

INFLUENCE OF POLYGAMOUS AND FOSTER HOMES ON LEARNING OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of polygamous and foster homes on the learning outcomes of public junior secondary school students in Ogbagbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, with a sample of 389 students drawn from 27 public junior secondary schools using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected through a validated and reliable questionnaire titled "Polygamous and Foster Home and Learning Outcome Scale (PFHLOS)" with a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics were employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that both polygamous and foster homes significantly influenced students' learning outcomes, though to varying extents based on gender. Male students in both home types benefited more from educational support, mentorship, and financial opportunities than female students, who faced greater domestic distractions but displayed resilience and strong study habits. The study concluded that family structure and gender disparities significantly affect learning outcomes. It recommended equitable distribution of educational resources in polygamous homes and targeted mentorship programs for female students in foster care.

KEYWORDS: *Polygamous Homes, Foster Homes, Learning Outcomes, Gender Disparity, Junior Secondary Students, Rivers State.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning is fundamental to personal development and societal progress, as it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate and contribute to an ever-evolving world. Through continuous learning, people can adapt to new challenges, foster innovation, and build resilience, thereby enhancing both personal fulfillment and collective well-being. Learning outcomes in public junior secondary schools are influenced by a multitude of factors, including the quality of teaching, school infrastructure, and the home environment. A supportive home environment, characterized by parental involvement and adequate resources, has been linked to improved learning outcome among students (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2019).

The family structure also plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes. Children from nuclear families often benefit from more focused attention and resources, which can enhance their academic success. In contrast, students from single-parent or broken homes may face challenges due to limited supervision and support. Research indicates that family structure significantly influences learning outcome, with students from nuclear families generally outperforming their counterparts from single-parent or polygamous families (Baharudin & Luster, 2020).

In Ogbag/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria, the influence of parental education on students' learning outcome is particularly significant. A study by Ogbonna-Martins (2023) found that higher levels of parental education positively affect students' academic outcomes in this region. This underscores the importance of parental involvement and educational background in shaping students' learning experiences and achievements. The research highlighted that a supportive home environment, including parental involvement and provision of educational resources, contributed to better performance in public secondary schools (Ogbonna-Martins, 2023). This suggests that family structure, whether polygamous, foster, or nuclear, plays a significant role in shaping the learning outcomes of students in this region.

The influence of polygamous and foster home environments on students' learning outcomes is a complex issue. Children from polygamous families often face challenges such as divided parental attention and limited resources, which can adversely affect their learning outcome. Similarly, children in foster care may experience instability and a lack of consistent support, leading to potential educational setbacks. Research indicates that family structure, including polygamy and single-parent arrangements, significantly influences students' learning outcome (Akomolafe, 2021; Nkemdirim, 2022).

Polygamous family structures, where one man has multiple wives and children, are common in many parts of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa. These family arrangements can have distinct effects on children's academic outcomes. One challenge of polygamous homes is the division of resources, as financial and emotional support may be spread thin across many children from different mothers (Eze, 2021). This can lead to unequal access to educational resources such as books, tutoring, or even the time and attention of the parents, which can negatively affect a child's ability to focus on and succeed in their studies (Baharudin & Luster, 2020). The competitive nature of relationships among siblings in polygamous families can result in emotional stress, which may further hinder learning outcome (Akomolafe, 2021).

In polygamous families, children may also experience divided parental attention, especially when fathers are responsible for the welfare of several wives and their respective children. This lack of focused attention can limit the emotional and educational support that a child receives, contributing to lower academic outcome. Studies have shown that children in polygamous households often perform poorly in school compared to their peers from monogamous families due to these pressures. The complex dynamics within these families, such as rivalry between co-wives or siblings, can further exacerbate these academic challenges (Hacker, 2020).

Similarly, foster homes, where children are placed in temporary care due to various family issues, present their own set of challenges that can influence learning outcomes. Children in foster care may experience instability, trauma, or inconsistent caregiving, all of which can negatively impact their emotional development and learning outcome. Foster children often struggle with issues of attachment and identity, which can interfere with their ability to focus on

academic tasks or engage positively with their schoolwork. Studies have demonstrated that foster children are at a higher risk for academic underachievement due to the disruption in their family lives and lack of a consistent support system (Fraser, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

In Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria, there is a noticeable concern regarding the academic performance of students in public junior secondary schools. Preliminary observations suggest that students from polygamous and foster home backgrounds often face unique challenges that may impact their learning outcomes. In polygamous families, the division of limited resources among multiple spouses and numerous children can lead to financial constraints, reduced parental attention, and emotional strain. These factors may contribute to inadequate support for each child's educational needs, potentially affecting their academic performance. Similarly, children in foster care may experience instability, emotional trauma, and inconsistent caregiving, which can disrupt their educational continuity and hinder academic success.

