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Narratives Of Nigerian Educated Women Pursuing Higher Education Degrees In Western Universities

Vincent Hassan Bulus

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NARRATIVES OF NIGERIAN EDUCATED WOMEN PURSUING HIGHER
EDUCATION DEGREES IN WESTERN UNIVERSITIES

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the degree of

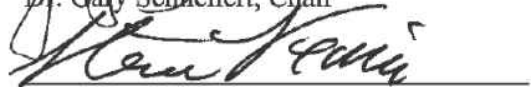
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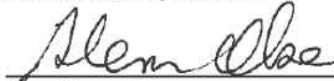
This dissertation, submitted by Vincent Hassan Bulus in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



Dr. Gary Schnellert, Chair



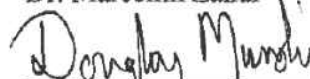
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Dean of the Graduate School



Date

Title Narratives of Nigerian Educated Women Pursuing Higher Education
 Degrees in Western Universities

Department Educational Leadership and Human Development

Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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Vincent Hassan Bulus
November 19, 2012

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, especially my late mother,
Angelina Lalai Bulus; my sister, Rev. Sr. Mary Bulus (OLF)
and all the women out there in the world who are
sacrificing their joy and painfully taking risk every second
to make the world a purposeful place for humanity to live.

To these women that I have such great passion for in my heart, may this work
Be a blessing to help enrich your lives and those of future generations.

ABSTRACT

The impetus for conducting this research is near and dear to my heart along with desiring to make a change for the better. In conducting interviews of Nigerian women's experiences, struggles and accessibility to secondary education, the research shows significant barriers to secondary education in their narrative experiences that their male counterparts do not experience. Specifically, the experiences of these selected Nigerian women who have shared their aspirations, goals and accomplishments through narrative form can be generalized to the women of Nigeria as a whole. The cultural background is an overwhelming obstacle which, although seems to be slowly eroding, the women still must deal with imbued beliefs that "a woman's place is in the home" and therefore not entitled to access higher education. The Nigerian women, therefore, face various challenges in their endeavors to pursue higher education.

Qualitative research by means of interviews was used to generate details of the Nigerian women's struggles, determination and their resilience despite the overwhelming sacrifices that they made. The reason as to why only women were chosen is due to the fact that cultural, religious and societal mechanisms affect women in Nigeria to a much greater degree than men. Equal access and acceptance of that concept are integral in helping Nigerian women secure educational access for all Nigerian women in the future.

Quantitative research was obtained by using a survey instrument distributed to Nigerian women obtained their advanced degrees and others who are still pursuing their

higher education. A total of approximately 300 surveys were distributed with 278 respondents for a response rate of 93% response rate. The survey sought to examine Nigerian women's struggles as they pursue higher education, the challenges they face, the support they gain through these struggles, the issues they go through, and their needs, motivational factors, encouragement factors, the role of religion, the impact of obtaining a higher education, and the impact of shaping strategic government policies towards women's educational awareness, and empowerment of women both in the family and society at large.

QUOTATIONS

“The decision we make now, as human beings, and as human beings who are members of groups with power to act, may bind the future as no man’s decision have ever bound it before . . . so we stand at the moment in history when we still have choice . . . it is of the greatest importance which questions we ask, because by the questions we ask we set the answers that we will arrive at and define the paths along which future generations will be able to advance.”

Margaret Mead

“People who feel insecure in a world of shifting boundaries and values are prone to look back with a great deal of nostalgia to the “Good old days” when women were women and men were men and they both knew their proper place”

Francine Blau and Marianne Ferber

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is receiving national attention; It was spelled out in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's (2004) National Policy on Education that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities. The efforts of the Nigerian government in education have not yielded significant positive results on girls' and women's education. Girl child educational attainment in Nigeria is still low as records have shown that fewer girls go to school than boys. Female enrollment dwindles as they move up the educational hierarchy (Onuebunwa, 2003). Nigeria as a nation has adopted education as an instrument for social and economic transformation. At the global level, United Nations has included gender equality and women empowerment in its development goals (UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013). Thus, investment in women is an essential ingredient for achieving all the development goals.

Dauda, quoting from the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs (2001), stated that to empower women it has to be done through an enhanced strategic human resources development. Dauda referenced the National Policy on Women having its major objective in education that is compulsory, free, and as a right for all citizens. This policy emphasizes legal penalties for withdrawal of girls from pursuing their education for the purpose of marriage. The policy encourages total inclusiveness for education towards avoiding ignorance within the vulnerable group which includes females at both primary

and secondary levels. Likewise, relevant education for women and girls with special needs and those women who pursue nomadic lifestyles, single parents, widows, market women and career women in society (Dauda, 2007).

The increasing cost of schooling is the major reason why many parents cannot send their children, particularly girls, to school. Poverty is widespread and parents cannot meet the private or individual cost of education. Most parents from rural households are poor and send their daughters into domestic labor markets as a source of income. This draws many promising young girls away from schools (Obanya, 2002). In the average home in Nigeria, women and children move in search of water, firewood, and coal for domestic uses. This wastes a lot of human hours ideally that should be spent in pursuing education. As Martineau (1997) put it, the inequalities encompass accessibility, student output, employment and institutional resources. Martineau stated that access, student outputs, employment, and institutional resources have been affected by gender-specific inequalities (citing Gerwel, 1992; MacGregor, 1996; Subotzky, 1996).

The economic status of women in Nigeria is low compared to their male counterparts. The pecuniary value of menial jobs held by women is inadequate. Traditionally, the work and activities performed by women are not financially well rewarded (Egunjobi, 2005). Culturally, a woman's place is in the kitchen and women are perceived as parts of husbands' properties. Lack of access to education in Nigeria causes women to remain perpetually under the control of men. "It is, therefore, not surprising that women's inadequate access to education has been seen as the source of the various discriminations that they suffer" (Afigbo, 1991, p. 61). Women have suffered for long within the Nigerian culture as they strive to pursue higher education locally and abroad.

According to UNESCO statistics, 31% of women in Nigeria are literate versus 54% for men. Two thirds of illiterate adults are women (Egunjobi, 2005). The goal of Nigerian women in pursuing higher education degrees is to acquire self-respect, and to be able to protect themselves and their children from abuse. Abuse can mean physical and emotional abuse at home at the hands of the husband, or also stem from the constraints that society and culture place on them in expectations on adhering to the traditional stereotypes that women must be subservient to their husband, take care of the children and attend to their needs without realizing any of their own. In addition, they become resilient, confident, and productive members of the society.

Statement of the Problem

Agu (2007) delineated factors which affect women's accessibility to education which contributes to the problem of persistent illiteracy amongst not only Nigerian women but African women as a whole. Agu stated that women are perceived as property due to former socio-cultural beliefs and practices. These factors Agu stated that influence this problem are early marriage, early pregnancy, early imitation of adulthood by teenagers, and the preference to have male children.

Similarly, Hyde (1993) identified factors that affect female participation in education in Sub-Saharan Africa including: (a) family factors that include social class, parental attitudes, the mother's education and child labour; (b) societal factors including marriage and childbearing, rural vs. urban differences, and national patterns; and (c) school characteristics such as the quality of schools, curriculum, the portrayal of female stereotypes in that curriculum and lack of female role models. Therefore, this study sought to review the experience of Nigerian women as they reflect on their achievement

of higher education from childhood to adulthood and their experiences in transitioning from a traditional Nigerian culture to that of a westernized culture that supports academic achievement of women. Additionally, this study will explore how this achievement has enhanced their personal and professional growth and their perception of their world and their “rightful” place locally and in the western society.

Purpose of the Study

The imbalance of opportunities of access to higher education, the lack of prospects of employment in governmental positions because of gender bias, and the definition of women primarily as mothers in Nigerian society drive women abroad in pursuit of advanced degrees. This study will shed light on the challenges that Nigerian women faced in obtaining for graduate education in the Western World. In addition, awareness regarding the “glass ceiling” that women experience in Nigeria will be shared (Agbenta, 2001). This study will also demonstrate that the women who come to western universities to study and obtain professional degrees gain a sense of economic security, personal freedom, and recognition of their academic achievements beyond cultural expectations based on their gender (Ajayi, Goma, & Johnson, 1996).

Significance of the Study

Development strategy is now a recognized and fundamental tenet that supports the ideation that through education one can realize the improvements and full promotion of the status of women. Dauda (2007) argues, “There can be no sustainable development if women remain ignorant, disenfranchised and discriminated against. Improving and widening access to education, especially basic education, is an objective in itself as well as the conduit to accelerated social and economic development” (p. 461).

