading to the majority of them becoming key contributors to the continuous survival of their families.

The second is their lack of capacity to meet the requirement for admission. Almost all participants (female and male) acknowledged that they had difficulties in meeting the requirement for higher educational institutions. The third core theme discussed in this chapter was the complexities associated with routines or processes of admission. Many participants could not have access to higher education because they found the admission process to be cumbersome and loaded with corrupt practices such as favoritism and bribery while the government policies of quota system and federal character were found detrimental to a number of them.

The fourth is the social context and dilemma of unemployment associated with Nigerian graduates. A few participants in the study did not consider the need to pursue higher education for fear of uncertainty of employment in the labour market when they complete their studies.

Finally, the chapter examined how a number of young females attempted to enhance their finance by engaging in sexual relationships with men that were financially well off. This was found to have impacted negatively on some of the young women's access to higher

education as they could not negotiate protected sex and consequently became pregnant and dropped out of school. Moreover, these females risked being exposed to the HIV/Aids virus.

Taking the positions of Pierrie Boudieu and Oscar Lewis's arguments, this chapter affirms that young people's access to higher education is not entirely based on their rational choice but principally depended on the various factors and contexts in their socio-cultural environments, economic conditions and other circumstances revolving around them.

Having dealt with the analysis of findings the next section focuses on the findings, conclusion and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to deepen an understanding of the various factors that influence young people's access to higher education in Kogi State of Nigeria by employing the Bourdieuan and Lewisian points of views. In particular, this study focused on the factors that mediated in young people's access to higher education within their local contexts. It was in a context in which poverty, cultural norms, values and gender practices as well as other social conditions were found to be dominant factors within which young people negotiate, juggle, or became subjected to certain conditions which determine their access and retention in higher education. The discussion presented in the preceding two chapters has revealed a number of complexities and contradictions surrounding young people's access and factors which limits their capacities to gaining access to higher education. It also focused on factors that help sustain their retention or completion of their academic tenures. Although the factors observed from this study may not be generalized in describing young people's situation across the African continent, this study is a context-specific research that provides insights that will help build a study on a wider scale to determine the various barriers which young people are faced with in accessing higher education in an African context.

This final chapter draws insights that have emerged from this study. It expounds on the relevance of theories adopted in the study, along with its implications for young people's access in the Nigerian context. Specific recommendations are also made for policymakers and future researchers to test these findings further, build on the findings contained in the study or replicate them.

7.2 Summary of Findings

The first research question set out to determine the ways in which young people narrate their social and economic backgrounds in relation to their access to higher education. The study reveals that financial constraints are a major inhibiting factor due to parent's low income level and limited resources to support the education of their children. Hence, it comes as little surprise that most of the young people in the study encountered economic difficulties in negotiating access to higher education. Given that most of the young people in the study originate from poor socio-economic backgrounds, the majority of the narratives suggest that they are engaged in various forms of income-generating activities such as petty trading and services of all kinds, while others were involved in different forms of apprenticeship. Thus, even though when higher education is constructed as fundamental to eliminating poverty and a way to securing a brighter future, many of them could not negotiate access to their desired institutions (e.g., private universities) and fields of study. Other studies in the African context reported similar findings in respect of the constraints that young people face in negotiating access to higher education due to limited parental economic resources (Maqsd, 2011; Ogujiuba et al., 2011; Aluede et al. 2012; Hervish and Clifton, 2012; Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013). Another novel finding of the present study is the manner in which young people constructed higher education as a panacea to a brighter future for them. This was observed in the way in which they framed their need in obtaining higher education even though their parents could not afford it. They were also found to be involved in active negotiations for alternative institutions such as seeking admission to Colleges of Education and Polytechnics once they realized that they could not gain access to their desired choice of higher educational institution.

The second research question was directed to investigate the different socio-cultural contexts that influenced young people's access to higher education. An important finding from this empirical study was that cultural values impacted on the way in which young people participated at a higher educational level. Certain social norms, beliefs and practices facilitated or limited young people's access to higher educational level achievement. In chapter five of this thesis, the study highlighted how young people perceived higher education as providing social prestige within their social circle. For instance from the young