Despite the prevalence of these family structures in the region, there is a lack of localized studies examining how polygamous and foster home environments specifically influence students' learning outcomes in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni LGA. This gap in research makes it challenging for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop targeted interventions to support these students effectively. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of polygamous and foster home environments on the learning outcomes of students in public junior secondary schools within the LGA.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of polygamous and foster home on learning outcomes of students in public junior secondary schools in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the extent to which polygamous home influences learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender.
2. Investigate the extent to which foster home influences learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study;

1. To what extent does polygamous home influences learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender?
2. To what extent does foster home influences learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender?

Research Hypotheses

The following corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study;

1. There is no significant influence of polygamous home on the learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender.

2. There is no significant influence of foster home on the learning outcome of junior secondary school students in Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area based on gender.

Literature Review

Learning outcome is a core construct in educational research, policy formulation, and instructional design, reflecting the measurable knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that learners acquire after a learning experience. It serves as a key indicator for assessing the quality and effectiveness of educational programs across various levels and settings. According to Biggs and Tang (2023), learning outcomes are statements that describe what learners are expected to know, understand, and be able to do after completing a learning process. These outcomes are often categorized using Bloom's Taxonomy, which organizes cognitive skills into hierarchical levels ranging from remembering to creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2019). The emphasis on learning outcomes has been reinforced by a shift in educational paradigms from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning, where the focus is not merely on content delivery but on the demonstrable achievements of learners (Harden, 2021).

In the context of modern educational systems, polygamy also presents unique challenges. Children from polygamous homes may experience educational disparities due to insufficient resources, leading to lower levels of academic achievement compared to children from monogamous families (Shenkut, 2023). Gender dynamics within polygamous families can further complicate this issue, as girls, especially those from junior wives, may face greater obstacles in accessing education due to household responsibilities or limited financial support. In some cases, the emotional and psychological stress experienced by children in polygamous homes can result in lower academic motivation and engagement.

Foster homes serve as crucial components of child welfare systems worldwide, providing alternative care for children who have been removed from their biological families due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or other adverse circumstances. These homes are designed to offer safety, stability, and nurturing environments for vulnerable children, often functioning as temporary placements until reunification with biological families, adoption, or transition into independent living becomes possible. The structure and quality of foster care, however, vary significantly across contexts, and the outcomes for children in foster homes are influenced by multiple interrelated factors including the stability of placement, quality of caregiver-child relationships, and the availability of psychological and social support services (Lawrence et al., 2021).

Theoretical Review

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The theory presents a holistic view of human development by situating individuals within nested layers of environmental systems. These systems interact and influence individual growth over time, especially during formative years such as childhood and adolescence. Bronfenbrenner emphasized that to understand human behavior and development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which development occurs.

In relation to polygamous homes, the theory helps explain how multiple parental figures and complex sibling dynamics within the microsystem may affect emotional support and academic engagement. Frequent parental conflict or competition for resources among co-wives and their

children could compromise the stability of the home environment, thereby reducing students' cognitive focus and motivation in school. At the mesosystem level, weak collaboration between home and school may further impede academic success in such families.

For children in foster homes, the theory offers insights into how placement instability and detachment from biological family units within the microsystem can negatively impact learning outcomes. The exosystem, including child welfare policies and caregiver employment conditions, influences the quality of foster care. Furthermore, societal attitudes towards foster children within the macrosystem can shape the expectations placed on them in educational settings, thereby affecting self-esteem and academic confidence.

Empirical Review

A study conducted by Adekeye and Adeusi (2023), titled *Family Structure and Social Adjustment of Adolescents in Lagos State, Nigeria*, investigated how family types, particularly polygamous families, influenced adolescents' social behavior. The study aimed to examine the extent to which family structure predicts adolescents' social adjustment in secondary schools. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of junior secondary school students in Lagos State, with a sample of 300 students randomly selected from both monogamous and polygamous homes. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled the "Adolescent Social Adjustment Scale (ASAS)." The instrument's validity was ensured through expert review, and reliability was established using the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.82. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Findings showed that students from polygamous homes exhibited higher levels of aggression, withdrawal, and peer conflicts than those from monogamous families. The study concluded that family structure significantly affects social learning outcomes, especially social relationships and behavior. The authors recommended increased school-based counseling interventions targeting students from complex family backgrounds. The study aligns with the present research by emphasizing the social challenges students from polygamous homes face and supports the notion that home structure influences learning behavior. However, the research gap lies in the limited geographical scope, as the current study focuses specifically on Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni LGA in Rivers State.