Obtaining a graduate degree positively influences their ability to contribute, not only as mothers and wives, but also as active citizens and socially mobile policy makers in their own community and the society at large. The findings of this study will help to teach other women how to be independent by providing role models for the future female generations of Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Research Questions

The following research questions were the focus of this study.

1. What are the major barriers that the Nigerian women face when they go abroad to pursue their education?
2. How does the Nigerian culture affect women in the struggle to pursue advanced degrees both abroad and within Africa?
3. What are some changes needed to make primary, secondary, and higher education accessible to Nigerian women?

Limitations

The following limitations were noted for the purposes of this study:

1. The study took place in Nigeria and United States.
2. Only female candidates and female graduates who are pursuing their higher education in western universities and are now back in Nigeria participated in this study.
3. The study participants included taking narratives of Nigerian and Cameroonian women who have pursued higher education in Nigeria.
4. The researcher is a doctoral student at the University of North Dakota in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development.

Definition Acronyms

<u>ABU</u> :	Amadu Bello University
<u>AIDA</u> :	American International Development Agency
<u>CBN</u> :	Central Bank of Nigeria
<u>CES</u> :	Center for External Studies
<u>CLO</u> :	Civil Liberties Organization
<u>COSU</u> :	Correspondence and Open Studies Unit
<u>DLC</u> :	Distance Learning Centers
<u>EFA</u> :	Education for All (Nigeria)
<u>EFCC</u> :	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
<u>ESP</u> :	External Study Programmes
<u>FAWE</u> :	Forum for African Women Educationalists
<u>FOS</u> :	Federal Office of Statistics (Nigeria)
<u>HND</u> :	Higher National Diploma
<u>ICRW</u> :	International Center of Research on Women
<u>JFC</u> :	Journalists for Christ
<u>NCE</u> :	Nigerian Certificate in Education
<u>ND</u> :	National (Nigerian) Diploma
<u>NNPC</u> :	National Nigerian Petroleum Company
<u>NTA</u> :	Nigerian Television Authority
<u>NTI</u> :	Nigeria Teachers Institute
<u>SAGEN</u> :	Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria
<u>SSCE</u> :	Senior Secondary Certificate Education

TISEP: Teachers' In-Service Education Programmes

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

UNAD: University of Nigeria, Ado Ekiti

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WIN: Women's International Network

Definition of Terms

Candidates: Individuals who participated and offered to be interviewed in this research work.

Domesticity: Is the dynamism of the interplay of roles and structures in the lives of women and the choices they make. It touches every woman's life in some way. It is often seen as an axis on which women's lives revolve and evolve. In this research, I will use the concept as a thread that weaves through the women's narratives (Mwangi, 2002, p. 8).

Education: Formal education which is acquired through attending school at primary, secondary and higher education levels in Nigeria. Formal education is associated with white Christian missionaries. Informal education is the everyday process of socializing girls right from childhood, and girls are always around their mothers in order to learn skills and habits expected of them (Abagi & Wamahiu, 1995). Through informal education, domesticity is taught as a norm (Afshar, 1987).

Graduates: Individuals who have and are still pursuing their higher education degrees.

ODL (Open Distance Learning): Open distance learning has indeed been a revolution of inaccessibility, high drop-out rates and lack of opportunities that have always constituted

barriers to women education in Nigeria. This is the type of education in Nigeria that takes place outside the traditional school system. It is imparted without necessarily having personal interaction with the learners, and there is liberal admission procedure and requirements. The ODL takes various forms in Nigeria which include: Open University, Nigeria Teachers Institute.

Practical Application: Being able to apply the knowledge learned from this research to reality.

Human Subject Approval

In order to ensure that the right and welfare of subjects participating in this study were adequately protected, all requirements set forth by the University of North Dakota's Institutional Review Board were strictly adhered to. This research was conducted with adult women. Data for this study was obtained through narrative interviews. The time required to complete interviews was approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews were conducted in February of 2011 in Nigeria and in June of 2011 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, United States. A draft of the interview questions for the questioner is attached as Appendix A.

Dissertation Organization

Chapter I presented an introduction to this research study by stating the importance of educating women globally through a United Nations mandate. This study looks specifically at Nigerian women's experiences by including a statement of the problems faced by this specific sample population, the purpose of the study, the research questions and instrument used, delimitations, definition of terms, and human subject approval parameters. The importance of women's global education, as Wotipka and

Ramirez (2008) stated, shows the need to incorporate women in the dimensions of 'polity' and educational opportunities towards developing multidimensional involvement. Polity here refers to the government or administration where women are not given the opportunity to really explore and share their skills.

In Chapter II, a review of the literature was provided starting with historical background data and moving towards a social context in which it occurs. There is a focus on the distance learning aspect of education, with emphasis towards how open distance learning programs specially affect Nigerian women positively.

Chapter III explains methodologies used in the study. In addition, it discusses the scope of the collection of the qualitative data garnered from the participants.

Chapter IV discusses an overview of the background and selection of the interviews done of a diverse group of Nigerian women pursuing higher education in the United States. This chapter also contains the analysis of the narrative experiences of these women describing their encounters with obstacles, motivational factors, goals, and achievements.

Chapter V offers recommendations not only educationally for attaining programs designed to provide more accessibility to young females and women seeking education at all levels, but also provide policy and governmental strategies that would help alleviate the gap between the educational attainment levels between males and females in Africa

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In most parts of Nigeria, women are beginning to realize their educational goals (Uduigwomen, 2004). Even so, the level of education of women is generally low in the country especially in the Northern States. Overall, the national literacy rate for men is 23% higher than that of women and, in certain states of Nigeria, the female literacy enrollment and achievement rates are much lower. For instance, female enrollment in Sokoto in northern Nigeria is 15% compared to 59% for boys (UNICEF, 2002). Additionally, the Platform for Action and the National Gender Policy (Akosile, 2008) is nowhere near the 30% that is recommended when appointing women to policy-making functions (Agee, 1996). Politically, women have not had much of a role impact because their numbers are so few and under-represented (Ukpore, 2009).

Although Nigerian women have a long way to go to realize educational equality with their male counterparts, a good number of Nigerian women have ventured into diverse enterprises and occupations such as law, teaching, medicine, business, and the armed forces (FOS, 2005; UNICEF, 2002). UNESCO, which has sponsored numerous research studies in the area of higher education for females in Africa, confirms the barriers that persist and prevent women's attainment to education at all levels. Assié-Lumumba (2006) noted: "Out of a variety of social and individual variables, gender remains

the most universally entrenched, compounding the effects of other factors on life chances of individuals and groups for educational achievement and socio-economic attainment” (p. 4).

Nigeria women are gradually occupying their “rightful” places within the political arena due to their increased level of education. Although there is increased awareness that women should participate in national politics, as a group, they are discriminated against in a similar fashion to women in the United States by encountering the “glass ceiling” (Women’s History, About.com, 2011). The positions of authority women hold are not in proportion with their numerical strength. Nigerian women have been occupying various positions such as ministerial positions, senate, House of Representatives, state Houses of Assembly, as well as deputy governors, commissioners, and various important political positions. However, increased level of education for is necessary to assist women economically not only for themselves and their families, but also nationally.

Higher education is meant to build both male and female individuals into leadership positions. Leadership, according to Rost (1993), is not the work of a single person; rather it is defined as a collaborative endeavor among group members. Building a better society entails working on developing and producing more adept leaders for the purposeful development of the world as it affects the universities and colleges positively (Adeola & Olufunke, 2010). Anzia noted: “If you educate a woman, you educate the entire continent, because she is the bearer of the culture, childcare, etc” (para. 1). In other words, an educated woman is likely to transform the family because of her strategic role of being the bearer of the culture.

Studies have shown that resources that are of great importance in the life of women for the purpose of meeting their domestic and matrimonial commitment are inadequate and not available in most cases (Adegbesan, 2007; Adelabu & Adepoju, 2007). Scholars such as, Olufemi (1993), Pittin (1990), and VerEecke (1993), along with activist groups such as Women's International Network (WIN) and the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) are of the view that ideological reinforcement for structural inequality comes about through customs, practices, and norms. Further, religious and ethnic variations by region affect the patterns of discrimination that women face.

The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991 submitted to the United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations noted that some of the women's economic power exerts influence in Nigerian society but not as much in social, economic or political organizations (Okome, 2002). The report also stated that ethnic and religious regional patterns incorporate patterns of discrimination while at the same time husbands are legally preventing their spouses from basic human rights such as the right to work, obtain their own passports and routinely beat their wives. Land rights inheritances are also denied to women. The question remains: can women rights organizations exert pressure to alleviate the situation or should the government intervene regarding such practices.