people's accounts, particular references were made to their religious norms, parents, members of households and their working class siblings and relatives that prescribed higher education as a guarantee in accessing economic and cultural capital (*see Chapter 5*). Such importance to the level of acceptance given to higher educational status was observed to have been inculcated into the local norms of the research communities during the British colonial rules when a few educated citizens (the elites) became beneficiaries of white collar jobs (Aluede, 2006; Jaiyeola-Omoyeni and Omoyeni, 2014). Following the introduction of white-collar jobs, which appeared to be more prestigious, and economically rewarding as compared to agricultural activity, the people's way of life changed dramatically towards embracing western forms of education, which was sustained by their long association with that influence (Enwo-Irem, 2013). Thus, a number of people became motivated and endorsed the enrolment of their children into the missionary schools which were spread across the Christian dominated regions of Nigeria including the research localities of this study. Thus, formal education became widely accepted as a fundamental or significant status that most parents want their children to aim and achieve in life. In a similar way, other recent studies across different African and western societies have reported that education especially at higher level has been universally recognized as a basic necessity of life (Aluede et al., 2012; Esomonu and Adirika 2012; Mwenda and Mwenda, 2013; Iruonagbe et al., 2015). However, it is important to mention at this point that most of the previous studies have often portrayed or found the role of culture as always negative (or creating undesirable influences) and discouraging young member's participation in formal education (Mike et al., 2008; Tehobo, 2000; Nakpodia, 2010; Olaniyan 2011; Abdulkarim and Ali, 2012; Dichaba, 2013; Mucee et. al., 2014; Akinbi and Akinbi, 2015; Aliyu, 2015). Contrary to existing studies, it has become clear from this study that some cultures can develop new norms and values which may influence their young members and contribute positively to some aspects of their lives (such as enrolling in higher education).

The third research question was to confirm whether young people were being affected by gender discrimination in pursuit of higher levels of education. One of the important findings in chapter five of this study was that there was a prevalence of gender imbalance in the local context of the young people which acted as a barrier for many young females gaining access to higher education. This was found to be a dominant practice especially in situations

of limited financial resources. Notably, such gender discrimination was also found to be in contrast to the positive influence that encourages them regardless of gender in attaining formal education up to a higher level. A major implication observed in these contradictory norms was that, while some of the younger females seemed to have accepted the norm and did not negotiate their way to higher education, a number of them did not passively accept the gender norms and values imposed on them. As such, many young female's accounts illustrates that they engaged in different levels of negotiations through their involvement in various economic activities, even to the extent that some engaged in sexual relationships with men of relatively good economic status in their struggle for survival and financial needs so that they may secure access or maintain their retention in higher education. These findings corroborate with other studies across Africa which revealed the extent to which female's access to education has remained contextualized within patriarchal ideologies. This perpetuates the influence of gender based expectation which presents men as inherently occupying positions of power, control and virility while women are required to be submissive and passive in order to maintain their culturally valued positions of passivity and dependency to play roles of wifeness and motherhood (Olateru-Olagbegi et al., 2004; Okeke et al., 2008; Okarfor and Arinze, 2012; Duzé and Yaz'ever, 2013; Mucee et al., 2014; Ogunniyi and Dosumu, 2014; Akinbi and Akinbi, 2015; Osagiobare et al., 2015).

7.3 Other Emerging Themes from the Study

In Chapter five of this study, analysis of the data reveals five dimensions of challenges encountered by participants in gaining access to higher education. The first is the role that young people play as key contributors to the economic survival of their families. As revealed earlier, evidence from this study suggests that young people's access to higher educational level were largely influenced by their parental economic status. This necessitated their active participation in economic activities during their teenage years. A major implication of their involvement in economic activities is the manner in which they became distracted and could not concentrate solely on their academic pursuits. Unsurprisingly, a majority of them could not obtain excellent grades that were required of

them to gain admission into higher education especially university education. Almost all of the participants in the IDIs and FGDs revealed that they chose to enroll in Colleges of Education or Polytechnics because they could not obtain the required grades for university admission. This finding led to the second theme that emerged which reveals how admission requirement and entrance examination became major barriers in gaining access to higher education among the sampled young people. It was found out in the IDIs and FGDs that, apart from the financial constraints, they could not pass the entrance examinations and the required subjects like Mathematics and English at secondary school certificate examinations. Many young people also reported that they had attempted to pass university examinations before they decided to enroll in Colleges of education and Polytechnics as a last resort. In addition, a few had to change from their intended course of study to another field because they could not meet the requirements for admission into their intended fields of study.