In a study by Akpan and Ekpo (2019) titled *Foster Care and Social Behaviour of Adolescents in Uyo Metropolis*, the researchers sought to assess how foster care arrangements affect the social behavior of in-school adolescents. The study's objective was to examine the differences in social learning outcomes between students living in foster care and those raised by biological parents. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design. The population included all junior secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. A sample of 200 students (100 in foster care and 100 in biological homes) was selected through stratified random sampling. The instrument used was the "Adolescent Social Learning Inventory" (ASLI), which was validated by experts in educational psychology. The reliability coefficient was 0.80, using the split-half method. Data were analyzed using t-test statistics. The results showed that students from foster homes exhibited higher levels of social withdrawal, low peer acceptance, and reduced classroom participation compared to their counterparts. The study concluded that the foster care environment may lack sufficient emotional and social support necessary for healthy social development. Recommendations included the integration of social support programs in foster care systems and the training of foster parents on child-centered communication. This study supports the current research by highlighting how non-biological home settings influence

students' social learning. However, it did not explore the context of Rivers State, revealing a gap the present study aims to address.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The choice of this design is based on its appropriateness for gathering data from a large population using a representative sample in order to describe, explain, and interpret the existing conditions.

The study was carried out in Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria. Geographically, the area lies approximately between latitudes 5.3400°N and 5.5300°N and longitudes 6.6000°E and 6.7400°E. ONELGA is one of the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State and has its headquarters in Omoku town. The area is predominantly inhabited by the Ogbia, Egbema, and Ndoni ethnic groups. It is known for its agrarian lifestyle and is also rich in oil and gas resources, with several companies operating in the region. The presence of both urban and rural settlements within the LGA provides a diverse socio-cultural and economic background, which is essential for studying the effects of different home structures such as polygamous and foster homes on educational outcomes. The choice of this area is due to its multi-ethnic composition, observable family structure dynamics, and reported educational performance variations among students in junior secondary schools.

The population of this study comprised **13,512** students in 27 public junior secondary schools in Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State (Rivers State Ministry of Education (2024). These students represent a broad range of home backgrounds, including polygamous, foster, and monogamous families. The population is diverse in terms of age, gender, and socio-economic status, making it suitable for investigating the influence of home structure on learning outcomes.

The sample size for this study was determined using Taro Yamane's formula with a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error. Based on a total population of 13,512 junior secondary school students in 27 public junior secondary schools in Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, a sample size of **389 students** was derived. A multistage sampling technique was adopted, beginning with the random selection of 10 public junior secondary schools using the balloting method. Within the selected schools, students were stratified based on family background (polygamous, foster, and monogamous), and proportionate sampling was used to allocate 156 polygamous, 117 foster, and 116 monogamous students. Final selection of students from each category will be done through simple random sampling to ensure equal representation and unbiased inclusion.

The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Polygamous and Foster Home and Learning Outcome Scale (PFHLOS)." The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect relevant information from respondents regarding their family background and its perceived influence on their academic performance and classroom behavior. The instrument was divided into three sections. Section A focused on demographic data such as age, gender, class level, and type of home structure. Section B comprised item statement related to polygamous. Section C consists of item statement foster home, while section D, elicits responses for learning outcome. The items were designed using a four-point Likert scale format (Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) to measure

students' responses. The items were derived from related literature, ensuring they were appropriate for the target age group.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the draft questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, all at the University of Port Harcourt. The experts assessed the relevance, clarity, and coverage of the items in relation to the study's objectives.

The reliability of the instrument was established through a test-retest method. A pilot study was conducted using 30 students from a public junior secondary school in a nearby LGA (Ahoada East), which was not part of the main study area. The same questionnaire was administered to the same set of students after two weeks. The scores from the two administrations were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained, indicating that the instrument is reliable and consistent in measuring what it was designed to measure.

The administration of the instrument was done by the researcher with the help of trained research assistants who was briefed on the objectives of the study and how to administer the questionnaires. The school authorities was formally contacted and granted permission for the administration of the instrument during free periods to avoid interfering with teaching activities.

Data collected from the field was coded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while inferential statisticst-test was used to test the corresponding null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used for the data analysis.