There is a big challenge in having more women in higher education in Nigeria because of the discrepancies based on gender biases and unfavorable educational policies and programs that do not favor women. Additionally, Nigerian women still struggle with limited opportunities when pursuing advanced degrees. Given the nature of the Nigerian culture and its focus on men, women are denied access to that which is normal to men

leaving them with nothing but frustration and the hostility that goes along with it (Abagi & Wamahiu, 1995; FAWE, 1996; Kaziboni, 2000). Examining the shortcomings of the education system in Nigeria, and the plight of Nigerian women in academia, Mbilinyi and Meena (1992) reported that majority of Nigerian women live in hostile patriarchal education environments and struggle for existence in circumstances ranging from sheer neglect to overt hostility and sabotage. Cultural beliefs and expectations also devalue women's education because they are not seen as full members of the family coupled with the fact that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the society sees women in an unfair position because they are overworked with household and child-rearing responsibilities (Kwesiga, 1998).

Major barriers to women's education include the cultural notion that males have superior abilities, and especially in rural areas, females are to be bound in an early marriage. Shabaya and Kwadwo (2004) argue that deep-seated cultural barriers have conspired to create and perpetuate gender disparity in access to education in many African countries. Many families in sub-Saharan Africa devote a great deal of monetary investment, time and resources in education for boys more than for girls. Limited women participation in all levels of education in many Sub-Saharan African countries are indicative of the traditional and societal norms. Sifuna (2006) observed that such norms often influence parents' unwillingness to send their daughters to school even when they could afford it. In a four-country study conducted in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania, Adetunde and Akensina (2008) found "education of girls in the rural areas is less valued compared to that of boys" (p. 339).

Historically, higher education in Nigeria has mainly been the domain of men (FAWE, 1996; Kaziboni, 2000; Mbilinyi & Meena, 1992). The formal educational

structures and social expectations during the colonial and present post-colonial era have worked to limit women's access to higher education, as a result of which the typical higher education student in Nigeria has been defined as male (Mwangi, 2009). Thus, government educational policies, higher education programs, scholarships, and supervision of academic processes within Nigerian universities are planned from the perspective of male students and, therefore, discriminatory against women seeking higher education (Mwangi, 2009). Williams (2001) argued that most women are equality-minded citizens, but the state [of Nigeria] itself needs to show encouragement as well as recognize their obligation to address educational inequality.

Mbilinyi and Meena (1992) noted that Nigerian women prefer to study in western universities to avoid the hostile and insensitive academic environment coupled with low completion rates in Nigeria. Studying abroad therefore ensures a timely completion and acquisition of higher degrees along with offering a wider variety of opportunities and choices from which women can choose their areas of specialization. Additionally, studying abroad carries with it an aura of prestige enjoyed, until recently, only by men who were unhindered by familial barriers and who always took advantage of those opportunities (Mwangi, 2009). However, coming to western universities to pursue higher education for the Nigeria woman is often a bittersweet option because they must contend with being away from their families. Every Nigerian woman who gets the opportunity to pursue advanced degrees in western universities have excitement and joy in their heart in and the feeling goes along with challenges that is bittersweet (Mwangi, 2009).

Many Nigerian women who choose to further their education outside their country of origin suffer alienation and exclusion from the mainstream traditions of the

society as they wrestle with the “contradictions of motherhood and the development of [their] career” (Kiluva-Ndunda, 2001, p. ix). However, their willingness to risk alienation speaks to the dire need to reconsider and redefine the structure, programs, and policies of women’s education in Nigeria, and subsequently Africa at large (Mwangi, 2009). There is a unique enrichment brought to one’s region through the education of women by virtue of benefits coming back to society and as an investment through the next generation (WairimuGatua, 2009). Further, the research by Assie-Lumumba (2006) reported gender inequality handed down through traditional and cultural systems that continue to affect the education of girls.

The Population Council report (2005) showed that educated women benefit broader society with increased quality of human living because of the broader benefits that goes along with women’s education. These benefits include “increased economic productivity, improvements in health, delayed age at marriage, lower fertility, increased political participation, and generally more effective investments in the next generation” (Population Council, 2005, p. 1). A long-term impact on education of girls gradually translates into broader benefits for society (Kellogg, Hery, & Yizengaw, 2008). The women’s narratives in the current study provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and the pain experienced by every woman when pursuing higher education outside of their homeland (Mwangi, 2009). These narratives reveal their experiences of anger, helplessness, and defiance – a major tension between domesticity and education was revealed that inhibits their access to education (Mwangi, 2009).

History of Women's Social Struggles

There are many factors contributing to the gap, social struggles and relegation of the women in attaining higher education in Africa and especially in Nigeria. The pace of social and economic change in other parts of Africa was much slower than had been the case in Egypt and it was linked to colonialism (McGarvey, 2010). Maduewesi (2005) noted that Nigerian women were passive sexual objects adhering to societal roles and acceptable characteristics that have been defined for them. Maduewesi further stated:

In those bad old days according to Nigerian cultures, women are not seen or heard, but in few cases could occasionally be seen with absolute permission of her husband. The Nigerian woman was relegated to the background, ignored, dehumanized and generally confined to lower status in society . . . when western education came to Nigeria, women were shielded from its influence until very late. The result is that the gap between educated men and women is still very wide. (cited in Umezulike, p. 304)

The proactiveness of women to find their voice and character was very slow, but in terms of women's social and economic/political participation gained little momentum. Umezulike and Afemikhe (2007) noted that cultural traditions were imbued to see women as objects, not only to be kept home, in the kitchen, and bearing children, but perpetuated through the early beginnings of education opening up to women because of the belief that women did not belong there. Further, women were a 'complete servant' and bound to their culture and tradition as community dictated them to be domestically inclined towards home, farm work, and childcare.

Some foreign countries such as, the French (1830 to 1962), Tunisia (1818 to 1956), and Morocco (1912 to 1956) were at the forefront for promoting the reformation and empowerment of women as the British did in Nigeria in 1903 to 1960. However, women had no support from the government and the local community; there was no any

positive law system that was meant to provide support for the women. The need for women's empowerment sprang up in the mid-1960s to 1980s (McGarvey, 2010). The struggle for justice against the various injustices women experienced for some time chronicles the unfair legal and colonial systems of many African countries. McGarvey (2010) noted:

Nana Asma'u is often named as an example of a woman in nineteenth century Northern Nigeria who struggled to elevate the status of women. She was a daughter of d'an Fodiyo, the jihadist who created a Caliphate in the region at approximately the same time as those Arab nations that had indigenous empires found themselves under colonial rules (1804-1903). (p. 30)

Nana Asma'u is remarkably known to be a key player in the Caliphate and a significant figure to employ the policies of that time along with her father who insisted on women's rights to pursue education as an advocate for empowerment – a role model to all women in Nigeria. Additionally, she pursued the right of women to have access to education by launching a movement for women's education called *Yan Taru*. Her legacy helped women to be proactive and assertive in their everyday rights both in Nigeria and Africa. Her achievements was only recorded as a seclusion of wives that became a practice among elite Muslim rulers which favors men and the African culture (Shaheed & Aisha, 2004)

A typical example of what traditional Nigerian women go through is portrayed in the scenario where Nana Asma'u asked her father, chief of the Caliphate in Northern Nigeria in the early 20th century why he was appointing only men to official positions in the Caliphate. Her father informed her, "You will be over all the women. The women of the Caliphate belong to the women, and the men belong to the men" (cited in Boyd, 1989, p. 46). Besides Nana Asma'u and her foray into establishing a voice for Nigerian

women, there was no other significant Nigerian women movement to improve women's cultural status until the 1970s although there was a small percentage of positive contribution to the African women's life to creating awareness of their rights which still remains a matter of debate (McGarvey, 2010).

From the African point of view, prominent African women fought and promoted the empowerment of women by creating women's movement like Malika El-Fassi, born in 1920, who is accredited for founding the Moroccan Women's Movement. Her work provided her the opportunity to be involved in the national political movement and national politics that established policies that favor women in Morocco. Her resilience further provided room for Moroccan girls, who were denied primary education and secluded after puberty, gained the backing and support from her husband, Mohammad El-Fassi. In 1944, he collaborated with her and formed a group of Nationalists, the Istiqlal (Independence Party), to work for reform and independence for women's education (McGarvey, 2010). Morocco joined the Arab League in 1958 after the King went into exile in 1953 after the visibility of Malika in the nationalist politics. She also adopted the veil as a pragmatic gesture choosing to develop an Arab and Muslim identity rather than a Berber or a French one.