The third dimension of the challenges encountered by young people in this study is the complex routines and unlawful practices associated with admission processes. Many participants cited the use of the quota system and federal character policy as a barrier to gaining admission into their desired institutions. In addition, the findings of this study reaffirm that most of the sampled young people find the unethical conducts of admission officials as extremely worrisome as it serves as another factor that discourage them from seeking admission into the university education system. This corroborates with Willliott's (2009) findings on the extent to which some parents and potential students are involved in bribing admission officers. Participants in this study expressed concern that even though they qualified for admission, they may not secure their entry into the university since they could not afford the large sums of money to influence the admission official's decisions. In addition, another barrier experienced by participants in this study is the complex routines of online registration and the need to travel to far distances in order to write the JAMB examinations. Such routine activities which demand the use of internet on frequent basis to accomplish online registrations, checking and rechecking for updates on admission, and examination results, the need to travel to far distance centers where JAMB examinations and post UTME take place, all discourage participants who are seeking admissions into university education. Similarly, nepotism and favoritism are some of the corruptible

practices experienced during admission processes. The fourth theme that emerge in this study is the social context and dilemma of unemployment associated with Nigerian graduates. It was found that some of the young people in this category were engaged in different forms of apprenticeships and did not consider the need to pursue higher education for fear of being marginalized in the labour market. The study reveals that some of the young people have lost hope in achieving their desired goal through higher education and consequently seek other means of economic survival such as trading and apprenticeships rather than seeking education at a higher institutional level. This finding supports other recent studies in Nigeria that focused on the problem of unemployment as a major barrier to individual and national development (Ogege, 2011; Olofintoye and Prince, 2013; Asuquo and Agboola, 2014).

Finally, the fifth theme highlights how young women constructed sexual practices in monetary terms, and how their sexual negotiations were being shaped by economic circumstances. This suggests that a number of young females attempt to enhance their financial status through engagement in sexual relationships with financially endowed men. In offering sexual favours, it made it extremely difficult for them to consider protected sex with the use of condoms. Such patterns of economically motivated sexual relationships are usually unprotected, contributing to the increased transmission of HIV/AIDS (Selikow, 2004; Stoebenau et al., 2011; Macpherson et al., 2012; Tiruneh et al., 2014).

Moreover, as revealed in chapter six of this study, a number of young people, both male and females made reference to their peers and school mates who contracted HIV/AIDs and eventually lost their lives. In addition, it was also found that economically motivated relationships hindered a number of young females from negotiating protected sex which led to some of them becoming pregnant and dropping out of school. This also led to some young people becoming emotionally depressed and eventually subjected to psychological trauma, abandonment, idleness and becoming subjects of ridicule among peers who were ahead of them.

The findings reported in this study provide the basis for the relevance of theoretical perspectives, concluding thoughts and recommendations, which are presented in the sections that follow.

7.4 Relevance of Theoretical Perspectives

The explanatory frameworks of Bourdieu and Lewis were found relevant in analyzing the limitations experienced by young people in gaining access to higher education. Essentially, the young people's narratives confirmed Bourdieu's theoretical arguments which emphasized the conditions for cultural capital to be transmitted from one generation to the next or social reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In particular, Bourdieu's theory analyzed the role of family in the transfer or reproduction of cultural capital to their young members. This provides an understanding of the roles that parents play in their children's educational attainment. It also provides understanding of the fact that parents with greater cultural capital are more involved in supporting their children's educational attainment, which led them to achieve other forms of capital.

Looking at the relevance of Bourdieu's arguments (1980, 1986) to the responses from young people in this study, it appears that a majority of them are disadvantaged and highly constrained in gaining access to the top (that is, acquiring higher education as a cultural value) due to the limited resources of their parents. In other words, this study found that most young people lack social, economic and cultural capital in terms of wealth, financial assets, social networks and other necessities, which would have been inherited or transferred to them by their parents. Such capitals as argued by Bourdieu is a *sine qua non* for young members to equip their capacities for gaining access to higher education and thus achieving their desired educational qualifications which were hitherto unavailable to them. Thus, due to the lack of such inheritance, young people in the study were found to struggle, and engage in complex negotiations in order to access higher education. They were also found to be highly disconnected from resources that would move them up to a higher social hierarchy and valuable connections in order to accumulate capital resources for a brighter future.