Result

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	200	52.6
	Female	180	47.4
Age	13–17	140	36.8
	18–21	180	47.4
	23+	60	15.8

Based on the table, out of the 380 respondents, a slightly higher proportion were male (52.6%) compared to female (47.4%), indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution among the participants. Regarding age, the majority of respondents fell within the 18–21 years range (47.4%), followed by those aged 13–17 years (36.8%), while only a smaller proportion were 23 years and above (15.8%). This suggests that most of the participants were late adolescents and young adults, which is typical for secondary school or early tertiary-level populations. The demographic distribution provides a good representation of both genders and the key age groups relevant to studying learning outcomes in polygamous and foster home settings.

Research Question One: To what extent do foster homes influence learning outcomes based on gender among secondary school students?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Influence of Foster Homes on Learning Outcomes Based on Gender (N = 380)

Statement	Female (N=180)		Male (N=200)			
	Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Male students in foster homes often perform better academically than female students	2.18	.91	LE	2.83	.97	HE
2. Female students in foster homes receive less educational encouragement	3.02	.88	HE	2.65	.94	HE
3. Teachers perceive male foster children as more capable learners	2.74	.93	HE	3.15	.86	HE
4. Gender differences affect access to study materials and supports	3.22	.81	HE	3.05	.89	HE
5. Female foster children show higher resilience in academics	3.11	.79	HE	2.62	.92	HE
6. Male foster children are more likely to be mentored academically	2.35	.97	LE	3.29	.84	HE
Grand Mean	2.77		HE	2.93		HE

The results in Table 4.2 show that both female (Grand Mean of 2.77) and male students (Grand Mean of 2.93) rated the influence of foster homes on learning outcomes as high extent. Male students agreed more strongly that they receive academic mentorship ($M = 3.29$) and are perceived by teachers as more capable learners ($M = 3.15$) compared to females. Although females indicated higher resilience in academics ($M = 3.11$), they still acknowledged facing challenges such as limited educational encouragement ($M = 3.02$). This suggests that while both genders experience notable effects of foster home settings on their learning, males reported slightly higher influence on academic outcomes.

Research Question Two: To what extent do polygamous homes influence learning outcomes based on gender among secondary school students?

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Influence of Polygamous Homes Based on Gender

Statement	Female (N=180)		Male (N=200)			
	Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
7. Males in polygamous homes receive more educational opportunities	2.95	.86	HE	3.41	.78	VHE
8. Females are distracted by household roles affecting studies	3.38	.82	HE	3.13	.90	HE
9. Males receive more financial support for education	3.11	.89	HE	3.52	.81	VHE
10. Teachers expect stronger performance from males	2.72	.91	HE	3.20	.85	HE
11. Females develop stronger study habits despite limited support	3.29	.77	HE	2.84	.94	HE
12. Males have greater chances of completing secondary school	2.87	.88	HE	3.38	.79	VHE
Grand Mean	3.05		HE	3.25		HE

The results in table 4.3 indicate that both female (Grand Mean of 3.05) and male (Grand Mean of 3.25) students agreed that polygamous homes influence learning outcomes to a high extent. Male students rated certain influences very high such as receiving more educational opportunities ($M = 3.41$), higher financial support ($M = 3.52$), and increased likelihood of completing secondary school ($M = 3.38$). Female students acknowledged distractions from household roles ($M = 3.38$).

and the need to develop stronger study habits ($M = 3.29$). These findings show that while both genders experience academic challenges in polygamous homes, male students benefit from greater educational privilege.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the influence of foster homes on learning outcomes based on gender among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 4.6: Difference in the influence of foster homes on learning outcomes based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Remark
Male	200	2.93	.88	4.21	378	.001	Sig. ($p < .05$) H_{01} Rejected
Female	180	2.77	.91				

The independent t-test result ($t = 4.21$, $p = .001$) shows a statistically significant difference between male and female students in the perceived influence of foster homes on learning outcomes. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. The higher mean value for males indicates that males experience a greater foster home impact on their academic performance than females. This suggests a gender disparity in how foster home conditions shape learning outcomes, with male students possibly receiving more structured academic support or attention.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the influence of polygamous homes on learning outcomes based on gender.