In 1962, after eight years of war, Algeria became independent. Nearly 11,000 women were involved, many killed or jailed, but who actively and courageously gave the spirit of hope that created room for women's empowerment (McGarvey, 2010). Eventually, because of their resilience and determination and longing for empowerment and freedom, Algerian women were granted the vote of independence. After its independence in 1956, Tunisia granted women voting rights in 1957. Greater rights for

women included the bride's physical presence and her verbal consent which were made as a legal right to validate a marriage and, likewise, to initiate a divorce. Polygamy, repudiation, forced marriage, and requirement of a male tutor to act on behalf of women were banned in 1956 (McGarvey, 2010).

Similar struggles were felt across the African continent. For instance, Sudanese women joined the national movement and the struggle for independence granting them the right to vote and to stand for election. This also facilitated the national efforts to seek social, economic and political justice for women (McGarvey, 2010). In the early 1900s, there was an attempt to include women in education through the establishment of Ahfad University for Women (Badri, 2001). Established by Sheikh Babiker Badri in 1907, the school was remarkable at the time because it accepted only girls, accepting nine girls at the time of its establishment, one of which was Sheikh Badri's daughter together with eight girls from neighboring families. Badri (2001) noted:

It was most likely the first private school for girls in the whole of Africa. From then on, Sheikh Babiker (1860-1954) and his son, Yusuf (1912-1995), expanded private education for both boys and girls, culminating in the establishment of the Ahfad University College for Women by Professor Yusuf in 1990. In 1995, full university status was granted by the Sudan National Council of Higher Education. Babiker had a vision for educating girls combining the traditional Islamic devotion to learning with his then radical idea of providing secular education in addition to religious instruction to both boys and girls. Babiker rejected the view which cut girls and women off from any advances in knowledge. Educated women, in his view, were essential to achieving improvements in nutrition, health, child care, community development, and for preparing both young men and women for life in the emerging urban society of Sudan. (p. 24)

Cultural Status of Nigerian Women

Nigerian women face many challenges to attain basic education because of the customs which create dichotomy and barriers in the name of culture, customs and

traditions, which results in most African countries that do not consider women as important as men and habitually do not send their girls to school (Gourley, 1999).

Various international organizations, such as UNICEF and UNESCO have documented the gap in education accessibility between males and females in Africa. The World Bank has also noted the discrepancies that both male and female have educational potential but the female child is greatly disadvantaged due to cultural limitations.

In Nigeria, as in many developing countries, there is gender gap in terms of access to education for a long time. “Females constitute the majority of illiterates in Nigeria at all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary)” (Adeola & Olufunke, 2010, p. 51). Males represent a higher proportion than females in educational attainment (Yusuf-Ajibade, 2008). Most Nigerian females live in rural areas and they are either semi-illiterates or non-literate” (Aboyade & Olabimpe, 1987; Onwubiko, 1999). Additionally, “According to UNESCO (2006), girls make up 60% of all out-of-school children and represent two-thirds of illiterate adults” (Save the Children, 2005). Adelabu and Adepoju (2007) reported these relational statistics:

The studies of Adegbesan (2007) revealed that 33.7% of females had no form of education in the North Eastern states of Nigeria (Borno, Yola, Adamawa, and Bauchi). In the North Western states of Nigeria, (Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Jigawa, etc.) 87.8% of female had no formal education. The case of southern states was slightly better. In the Southeast states of Nigeria (Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Imo, Cross-River, Anambra) only 36.2% of female have no formal education. In the Southwest states of Nigeria (Ogun, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti) at least 26.1% of females had no formal education. The Middle Belt states (Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Kwara, Niger, Kogi) are in between the South and North in terms of average figures of female illiteracy. (FOS 2005; UNICEF, 2002)

In many countries in rural Africa including Nigeria, schools lack resources such as adequate classroom space, furniture and equipment. Additionally, “Many schools are

in rugged and unsafe physical condition; water, health and sanitation facilities are inadequate; and pupil teacher ratios are high, with as many as 100 students in one class, especially in schools in urban slums” (UNICEF, 2002, para. 1). Large families, limited resources, and misinterpretation of the tenets of Islamic religions favor boys in school rather than girls. Additionally, “Boys are given more opportunities to ask and answer questions, to use learning materials, and to lead groups. Girls are given less time on task than boys in primary and secondary school science classes” (UNICEF, 2002, para. 2). Nearly one third of teachers in Nigeria also lack the required minimum certificate that the government mandates.

Social Context of Nigerian Women and Making A Difference through Institutional Habitus

When African women attempt to make decisions about their education, a ‘school effect’ (Smith & Tomlinson, 1989) occurs which is termed as an ‘institutional habitus’ whereby the raced, gendered and class processes are played out in African women’s educational decision making process. The Nigerian society cannot afford *not* to have females in leadership positions. The robust activities of females in management positions in the country implies that if more Nigerian female youths are given the right type of education, greater participation among females will emerge in the future (Adeola & Olufunke, 2010). Further, leadership development and strategies for youth, especially women, can help empower them through activities such as leadership initiatives, career development, curriculum reconstructions and inspiring role models. Female education also helps to create high prospects that are pivotal to building a better nation and society.

Several Nigerian women have done well to earn their credibility, integrity, honesty, uprightness and other reputable qualities. Nigerian women have an enduring gift towards their positions as role models such as mothers, wives, scholars, family care providers, and professional managers in the global system. Prime role models among Nigerian women include Professor Akunyili, Director of the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control; Dr. (Mrs.) Okonjo Iweala, Former Minister for Finance and Foreign Affairs; Dr. (Mrs.) Obiageri Ezikwesili, Former Minister for Education; Prof. Mrs. Grace Alele Williams, First Female Vice Chancellor in Nigeria; Arc (Mrs.) Halima Tayo Alao, Minister for Housing and Urban Development; Dr. Angelina Jaja; Dr. (Mrs.) Ekom; Dr. (Mrs.) Leo Gambo; Honorable Mrs. Lawrencina Mallam; and many others. Alele Williams, First Female Vice Chancellor, has shown unparalleled ability in issues of initiating and making policy when they are in direct control.

Many women, despite the challenges facing them, have influenced Nigerian policies through their profound contribution to society. They have been found in so many ways to be very resilient and very dynamic. Nigerian women have proven themselves to be firm despite the challenges, to be fair and flexible given their nurturing hearts. Nigerian women can achieve more and greater things if given the opportunity in justice and fairness, honesty and transparency. Adeola and Olufunke (2010) argued that higher education 'is a veritable weapon' for empowering female youth who are looking forward to leading a purposeful life with the hope that someday they can lead the nations of the world. From a social point of view, females are proving to be of greater integrity in leadership because of their natural endowment and deeper skill of management based on

more prudent ways of doing things than men. Adeola and Olufunke (2010) wrote: “Besides, gone are the days when men manage the home alone by providing for all the needs of the women and the children. The present economic recession has turned things around” (p. 53).

The International Center on Research of Women (ICRW) reported that more education is helping to lower the incidence of domestic and abusive relationships and redefining social relationships due to factors such as family structure and their employment opportunities. ICRW (2005) pointed out that in relation to Nigerian women, the family structure is defined predominantly on the woman’s success in life. Securing a good job opportunity and decision-making on every aspect of the woman’s life depends primarily on the family. However, disparity between different cultures in Nigeria like Kanuri, Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, and Ijaw also count (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1999).

Nigerian government has interest and commitment to address women rights due in part to the international conventions that have been investigating this issue which has created some rippling effects in other countries of the world. Afemikhe (1988) noted that women lag behind men in education and also noted an increase in the number of women occupying decision-making positions. Oyinlola (2000), reflecting on Kofi Annan’s point of view, indicated that “in economic terms, the gender divide is still widening; women earn less, are more often unemployed and generally are poorer than men” (cited in Umezulike, 2007, p. 4). The benefits described by Herz and Sperling (2004) of women’s education include the viability of women able to resist debilitating practices such as female genital cutting, early marriage and domestic abuse by male partners. Therefore,

building up the capacity of women is a desideratum. Pant (2004) stated that “Capacity building for women’s collectives is an essential input to reduce the vulnerability of group members to poverty and to enhance their participation in economic growth through improved livelihoods” (p. 121).