Lewis's culture of poverty is concerned on how people internalize and normalize particular forms of social behaviour which retains them in the vicious cycle of poverty (Lewis, 1964, 1969). This perspective illuminates the ways in which certain norms and values influenced

young people's perceptions of higher education were reinforced through their upbringing and by virtue of their religion, family/community and cultural values. However, Lewisian approaches that emphasize only negative influences are problematic. As this study has done, it is important to look at the transferred values that both enhance and constrain young people's access to higher education. Viewing young people's accounts in the present study, one could observe some positive influences such as the favorable norms that encourage young people to pursue higher education in the research setting. This was in contrast with Lewis's findings in the western context among the Puerto Rican immigrant urban poor who had shared 'deviant' cultural traits that characterized them as inferiors, helpless or full of self-gratification and thus remained in the cycle of poverty passing from one generation to another (Lewis 1969). Looking at young people in the Nigerian context, there is an existing local norm that encourages young members to attain higher education. This leads this study to an argument that positive ideas could be transferred from older generations to the younger generations. As also observed in this study (*chapter five*), despite the absence of financial support and the low literacy level of most parents in the research setting, parents were able to inculcate positive values which conceive formal education and particularly higher educational level as being prestigious and a necessity for overcoming poverty. Also, as opposed to Lewis's perspective, individual social or cultural behaviour may change over time, the young people in this study did not retain the conventional way of survival such as farming, fishing or idleness as found in their parents data, rather they were found to be actively involved in juggling and negotiating different conditions that determine their access to higher education.

In another vein, findings from the young people's narratives also support an aspect of Lewis's argument that the culture of poverty includes a relatively distinct subculture of the poor with its own norms and values. The young people's narratives affirmed that the young people were socialized to the long established gender norm and practice in which access to higher education is viewed within the context of culture that prioritize male identity. Hence, while the young female's access to higher education were constrained and organized towards the dimension of achieving socially recognized status of wifehood and motherhood, greater value were placed on males' access to higher education. Thus, given that a number of young females that were confronted with such conventional norm have

accepted their limitations and would not negotiate other means to enroll into higher education, they might remain dependent, helpless and thus continue to sustain the cycle of poverty as Lewis postulated.

Similarly, as found in Lewis's empirical studies in the western context, the narratives of young participants in the present study, both males and females, revealed that some normative influences (like gender practice as discussed) and economic needs constrained young people's capacities. However, findings from the present study are different from Lewis's analysis as they take accounts of additional contexts such as religion, the role that young people played in the economic survival of their families, the dilemma of unemployment, various routines and complexities associated with admission processes and other relational positioning of young people's negotiations within their local contexts.

Overall, it was interesting to observe that the use of Western theories in the African context revealed that theories could be adapted to the local context to offer insight into social, cultural and implications of economic limitations of the Nigerian young people. This enabled the present study to draw on findings that reveal the dominant norms, religious beliefs and different socio-cultural factors which shaped young people's access and negotiations to higher educational institutions, rather than the individuals' rational choices.

7.5 Conclusion

This thesis is in response to the identified absence of young people's voices in the body of research literatures on low literacy level, and the determinant factors for the low level of literacy, dropping out of school and their poor enrolment in higher education. The main conclusion of this study is that young people encountered multi-faceted challenges in negotiating access to higher education. Essentially, the findings of this study demonstrated that young people's access to higher education was generally influenced by virtue of: (1) their level of poverty and poor socio-economic conditions; (2) the influence of socio-cultural factors such as their religious affiliations; (3) dominant ideologies of gender practices in their local context; (4) the peculiar roles that young people played as key

contributors to the survival of their families; (5) difficulties in meeting the requirements for entry into higher educational institutions; (6) the practices or routines associated with admission process; (7) the social context and dilemma of unemployment; and (8) the effects of non-negotiated relationships leading to drop-outs.

Overall, this study has shown clearly that various factors played essential roles in young people's negotiation of access to higher education. In particular, it provides a deeper understanding of the interplay of different influential contexts that implicated on young people's enrolment and retention in higher education and the manner in which limited economic resources have interwoven with other social factors as major impacts. This is particularly true for those young people who are left with no choice but to engage in various types of income-generating activity for their survival and that of their families. As consequence, this was found to have impacted on their academic performance and limited their capacities to pursue university education. Also, participant's accounts illustrated how young women can be exposed to men who exploit them sexually in exchange for money, a form of relationship that was found to have limited young women's capacity for sexual negotiation, and leading many to drop out of the higher educational system (*see Chapter 5*). Analysis of young people's accounts provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities encountered by young people within their local contexts. It also built on existing literature that discussed young people's access to higher education as commonly problematic (as revealed in chapter two).