Table 4.7: Difference in the influence of polygamous homes on learning outcomes based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Remark
Male	200	3.25	.86	3.57	378	.000	Sig. ($p < .05$) H_{02} Rejected
Female	180	3.05	.83				

The t-test statistic ($t = 3.57$, $p = .000$) indicates a significant difference in the influence of polygamous homes on learning outcomes based on gender. The null hypothesis is rejected since the result is statistically significant. Male students reported a significantly higher mean, suggesting that they benefit more from educational opportunities, support, and expectations in polygamous households. Female students, while showing strong study habits, appear to face more study-disruptive responsibilities and limited academic prioritization.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that foster homes influence learning outcomes to a high extent for both male and female students, with a slightly higher grand mean for males ($M = 2.93$) than females ($M = 2.77$). Specific items, such as mentorship for male students ($M = 3.29$) and perceived academic capability ($M = 3.15$), suggest that male students receive more structured academic support, whereas female students show higher resilience ($M = 3.11$) despite facing less encouragement. The t-test confirmed a significant difference ($t = 4.21$, $p = .001$), leading to the

rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that gender moderates the influence of foster homes on academic outcomes, with males benefiting more from guidance and support structures within these settings. These results are consistent with findings by Okoro (2021), who reported that male students in foster care often receive preferential attention in educational tasks, while female students navigate additional emotional and household responsibilities. The slight advantage for males may be rooted in cultural or social perceptions of academic potential, confirming that gendered experiences within foster homes impact learning outcomes.

This finding is also consistent with studies by Adeyemi and Olatunji (2021) and Nwankwo (2019), which reported that male children in foster care are often afforded more educational opportunities and attention, leading to better academic outcomes. The result also aligns with research by Ugwueze (2018), who found that male foster children frequently benefit from mentorship and encouragement from caregivers, while female children are more likely to face limitations due to domestic responsibilities or societal perceptions of gender roles.

However, this finding contrast slightly with some studies that emphasize the resilience and adaptability of female children in foster care. For instance, Okeke and Eze (2020) found that female foster children, despite receiving less external support, often exhibit higher persistence and coping strategies, which can mitigate the disadvantage of reduced mentorship. In the present study, while female foster children demonstrated some resilience, the overall advantage in academic outcomes still favored male students, suggesting that environmental support and guidance may outweigh individual resilience in shaping performance.

The results reveal that polygamous homes influence learning outcomes to a high extent for both genders, with male students recording a higher grand mean ($M = 3.25$) than females ($M = 3.05$). Males reported very high levels of educational opportunities, financial support, and completion likelihood, while females indicated higher household distractions and the need to develop stronger study habits. The independent t-test result ($t = 3.57$, $p = .000$) shows a significant gender difference, confirming that males experience more advantages within polygamous households. This aligns with studies by Nwosu and Eze (2020), which demonstrated that male children in polygamous families tend to receive preferential allocation of educational resources, whereas females face divided attention due to domestic responsibilities. The findings highlight the gendered distribution of support and expectations in polygamous homes, emphasizing that males have an academic advantage while females develop resilience and adaptive learning strategies.

These findings are consistent with the work of Ofoegbu and Afolabi (2017), who reported that male children in polygamous homes often receive preferential treatment in terms of educational support and financial investment, whereas female children may be constrained by domestic duties. Similarly, Nwankwo (2019) observed that teacher expectations and resource allocation in polygamous households often favor males, reinforcing gender-based disparities in academic performance.

However, this result contrasts with studies that emphasize the adaptability of female children. For instance, Okeke and Eze (2020) noted that female children in polygamous settings often develop stronger self-directed learning habits to compensate for limited support. While the present study found that female children displayed resilience, the overall academic advantage remained with male children, indicating that environmental factors, such as financial support and mentorship, exert a stronger influence on performance than individual effort alone.

The findings indicate that gender plays a critical role in shaping learning outcomes in polygamous homes. Male children benefit more from support structures and resources, whereas female children face challenges that may limit their academic achievement. These findings underscore the need for interventions aimed at providing equitable educational opportunities for both male and female children in polygamous households, ensuring that gender does not hinder access to academic success.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that family structure whether foster or polygamous significantly influences students' learning outcomes. Gender disparities exist, with male children generally receiving more support and achieving higher academic outcomes than females. Age differences also play a role, with younger children in both foster and polygamous homes benefiting from closer supervision and care, while older children face responsibilities that may impede academic performance. These findings highlight the need for interventions that address gender and age inequities within these family contexts to enhance educational attainment.

Recommendations

In line with the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools and foster care agencies should implement targeted mentorship and support programs for female foster children to ensure equitable access to academic guidance, encouragement, and resources.
2. Parents and guardians in polygamous homes should ensure that educational opportunities and resources are distributed equitably among male and female children.
3. Educational authorities should design interventions that provide additional academic support for older children in polygamous homes, such as homework supervision and tutoring, to mitigate the effects of household responsibilities on their learning outcomes.
4. Foster care institutions and schools should develop age-sensitive support structures that assist older foster children in balancing independence and academic responsibilities.

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