Female genital mutilation is prevalent among more rural populations than urban. Research also shows education helps to eradicate these rituals, even though governments such as in Tanzania have outlawed female genital mutilation and such practices. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) found out that “Secondary education also can play a crucial role in reducing violence against women and the practice of female genital cutting” (p. 3). While educating women clearly cannot eliminate violence, research shows that secondary education has a stronger effect than primary education in reducing rates of violence and enhancing women’s ability to leave an abusive relationship (Jejeebjoy, 1998).. Profiles of nine African countries found that the practice was more prevalent among uneducated than educated women (Population Reference Bureau, 2001). Women with primary or no education are more likely to have been cut than those who have received secondary instruction (ICRW, 2005).

Women’s Lives and Open Distance Learning

Umezulike and Afemikhe (2007) noted that educational opportunities for women have opened up, but noted the caveat that emphasis has been placed only on vocational educational specialties. These authors further noted that women’s cultural place was in the kitchen, but also found that in some states, changes are imminent and fast growing with women in schools. Although more opportunities have opened up for women, education tends to focus on vocational specialties (Umezulike & Afemikhe, 2007).

Additionally, Nigeria has approximately 160 million people, and Nigeria's implementation of National Policy on Education has not been effectively and efficiently implemented due to rapid population growth, insufficient political will, corruption, greed, lack of patriotism and national pride, loss of focus, and absolute lack of management. The 2002 UNICEF report noted: "Women and girls have been most affected by these negative factors. The national literacy rate for females is only 56%, compared to 72% for males, and in certain states the female literacy, enrolment and achievement rates are much lower" (para. 1).

The UNICEF has outlined primary barriers to women education and empowerment that include (a) poverty and economic issues, (b) early marriage and teenage pregnancy, (c) inadequate school infrastructure, (d) cultural and religious biases, (e) gender bias in content and teaching and learning processes, and (f) poorly qualified teachers. Because of poverty, "girls are often sent to generate income for families by selling wares in the market or on the street" (UNICEF, 2002, para. 1). School-age girls usually have begun childbearing before the age of 18, leaving them to adhere to the cultural traditions of bringing up and taking care of children as they should, and not for the males to be burdened with. In light of these challenges facing women, education through distance learning is a promising aspect to addressing the imbalance of education between the genders in Africa. Equality can be achieved through a social re-engineering process through 'emanicipation of the mind' (Olakulein & Olugbenga, 2006). Open and Distance Learning schemes are considered as an agent of social change by being an effective strategy for women's empowerment (Olakulein & Olugbenga, 2006).

Open Distance Learning

Akomolafe (2006) provided a synopsis of some of the open distance learning (ODL) programmes available in Nigeria. Since it is fairly succinct yet descriptive, the full content of Akomolafe's article will appear here discussing the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Nigeria Teacher's Institute (NTI), Sandwich Programmes, Weekend Programmes, Correspondence Learning, and Distance Learning Centers. The information from the Federal Ministry of Education (2002) found that the development of open distance learning has helped reverse some of the problems of inaccessibility, high drop-out rates and lack of opportunities that have always constituted barriers to education that are now gradually phasing out. ODL does not have personal interaction with students because of its nontraditional format, which takes place outside the school setting (Federal Ministry of Education, 2002).

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

NOUN was established as a supplement and complement to traditional channels of delivering education to the Nigerian public. The need for ODL is imperative in view of the ever-increasing growth rate in Nigeria's population, and the high proportion of Nigerians under the age of 15 (about 51% of the total) that have produced the highest number of Nigerians to be educated (Jegade, 2002). NOUN provides access to tertiary education through ODL. In NOUN, the courses are organized for easy access, grasp, retention and retrieval. The programs are made available to students at their chosen places (e.g., home, school, or workplace) at affordable costs and are to be completed at the students' own time and pace (Alaezi, 2006).

Nigeria's Teachers' Institute (NTI)

The NTI's pivotal teacher training program was designed to produce teachers through ODL for the primary schools and junior secondary schools in Nigeria. NTI uses self-instructional materials and weekend vacation contact sessions for tutorials, practical lessons, and counseling. It has about 600 study centers countrywide. Between 1990 and 1992, the NTI graduated 21,000 with Nigeria Certificates in Education (NCE holders). This figure compares with the combined total of 58,000 teachers graduated by the nation's 58 conventional Colleges of Education (Aderinoye, 2001). The NTI's pivotal teachers' program produced 19,025 qualified teachers in 2000, 20,800 for the year 2001, and 15,567 for year 2002 (Aderinoye, 2001).

Sandwich Programmes

The sandwich programs in Nigeria date back to the mid-80s. They are programs that are run during the school vacations to create opportunities for the working class (Education for All, 2002). These programs are open to all groups of entry qualifications ranging from standard six, certificate school certificate attempted, school certificate holders, grade two teachers, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) holders, and degree holders. Many universities have been running the program from its inception in the mid-80s, although some universities later joined (Onwubiko, 1999). Universities that are very prominent in the running of these programs include: University of Port Harcourt, Amadu Bello University (ABU), University of Benin, University of Ilorin, Delta State University, Adekunle Ajasin University, and University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria (UNAD).

The Institute of Education was established in the 1987/88 academic year purposely to run sandwich programs among others. In 1991, the Nigerian Senate

approved the establishment of sandwich Board of Studies for Institute Sandwich Programs (UNAD, 1993). UNAD, however, established its Directorate of External programs in 2005 as a further step to coalesce and fortify its various ODL programs, which include sandwich, affiliation, and part-time degree programs. The high competition for admission to regular and traditional school systems have made young boys and girls opt for sandwich programs.

Weekend Programs

Some universities, the Nigeria Teachers' Institute (NTI), and the national polytechnics run weekend programs. Many senior secondary school certificate holders are seeking admission into these weekend programs. Indeed, these programs are grace saving devices for the Nigerian government since the traditional school system cannot cope with the teeming population of potential students for tertiary institutions. Weekend studies have produced holders of degrees in various disciplines, National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), and Teacher Grade Two Certificate in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2002).

Correspondence Learning

University of Lagos has established correspondence studies as far back as 1974. It was formerly referred to as the Correspondence and Open Studies Unit (COSU), but today it is redefined to produce university graduates in disciplines necessary to meet national labour needs (e.g., teachers, nurses etc.). Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) also established correspondence learning programs, and teachers' in-service education programs (TISEP) in 1976 which offers special training programs to prepare middle level teachers for Nigeria's primary schools (Aderinoye & Ojokheta, 2004).

Distance Learning Centers (DLC)

The University of Ibadan's senate established the DLC in 1988. It was initially referred to as the External Study Programme (ESP) that later became the Center for External Studies (CES), and today is called the Distance Learning Center (DLC). It was established to provide opportunities for teachers on the job to improve their skills and knowledge through on-the-job training. This in-service training enabled them to subsequently raise their status from holders of the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) to full-fledged university degrees holders (Federal Ministry of Education, 2002).

Nigerian Women in Open Distance Learning

The Nigerian government has taken ODL as an instrument to achieve its educational goal. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy in Education noted that the primary goal of ODL states is to provide access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities for those who otherwise would have been denied. Women have participated in myriads of ODL programs. It has been instrumental in lowering the illiteracy rate, dropout rate, and furthermore creating accessibility and immense opportunities for Nigerian women. Many Nigerian women from all walks of life have continued to seize the opportunities of ODL programs to improve on their education, get better jobs, and improve their general standard of living.