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing an alternative to the quantitative analysis that dominated explanations of young people's access to higher education in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. Most importantly, it engages in the debate concerning the need for a paradigm shift from research seeking the prevalence rates of young people who are out of higher educational institution or those dropping out to studies that attend to the underlying factors and contexts, which influence their negotiation for access to higher institution. In addition, while most of the existing studies have focused on young people in formal educational institutions, this study made its distinctiveness by involving the voices of those that are presently out of higher education. This provides concrete evidence, which exposes the contextual factors affecting young people's access as

a whole. This study has also challenged the psychological explanations that individuals are capable of making rational choices on enrolling or ensuring their retention in higher institutions of learning. Based on the particular findings of this study, the present study concludes by restating its primary argument that young people's capacity for negotiating access to higher education are not entirely based on their own rational choices but largely depends on economic circumstances, socio-cultural contexts whose elements are the norms, values, beliefs, gender practices as well as other relational conditions which shape their access to higher education.

7.6 Recommendations

As this study has shown, the factors that are known to contribute to limited access to higher education are embedded within the local context of the young people and the Nigerian context as a whole. Therefore, the recommendations are for strategies that could be adopted by local bodies such as religious groups, policy makers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This study begins by making three broad recommendations which could be adopted by policymakers and NGOs. It thereafter highlights five additional specific areas of intervention which are more practicable and easily achievable at different levels. While this study does not claim that these recommendations are definitive or exhaustive, adopting the following steps will enhance young people to gain better access to higher educational institutions in Nigeria.

There is need for programmes that deal realistically with the economic constrain which limit young people's access to higher education.

Given the significance of economic difficulties among young people in the study, it will be of great importance for policy makers and local NGOs to design strategic economic empowerment programmes for parents in order to improve their economic conditions. Exploring a broad range of economic empowerment strategies for young people's parents particularly at the community level will reduce the poverty-stricken conditions and increase parent's level of financial involvement in their children's higher educational pursuit.

Essentially, improving parental economic power will also reduce the burden of young people from being major contributors to the economic survival of their families as well as increase their concentration on their academic pursuit. This will further enhance their academic performance at secondary school examinations and increase their capacity to obtain the required scores (or grades) in JAMB which is a major criterion to qualify them for admission into their desired higher educational institution.

There is a need for regular financial support for young people

As observed in this study, young people have solely relied on parental support and ‘self-help’ to meet the financial demands for attaining higher education. Moreover, none of the participants in this study attested to have benefited from any form of scholarship or aids. In order to reduce the socio-economic hardship for young people who may be qualified and interested in furthering their education up to higher educational level, there is need for policy makers and different NGOs advocating for young people’s participation in higher education to provide regular financial supports in the form of scholarships, bursaries and different forms of aids that could encourage young people’s participation in higher education.

There is need to review the procedures and selection criteria for higher education admissions.

Considering the manner in which the young participants in this study lamented about the complexity and frustrations associated with admission processes, there is need to design a workable, simple and relatively flexible procedure for potential candidates to pursue admissions into the higher educational system. The admission processes involving the need for online registration, checking and rechecking of updates, the need to travel a distance to write JAMB examinations and the need for post JAMB examination to be reworked and redesigned to more suitable and simpler processes which would enhance young people regardless of their rural or urban locations to be able to participate in the admission process with less stress. In addition, this study also recommends the total eradication of the quota system and the federal character policies which contribute to the reduction of the chances of

qualified candidates from gaining admission. This will encourage young people to play their part in obtaining the requirement for gaining access to higher institutions of learning and thus enhance equitable access to qualified candidates. The admission process should also be based on policies that are highly transparent in order to eradicate the different forms of unethical conducts associated with the admission process. Such policies would also reinforce merit-based decision, creating more admission opportunities for qualified candidates rather than allowing rich parents to influence the admission processes/decisions. In order to make the above recommendations more suitable for use and achievable by policy makers, and NGOs that focus on educational attainment for young people, this study further suggests that intervention programmes are needed in the following three additional areas:

Social groups to acknowledge and understand young people's need for higher education irrespective of gender

This study has clearly established that parents and older members of the wider society tend to disapprove of or discourage young females from pursuing higher education in situations of limited economic capacities. Thus, there is a need for intervention programmes that educate them on the need for girl-child education and deconstruction of the myths and misconceptions attached to female's access to education and particularly higher education. There is the need for the recognition of young females as equally important beings. Such an understanding would provide an enabling or conducive environment for young females and their consideration for higher education.