Many full-time housewives were able to enroll in these programs thereby improving on their education (Akomolafe, 2006). ODL is a source of progress and development for women. Marriage had always been a terminal point in Nigerian women's education. Women rarely leave their homes for further studies because of the risk of losing their jobs. It was believed among educated men that just a little education

was sufficient for women just to make them literate. It was believed that educated women would not be submissive to their husbands and, hence, women's education met with resistance in terms of financial and moral support from their husbands. Olakulein and Olugbenga (2006) noted:

Recently in Nigeria, the federal ministry of education in conjunction with the UNICEF established a Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria (SAGEN). It is hoped that SAGEN will lead to a further expansion in the access of girls to education and ultimately the emancipation of women in Nigeria. (para. 4)

For women across the African continent, resistance frequently takes more subtle forms. Taylor-Thompson (2011) described how women try more subtle means of trying to change those cultural and underlying patriarchal belief systems. Referencing Ellen Banda-Aaku, a Zambian contributor, Taylor-Thompson reported that she felt since men place below them when it comes to decisions, choices, and being heard, she found that resistance meant challenging those values, traditions, and beliefs. Taylor-Thompson also interviewed Ann Kithaka, who agreed with this assessment of applying subtle means of resistance. Another interviewee, Maramé Gueye of Senegal, told Taylor-Thompson that refusing to 'succumb to any form of violent or oppression' was her way of defining resistance to the innate cultural denigration of women. Ms. Kithaka very poignantly stated her position on resistance to Taylor-Thompson:

. . . resistance means saying 'no' to the patriarchal system and values that continue to disempower, subjugate, and undermine my personal dignity. In all stages of my life, my thoughts and actions have been subject to societal dictates, where 'society' denotes the male figure—my father, my husband, my boss, my brothers, my pastor. (Taylor-Thompson, 2011, p. 1284)

Today, ODL has brought succor to women's education and subsequent empowerment. Women can aspire to reach any level in their education through ODL

programmes (Onokala & Onah, 1998). A lot of women have been admitted through sandwich programmes, NTI part-time programmes, and even weekend programmes who could now boast of reaching the height of their educational attainment. Some university lecturers who are women credited their educational attainment to the opportunities through ODL. It was revealed by some of them that they got married with the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), but they are also currently holders of a Ph.D. degree in their various disciplines. Some women claimed that they dropped out of secondary school while in elementary class due to teenage pregnancy. Many of these women are now holders of grade two teachers' certificate, NCE, and first degree (Onokala & Onah, 1998). The following chart will help readers in familiarizing themselves with the tiered educational system in Nigeria.

Table 1. Nigerian Education Level System.

NIGERIAN 6-3-3-4 EDUCATION SYSTEM		
6 years	Primary School Education	First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC)
3 years	Junior Secondary School Education (JSS)	Jr. Secondary School Certificate (JSSC)
3 years	Technical or Senior Secondary School (SSS)	Sr. Secondary School Certificate (SSSC)
4 years	Tertiary (Collegiate) Level Education	

The National Teacher Institute (NTI) was very important in women's education through ODL in Nigeria. Teachers in primary schools are predominantly women who have benefited immensely from the NTI program. A majority of primary school teachers were initially grade two teachers but today rarely can Grade Two teachers' certificate holders be found among them. They are nearly all holders of NCE and even many of them are degree holders (Akomolafe, 2006). Similarly, sandwich programs have also

recorded a large turnout of women's participation and attainment. ODL has started to benefit a small number of women in northern Nigeria compared with the southern part. The problem of women's education is compounded with early marriage and ignorance.

Concerted efforts are being made to bring education to the northern women. The women and girls are made to learn from women development centers. At Gidan Haki in Sokoto North Local Government, women have the opportunity to be educated at the Women Development Centre. Women are made to learn while nursing their babies at the same time. Some girls also abandoned street hawking in responses to peer pressure to learn how to sew and make dresses, weave baskets and practice home economics. Besides, some of the women see it as a chance to catch up on one of life's missed opportunities (Education for All, 2000).

Open distance learning creates opportunities for women's education today to learn throughout their lifetime. Education given to a woman is un-quantifiable; the spillover effect of women's education is on children, families, and communities which for the nation cannot be over-stressed. An educated woman is also a better mother, wife, social mobilize, and citizen. It is worthy of note that despite the ample opportunities through ODL, there are still millions of women who are still illiterates due to ignorance, cultural hindrances and poverty in urban, rural and remote areas of the country (Kellerhals, 2011). ODL has played significant roles in accelerating women's education and subsequently women's empowerment. ODL has created opportunities for women to squeeze time out to learn and further their education. It also helped to create opportunities for women to upgrade their qualifications and skills at reasonable intervals.

ODL is a veritable instrument in bringing social and economic transformation of women (Kellerhals, 2011).

Women in Nigeria have the opportunities and accessibility because available facilities in institutions are now used in educating them (Kellerhals, 2011). Access to education has always been a problem because of inadequate funding and facilities to meet the admission demands. ODL is cost effective because government could now spend less in providing education for a large number of prospective candidates. Hilary Clinton, Secretary of State for the United States, noted at the UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education in Paris, France, in May 2011 that "No society can achieve its full potential when half the population is denied the opportunity to achieve theirs" (cited in Kellerhals, 2011, para. 11).

Specifically, the current study will center around African culture in relation to Nigeria customs, traditions and educational system especially the higher education, the role of the culture, the challenges that women are facing, the issues and possible exploration of the way forward for the future through recommendation as a result of the researcher's findings in Chapter V. Analysis of the purpose of this research will be done by describing the personal experiences gathered through the one-on-one interviews with the participants selected for this research, which helped make meaning out of this study. Finally, delineation of the voices of women are envisioned in the process of gaining empowerment and access to all stages of education not only for the women who have already achieved their higher education degrees but for future generations of Nigerian women in Nigeria and Africa at large.

CHAPTER III
METHODS OF PROCEDURE

Qualitative Research

When choosing a methodology, it should be consistent with the researcher's beliefs that are brought to that inquiry (Bloom, 1998). According to Schwandt (1989), "we conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold" (p. 399). Interviewing is an established and well-documented technique for social science research (Byrd & Webber, 2010). This study explores the challenges Nigerian women face in pursuing higher education in western universities. Therefore, using narratives is appropriate since "In a sense, narratives afford participants the opportunity to reflect on their livelihood experience and share those moments and events with the world" (WairimuGatua, 2009, p. 16).

Qualitative research is 'interpretive' research, in which you make a personal assessment as to a description that fits the situation or themes that capture the major categories of information (Creswell, 2011, p. 20). Creswell's interpretive mode in qualitative research was appropriate for this study as the researcher interpreted Nigeria women's narratives to establish common themes and goals that these women held.

Theoretical Framework

The narratives in this study reveal shared lived experiences together with the demands of marriage, family and graduate school. Creswell (2011) noted, "there is no

single, accepted approach to analyzing qualitative data, although several guidelines exist for this process” (p. 238). This research focuses on social science queries of how these Nigerian women attained their goals while contending with their circumstances. Spradley (1979) suggests looking at the social conflict, cultural contradictions, social control, managing social relationships, and how people acquire, maintain, and achieve an ascribed status and how they develop solutions for problem encountered in a study. Bogdan and Bilken (1982) also suggests exploring setting, context, informants’ perspective, and informants’ ways of thinking about people, objects, processes, activities, events, and relationships in a study. Charmaz (1990) concluded, “Moving across substantive areas fosters developing conceptual power, depth, and comprehensiveness” (p. 1161).

Definition of Feminism

Mwangi (2009) discussed how Aina (1994) defined feminism as being an “encompassing political and academic experiences and actions of women’s lives as crucial to any understanding of the social aspect of humanity” (p. 66). Mwangi also stated that feminism offers a “critique and a remedy through activism for the prevailing male ideology which influences the lives, ideas, and physical emotional well-being of women” (p. 66). Discussing feminism as political activism, Weedon (1987) noted:

Starting from the politics of the personal, in which women’s subjectivities and experiences of everyday life becomes the site of the redefinition of patriarchal meanings and values and of resistance to them, feminism generates new theoretical perspectives from which the dominant can be criticized and new possibilities envisaged. (as cited in Mama, 1995, p. 8)

According to Harding (1987), methodology encompasses methods, techniques, theory application, and analysis of data collection and how it should proceed. Some

scholars have argued that there are no feminist methods per se (Devault, 1999; Harding, 1987; Reinharz, 1992). But feminist methodology is distinctive because it calls for careful and critical work of unraveling the interweaving complexity of gendered meanings and social structures in order to rethink the premises on which the contemporary patriarchal culture is based (Frese & Coggeshall, 1991; Mwangi, 2009). Additionally, Suara (1996) observed, “Feminists have also advanced the issue of empowerment of women through education as a means of challenging male domination and women’s subordination; and transforming the structures and institutions that perpetuate gender discrimination” (p. 1).

Feminist theory is applicable to this study in the sense that these Nigerian women are trying to break the male domination inherent in their religion and culture through western higher education. This does not necessarily imply that these Nigerian women are feminists or that all studies about women are feminist in nature. Traditional and cultural realities that are superimposed on individual through socializations can be examined by utilizing the feminist critique of social reality. Mwangi (2009) noted:

First, feminist research is based on the premise that reality and knowledge are socially situated and constructed (Bloom, 1998; Collins, 1990; Harding, 1991; Munro, 1998; Smith, 1987) and that dominant social institutions and attitudes are the basis for women’s subordinated position in society. (p. 33)

The qualitative data collected in this study should help women to seek effective ways to bridge the gap and the tension in their lives that complicate their access to education (Mwangi, 2009). Further, feminist research is ‘transformative’ with strong political and ideological commitments to help change women’s positions as well as help change the society in which they lives (citing Weiler, 1988). The narrative themes are

not only the center of analysis in this study but through the Nigerian women sharing their personal experiences, they also become co-creators of that knowledge (Mwangi, 2009).

The daily lives of Nigerian women are complicated due to political, social, and cultural factors that negate their access to higher education. Identifying the differences and tensions in these women's lives and exploring their daily life experiences enhances the importance and significance of this research. These women's voices (through their interviews) are a clear demonstration that they become subjects rather than [objects] of study and help in transforming strong political and ideological commitments towards changing the society and the world at large (Mwangi, 2009). The Nigerian women in this study overcome the cultural obstacles borne by the patriarchal society and their collective voices (in the form of narratives) reveal their struggles and accomplishments.

Many of the interviews portrayed women who went against the social dogma and the traditional stereotypes thereby enabling them to step out of their comfort zone and go after their dreams. McFadden (1999) noted:

I think it is important that we make these distinctions because we are different politically and ideologically as women. All women are women, by accepting the construction of themselves as such, but not all women are feminist, nor do they all want to be feminist. Being feminist is about donning a new and socially disconcerting identity. It is about transforming one's life and one's society, not just about reforming it. It is a difficult, lifelong task that few are willing to assume and many cannot sustain. But it is an identity which every feminist is most proud to bear. I would not be anyone else but a radical, African feminist. (para. 15)

This study is grounded in the feminist theory because many of these women consented to be interviewed because they felt that by doing so, they will be agents of change for all women. Additionally, the hope was that their narratives would facilitate some political action especially in the form of an educational mandate that would support

mandatory school attendance for all young females in Nigeria as well as male children who currently enjoy the traditional and cultural preference of being educated.

Research Process and Strategies

Data Collection and Identifying Respondents

This study utilized in-depth one-on-one interviews with Nigerian women who also consented to be audio recorded and videotaped regarding their experiences pursuing higher education in western universities. Since this researcher is also a priest, the connection with the Bishop in Kafanchan, Nigeria was helpful in facilitating and coordinating the process of securing female respondents in Nigeria. Through telephone calls, emails, and faxes, a selected population sample was identified in different locations of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The memo from the Bishop requested volunteers in identifying women participants as respondents for interviews. Interviews were also done at various universities in Nigeria and under the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan. Some Nigerian women living in the United States also offered to share their experiences that formed part of the narratives that were analyzed. The contacts for the in the United States were made through phone calls and references by Nigerian professors personally contacted them to request their participation.

The targeted number of respondents was forty (40) Ph.D. Nigerian female faculty including others in government positions in the country of Nigeria. The researcher chose this number in order to gain broad in-depth understanding of women experiences pursuing higher education. Fifty six (56) respondents volunteered to participate in the study. Before data collection, an interview questionnaire was developed (see Appendix B) along with an Informed Consent (see Appendix C) required by the IRB for human

subject research to authenticate the research process and make sure that the respondents were aware of their role as well as the risks and benefits of participating in this research.

The participants' interviews were videotaped and digitized into disk formatting at the UND Center for Instructional and Learning Technology Center (CILT). The disks were then given to a transcriber who transcribed them verbatim and handed them back to the researcher. Once the hard copies of the transcripts were analyzed, this researcher reviewed and analyzed the various themes among the participants. The participants' names as used here are pseudonyms for anonymity and ease of reading. It should, however, be noted that many of the participants gave permission to use their real names.

Various common themes emerged the data analysis that included: (a) cultural, where respondents found leaving their families a challenge among other issues; (b) financial/economic themes, where respondents had to work extra jobs to finance their education; (c) religious themes, where respondents found that the male dominated religious ideology was an obstacle to gaining their educational goals; and (d) these women felt that they had to be 'excellent in order to be equal' and also in order to be taken seriously.

The methodology followed delineates individual respondents' issues and themes that allow one to gain insights into individual evaluations of specific materials and information. Using a method of collective individual analysis helps delineate various themes because it produced very precise and specific answers as well as exhaustive and varied knowledge about individual determined experiences, opinions, and motives which if analyzed any other way may not encompass their own definite ideas or may result in losing their own voice. Thematic qualitative methodology is also evaluative because it

addresses controversial, sensitive and taboo issues from the respondents that need to be voiced albeit being unfamiliar to the audience.

The interview is a qualitative method for getting information from respondents through a confidential, secure conversation between an interviewer and a respondent. Here this researcher ensured that the conversation encompasses the topics that are crucial to ask for the sake of the purpose and the issue of this research. The respondents were able to provide their narratives from their individual points of view without due influence by the opinions of other respondents (Megafon, 2011). The analysis of individual participants accorded the participants true voices. Therefore, the distinctive choice of analyzing data in this format is to clearly bring out the women's voices so that they will not lose their identity and to be sensitive to what the intersections of themes are between the respondents. Mwangi (2009) noted that individual in-depth interviews have encompassed various methods:

This discourse addresses methodological and ethical issues that reflect particular feminist concerns like the researcher/researched relationship, the role of the researcher and the process of practice of carrying out feminist research. As a result of these concerns, for example, feminist methodology advocates the use of various approaches or strategies of investigation and data collection in ways that are sensitive to women's cultural contexts, their positionality, and intersectionality, and the multiple and subjective nature of their identities. (p. 33)

Although individualistic in nature, the women voices weave together many of the same cultural and gendered experiences that they have had not only individually but collectively in trying to attain their educational goals. Given the nature of these women's narratives and their life histories, cultural contexts and linguistic forms of their narratives portray the complexity of the Nigerian women's lives and challenges that they go through in their daily lives. Analyzing their voices provides an identity of their life

history contextually as well as a personal narrative that is described by Mwangi (2009) as “the linguistic form that preserves the complexity of human actions” (p. 34).

Limitations and Benefits of In-Depth Interviews

According to Maxwell (2005), the way and manner in which the data is being analyzed and structured varies because of the following reasons: (a) the comfort and experience of the researcher, (b) the extent of the researcher’s familiarity with the culture of those interviews, (c) the degree to which the topic is understudied, and (d) the complexity of the social processes involved. Similarly, Byrd and Webber (2010) identified various limitations associated with in-depth interviews that include:

- Personal interaction difficult to sustain
- Respondents unwilling or unable to share information
- Respondents unwilling or unable to articulate what’s most important or relevant for understanding their motives, actions and emotions
- Interviewers may not ask the right questions
- Respondents may not be cooperative or truthful
- Interview is not a naturally occurring interaction
- Smaller and less representative samples limit generalizability of findings

Personal interaction was achieved through building rapport between the interviewer and respondent throughout the process of conducting in-depth interviews for this study. The respondents were willing and able to articulate and share their stories and ordeals as they pursued higher education. Since respondents in this study were able to provide good responses because of the right questions that addressed their issues for their benefit (see Appendix B), they were still able to accurately articulate their emotions. The

respondents were cooperative, candid and truthful to the questions asked. Due to this researcher's own background as a priest, rapport was easy to establish and trust was gained between the researcher and respondent. Due to their negative experiences with their male counterparts who have detracted, enforced, and otherwise left them bereft of basic education in the first place, it took some effort and a sense of great determination for these women to forge new paths for future female generations that allowed them to trust in this researcher's abilities to portray their personal narratives in the proper light.

Even though an in-depth interview is not a naturally occurring interaction, it is this researcher's opinion that the respondents were willing to participate in order to get their voices heard. Interviews were pre-arranged for the convenience of the respondents, so any unnaturalness was negated because the respondents' needs were taken into consideration. This researcher does recognize that the small interview population sample would be difficult to generalize to the plight of the African women as a whole, but the respondents who were interviewed do comprise a varied background and educational status. Byrd and Webber (2010) has also identified some benefits of in-depth interviews that include:

- Allows researcher to explore complex topics and allows for ideas to emerge.
- Allows researchers to record expressive or emotive nonverbal responses.
- Provides researcher to see reaction of respondents and helps researcher to probe with further questions.
- Responses may indicate the importance of a particular question or topics to the respondents.