Resources should be reallocated to introduce free education/subsidy for higher education

Given the significance of economic difficulties among young people, it will be of great importance to policy makers and other stakeholders to gear efforts towards a reallocation of resources into the educational sector and to introduce free education at higher educational institutions or at least a remarkable subsidy to enable candidates from low-income backgrounds to have due access. Also, considering the importance of university education

in developing a competent workforce and contribution to national development through high level training, private universities should also be encouraged to lower school fees/tuition for the affordability of young people from low income earning families, thereby making the government pay for subsidies to the private higher educational institutions.

There is need to address unemployment with entrepreneurial education becoming a mandatory course at higher educational level

This study has shown that young people exhibit fear of unemployment commonly associated with many Nigerian graduates. For instance, some of the young people, particularly those of the out-of school were deeply concerned and do not want to make attempts to attend higher education in order to avoid the frustration of unemployment in Nigeria. Thus, this study recommends the need for the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE in charge of Colleges of Education and Polytechnics) to redesign their curriculum to incorporate mandatory entrepreneurial education. Such knowledge on entrepreneurial education will assist students or potential entrepreneurs upon graduation to be equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to go into small-scale industries and entrepreneurial venture. This will in turn make them employers of labour and job creators rather than job seekers.

7.7 Recommendations for Further Research

This study addressed a significant gap in the field of young people's access to higher education. Specifically, it moves beyond the large-scale quantitative analysis of young people's literacy rates to revealing the various contexts that may contribute to young people's participation in higher education, including the contexts in which they considered as obstacles to their access.

This study suggests that further research be conducted on the various factors that inhibit young people's access to higher education in Nigeria, as studies that attend to specific contexts through the voice of the young people themselves are still limited. Numerous studies of young people's participation in higher education in Nigeria have continued to

focus on the views of parents, teachers, religious leaders and other stakeholders in expounding their contributory factors. There is thus a need for research that primarily addresses young people themselves, examining their access and the underlying or contextual factors impacting on their access and negotiation for higher education.

This study is a context-specific research that was conducted in three communities of Kogi State of Nigeria. A replicate study involving all regions of the country should be conducted in order to garner broader perspectives which could be generalized on young people's experiences in accessing higher education across the nation.

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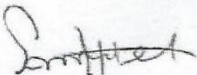
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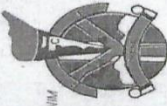
Appendix A: Gate Keeper's Letter Ahmadu Bello University of Agriculture, Kabba.

	COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE DIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY P M B 205, KABBA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA. Director: Prof. M.Y. Fatihu, DVM, M.Sc, Ph.D (ABU), FCVSN Provost: Akin Oloniruha. M.Sc (Ibadan)	
☎:058-300052, 08036083831		Email: cakab@abu.edu.ng
KCA/TRA-8	Date: 20 th April, 2015	
Mr. Babatunde Durowaiye, University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, School of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.		
Sir,		
RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH WORK		
Your application letter dated 15 th April, 2015 on the above subject matter refers.		
I wish to inform you the college management approval on your request to conduct a Research Work on Poverty and Sociocultural factors on Young People's to Higher Education in Kogi State.		
Kindly inform the college management in written when you want to commence your reseafch work.		
Congratulations.		
Thanks.		
Yours faithfully,		
 Samuel A. Augustine For: Provost, KCA		

Appendix B: Gate Keeper's Letter Federal College of Education, Okene.

FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

P.M.B. 1026 OKENE
KOGI STATE NIGERIA.
Tel: 058-500555, 500753
E-mail: fceokene@yahoo.com
Website: www.fceokene.com



PROVOST: DR. ITELA AJAYI, Ph.D, MA, BA, PODE, Cert. in Computer
REGISTRAR: ALI, YUSUF ABULLAH S., B. Sc. Bus. Adm. (MBA (Finance) MM

Our Reference:.....FCE/OK/RES/584/T.....

Your Reference:.....

Date: 4th May, 2015

Mr. Babatunde Emmanuel Durowaiye,
Department of Sociology,
School of Social Sciences,
University of Kwazulu-Natal,
Kwazulu-Natal,
South Africa.


Attention: Assoc. Prof. Sultan Khan

RE-APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 15th April, 2015 on the above subject matter and to inform you that the Management has approved your request to conduct a field research in the College.

The College wishes you success in your research undertaking.

Accept the College warmest regards.


THE REGISTRAR
Yakubu Grace
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
OKENE.

04 MAY 2015

Appendix C: Gate Keeper's Letter Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja.

KOGI STATE POLYTECHNIC, LOKOJA

P. M. B. 1101 LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

RECTOR
Prof. M. I. Ajibero (KSM)
BLS, MLS, Ph.D.

REGISTRAR
Aih. U. O. Saliu (MNIM)
B.Ed, M.Ed.



Telegram: POLYTECHNIC LOKOJA

Our Ref: **KGSP/REG/ACA/EXAMS/20/Vol.4**

Date: **16th April, 2015**

Dear Mr. Durowaiye
University of Kwazulu- Natal
Department of Sociology
Kwazulu- Natal.

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION

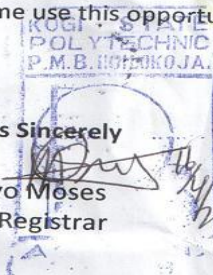
Your letter dated 15th April, 2015 was received in relation to conducting a research in our Institution on **Poverty and Sociocultural factors on Young People's Access to Higher Education in Kogi State.**

After a careful deliberation, I am happy to inform you that you have been approved to conduct this research.

Let me use this opportunity to wish you the best

Yours Sincerely


E. Ayo Moses
For: Registrar



Appendix D: Participants' Consent Form

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

Mynameis Babatunde Emmanuel Durowaiye (215078389). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus. The title of my research is: **An Exploration of Poverty And Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Young People's Access To Higher Education In Kogi State, Nigeria.** The aim of the study is to ask selected young people on their opinion and experiences regarding socio-cultural influences that facilitate or limit their access to higher institutions of learning. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 20 to 25 minutes.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password protected file accessible only to me and my supervisors. After a period of 5years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: 215078389@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Cell: +27762140185; +2348142388699.

My supervisor is Prof Sultan Khan, who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email khans@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: +27...

My co-supervisor is Prof Sultan Khan who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email khans@ukzn.ac.za; Phone number: +27...

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Appendix E: Declaration

DECLARATION

I..... (*full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Appendix F: Questionnaires

SECTION ONE: Personal Information

- I. Gender: Male ____ Female ____
- II. Age: ____
- III. Level of education attained/ Institution
- IV. Who do you live with: Both Parents ____ Mother ____ Father ____
- V. Who else do you live with: Brothers ____ Sisters ____ Other Relatives ____
- VI. Religion: Christian ____ Muslim ____ Others ____
- VII. How often do you attend Church/Mosques: Weekly ____ monthly ____ sometimes
____ never ____
- VIII. Rate your academic performance in the following by cycling the box appropriate to you
- Below Average
 - Average
 - Above Average
- IX. Father's educational attainment ____
- X. Mother's education attainment ____

SECTION TWO: General Knowledge on What Influences Respondents' Access to Higher Education

Indicate Your Opinion About The Following Statements	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Young people in your community generally want to pursue higher education				
2. Most young people make efforts to attain higher education as a way to enhance greater employment opportunities				
3. People generally want to associate with educated individuals because they seem to stand out in everything				
4. Achieving higher education accords some respects among friends and community members				
5. Most times, the financial involvement in attaining higher institution discourage people from furthering their education beyond secondary school				

SECTION THREE: Specific Accounts of Respondents on Access to Higher Education

Indicate Your Opinion on The Following Questions	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
6. Did somebody influence your decisions to pursue (or not to pursue) higher education?		If No, go to No.8	
7. Who mainly influences your decision? a. Mother b. Father c. Relatives d. People around you			
8. Were you in position to gain admission to the kind of institution you desire?			
9. Did you try for so long before gaining admission to your school?			
10. Based on your experience(s), has your ideas about education changed after you resume higher institution?			
11. Have you ever suffered any form of lack/ want in regard to schooling?			
12. Do you have reasons (or experiences) that make you feel like quitting school?		If No, go to No.14	
13. Are those reasons related to your: a. Religion b. Culture/ traditional practice c. Economic situation d. Parental influence e. Gender f. Others (specify)_____			

SECTION FOUR: Socio-Cultural Context and Access to Higher Education

Indicate Your Opinion About The Following Statements	Yes	No	Don't Know
14. Does being a man or woman affect your decision to obtain (or not to obtain) higher degree?			
15. Is it equally prestigious for a woman to attain higher education like men?			
16. Do you think that people with higher education qualification are likely to become more successful in life?		If no, go to no.18	
17. Is this equally true for both men and women?			
18. Are there traditional practices within family or community that encourage people to pursue higher education?			
19. Are there traditional practices within family or community that discourage people to pursue higher education?			
20. By virtue of the beliefs you hold about formal education, would you prefer to well educated?			

SECTION FIVE: Access to Higher Effects of Poverty on Respondents' Education

Indicate Your Opinion on The Following Questions	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
21. Are there financial supports you received from government of your country or other agency to achieve higher degree?			
22. Are your parents directly responsible for your funding/ sponsor?			
23. Who is responsible for your sponsor: a. Parents b. Guardians c. Friends d. Partner e. Self			
24. Has the financial support been consistent and adequate for you?			
25. Would you say that financing you education is a concern to you?			
26. Do you think that your financial status is affecting your academic performance in a way you don't like?			
27. Do you have siblings or other relatives that could not attend higher institution due to financial hardship?			
28. Would you have preferred to be in another school for financial reason?			
29. Have you been involved in economic generating activities while in school in order to raise money for your schooling?			

I sincerely appreciate your time. Thank you.

Appendix G: In-depth Interview (IDIs) Questions for the in-university Participants

1. Describe the circumstances, which led to your decision to pursue a higher education.
 - Probe to know whether becoming a graduate is a long held goal for the interviewee and why?
 - Tell me how you were able to gain admission to higher education.
 - Were you in position to gain admission to the kind institution you desire and how?

2. Do you think that achieving higher relationship accords you some respects among your friends or community members? Would you mind explaining in more details?
 - a. How long did you try before gaining admission to your school and why?
 - b. Has your ideas about education changed after you resume higher institution?
 - c. Would you mind telling me more about your experience?

3. Whose responsibility is it to provide for your tuition, feeding and general up keep in school?
 - a. Have you ever suffered any form of lack/want as regards your schooling? What did you overcome the situation?
 - b. Are there reasons to make you feel like quitting school?

4. Are there people you know in your family or community that stand out because of their educational achievement? How has this influence your decisions?

5. Does being a man or woman affect your educational attainment or in gaining access to higher education in your community.

6. There appears to be beliefs that people with higher education qualification are likely to become more successful in life. Is this true, do you think so? Probe to know where they envisage achieving higher education.

7. Do you think there are constraints upon you in completing higher education and gaining competence or better performance in your field of study (like having first class, upper class, or lower class)?

Appendix H: In-depth Interview (IDIs) Questions for the out-of school Participants

1. Describe the circumstances, which led to your decision not to pursue a higher education.
2. What are the efforts you have made to achieve a higher education?
3. How many other siblings do you have? (Probe to know if non-enrolment is due to gender, culture or poverty)
4. What aim have you set for yourself?
5. Do you see yourself achieving those aims?
6. If you have the opportunity, would you still enroll for a higher education? (Probe why)
7. Do you think that not achieving higher education will make you achieve those aims?
8. What has been the contribution of your parents towards your present status?
9. Do you have friends studying in any of the higher education? (Probe to see his/her closeness).

Appendix I: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Guide

The following is a list of guided questions that will be used during the FGD sessions:

1. What do you think often lead young people to pursue higher education or do otherwise in your community
2. Do you think most young people in your area want to attain higher education? Probe for reasons or factors that facilitate or constrain schooling beyond secondary school
3. Could you tell me about how family and friends often react to your decisions to pursue higher education
4. Describe what prompted you to pursue higher education?
5. Are there things that discourage people or make young people feel like quitting schooling
6. How easy/hard is it to gain admission into higher institution of your choice (probe to know whether they are currently in their desired institutions or left with no choice than where they are)
7. Are there people you know in your community that stand out because of their educational achievement? How has this influenced your decisions?
8. Does being a man or woman affect ones educational attainment or in gaining access to higher education in your community.
9. There appears to be beliefs that people with higher educational qualification are likely to become more successful in life. Is this true, do you think so? Probe to know where they envisage achieving higher education is taking them.
10. Do you think there are constraints upon young people in completing higher education and gaining competence or better performance in their respective fields (like having first class, upper class, or lower class performance)
11. Are there traditional practices within the family or community that encourage or discourage people from pursuing higher education? Please explain in detail.

Appendix J: Ethical Clearance Letter



13 November 2015

Mr BE Durowaiye 215078389
School of Social Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Durowaiye

Protocol reference number: HSS/1494/015D

Project title: An exploration of poverty and socio-cultural factors on young people's access to Higher Education in Kogi State, Nigeria

Expedited Approval

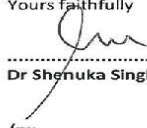
In response to your application dated 12 October 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Prof Sultan Khan
cc Academic Leader Research: Prof Sabine Marschall
cc School Administrators: Ms N Radebe

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

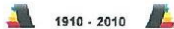
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X64001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/6350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4508 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymenn@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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