- Researcher can ascertain the participant's point of view and why the Nigerian culture is a challenge to women pursuing higher education.
- Allows researcher to capture the ways respondents described and explained their decisions, actions and interactions with others.
- Makes it possible to examine and interpret the motivations/constraints behind respondents' actions
- Helps research understand meanings of social phenomena under study.
- Offers a way to explore people's lives and context in which they make decisions and yield "thick descriptions" of social life (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

The in-depth interviews allowed this researcher to capture the ways respondents described and explained their decisions, actions and interactions with others because the environment was convenient and safe for them and it provided a free flow of their true voices in the telling of their life stories. This researcher believes that the in-depth interviews facilitated the examination and interpretation of the motivations and constraints behind the respondents' answers. This approach assisted the researcher to understand the meanings of social phenomena for which this study was developed. The in-depth interviews in this study also offered ways to explore these women's lives within the context in which they made decisions which yielded "thick descriptions" of social life (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Research Rationale

The impetus for not only the passion in taking on this research but how it is in actuality a very personal and deeply meaningful journey for this researcher is one that

must be addressed for the reader. In order to do this, it is necessary to relay the fact that the language in this following section will switch to using the first person instead of third person which will help the reader to understand why this researcher's passion, care and determination to explore this study is not only a personal goal but also one of the heart. In considering the choice for the topic of this study and the importance of education for women in Africa and Nigeria particularly, thoughts turned to my late mother who died from a preventable disease but lacked the formal knowledge to know that her ailment was not terminal if she has seen a doctor early enough. Some formal education would have saved her life and lack of education contributed to her early demise.

We must in good conscience ask ourselves, "Can somebody please speak for these women? Cannot somebody just ask the critical questions about why females are not allowed to become educated? Why are we so unconcerned about issues that need to be addressed because they seem not to be men's concern? Why can't we appreciate the role of women who have helped make society what it is today?" The ideal goal would be to improve women's quality of life and provide some form of empowerment for creating awareness for their educational achievement, their right to this education, and their knowledge that can be used for the benefit of their family and society at large.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

These women respondents have great cultural hurdles to overcome because “men in African societies are privileged and do not expect to contribute to domestic labor and childcare” (Beoku-Betts, 2004, p. 116). These hurdles are compounded because the men do not contribute to domestic labor, and the stresses and responsibilities of the family and of the marriage become intertwined with their academic pursuit. Common themes were established by identifying patterns in the narratives, which enabled the researcher to explore complex topics and allowed for ideas to emerge that have not been predetermined by the researcher (Byrd & Webber, 2010). For the purpose of this analysis, the nine respondents have been provided with a pseudonym as follows: 1—Sheena, 2—Christy, 3—Loralee, 4—Talia, 5—Beth, 6—Heather, 7—Tracy, 8—Carla, and 9—Patti.

The researcher identified patterns of unique phrases and common vocabulary (common themes) – this enables the researcher to explore complex topics and allows for ideas to emerge that have not been predetermined by the researcher (Byrd & Webber, 2010).

Again, pseudonyms have been used for all the participants that gave interviews. Demographic information is provided in table format which follows to give the reader a sense of the family structure, geographical background and dynamics of living and

growing up in Nigeria. A map of Nigeria is provided in the appendices (Appendix E) for reference to where these female participants grew up and have family.

Table 2. Demographic Information.

NIGERIAN WOMEN SEEKING HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES				
PSEUDONYM	GREW UP IN:	SCHOOLED IN:	DEGREE IN:	No. IN FAMILY:
Sheena	Kakuri, State of Kaduna, NI	Goningora, Nigeria— Sec.sch. Currently teaching at Kaduna Polytechnic in Kaduna, Nigeria	Obtaining Master's at Jomo Kenyatta Univ, Kenya	Married 21 yrs. with six children (four girls, two boys) Grew up in family with 16 children, father, and two wives
Christy: Seeking Master's in Public Health	Benue State Kaduna, NI	Abakpa, Kaduna-primary school Islamia School Federal Training Center Kanduna	Nursing/Midwife Murtala Mohammad Hopt./Potiskum Gen. Hopt (Benue)/Usassa Hopt., Azaria	Married with four children (youngest is 19) Health provider at Kaduna Polytechnic
Loralee Seeking Ph.D. in Economics		Pampas, Lagos—Prim. School Ladela Seminary Sc.	Accounting B.Sc. at Univ. of Maiduguri (Benue)	Parents had three children—herself and two brothers
Talia Seeking Master's and doctorate		Enugu Prim. Sc. Abbot Girls' Sec. School in Ihiala, Anambra Federal College of Tech. Educ., Owerri	Univ. of Nigeria Nsukka—degree in Educ./Eng. Fed. College of Educ., Abeokuta	Is third in family of five as youngest daughter
Beth Seeking Ph.D. in Chemistry at UND	Mbonge Village, Cameroon	Kumba Sec. Sc., Cameroon CAST Mambile, Adv. Level Univ. of Yaoundé	Chemistry, B.Sc. and M.Sc., Univ. of Nigeria Higher Ekonomia, Chem. Educ, Cameroon	Married with children
Heather Seeking Master's in Educ. Learning at UND and also Ph.D. in Statistics		Elementary School High School and then University, Cameroon	Banking/Finance, Univ. of Cameroon	
Tracy Teacher, Kaduna State University; Full & Permanent Staff At Kaduna Polytechnic; Teaches part-time at The Good Shepherd Seminary	Idoma Tribe, Benue State	St. Luke's Primary Sch., Jos Government Girls Secondary Sch., Shendam	Eng. Educ, B.A. Univ. of Jos Education, Master's at Univ. Of Jos Eng. Educ., Ph.D. at Univ. of Jose	Mother was first wife in polygamous family Married with children Husband died shortly after her receiving her Ph.D. degree
Carla Seeking Master's degree	Enugu-Ezike, Enugu	Central School, Amufi Primary School, Enugu Akudo Central Sch., Otol Nenwe, Prim.Six Girls Secondary School in Onitsha	Mass.Comm.; Enugu State Univeristy Broadcast Journalism diploma, NTA Television College	Parents had 11 kids Oldest of the girls Married with two children
Patti Seeking her Ph.D. degree	Chinwe Tribe	Ezikene Primary Sch. Enugu Queens School, Enugu (Sec. Sch.)	Mass. Comm., Institute of Mgmt and Technology, Enugu Education post-graduate diploma in 2006	Parents felt education was important Mother had B.A. Married

Considerations in looking at the personal narratives included the women's body language, the environment under which they gave their interviews, the ease or unease with which these women felt they could speak, and finally transcribing and analyzing the narratives of the women. Although pseudonyms were assigned to the women who were interviewed, many had no objection to using their names and appreciated being able to give their personal accounts of trials and triumphs in the pursuit for higher education.

Narrative Themes

The narratives of the Nigerian women participating in the study addressed the following research questions for this study:

1. What are the major barriers that the Nigerian women face when they go abroad to pursue their education?
2. How does the Nigerian culture affect women in their struggle to pursue advanced degrees both abroad and within Africa?
3. What are some changes needed to make primary, secondary, and higher education accessible to Nigerian women?

All the women interviewed were seeking their Master's or Ph.D. degrees. The demographic nature of these women covered the spectrum of marital statuses – single, married, or widowed. Several of the married and widowed women had supportive husbands who encouraged them in seeking higher education. Some had supportive parents who encouraged them to pursue their educational goals. The women also came from very large families with some having 11 to 16 siblings in their immediate family. The financial concerns of these situations seems to be a two-edged sword in that being from a large family some were motivated to go out on their own and seek their own

financial independence, while others were subject to very poverty-stricken circumstances and had difficulties in securing finances for their education. The variety of obstacles but also achievements these women participants experienced brought several themes to the forefront. A synopsis of the emergent themes and corresponding concerns of these women is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Emergent Themes.

EMERGENT NARRATIVE THEMES		
Themes	Definition	Concerns
Cultural Theme	“An emotionally charged concern, which motivates or strongly influences the culture bearer's conduct in a wide variety of situations.” (Nostrand, 1967, p. 177)	Patriarchal Women’s place at home Second class citizens Subserviant
Religious Theme	Activities governing beliefs and faith systems which guide value, morals, and codes of conduct.	Patriarchal Subserviant to men Faith-based moral support Guidance in further studies
Financial Theme	Issues dealing with monetary access or lack of access from banking institutions, family supporters, friends, etc.	Lack of access to funds Cost of education/tuition Providing for family at same time
Other Issues	Outside factors affecting obtaining goals of higher education	Leaving family Transportation Pregnancy/children

Some recurring comments identified out of the narratives of these Nigerian women were cultural problems associated with female circumcision. Another participant described how women were forced to drink water that was used to wash their dead husbands’ bodies laced with embalming fluid to prove innocence after being accused of murdering them even though they died of natural causes. The cultural ideations that these types of actions by others in villages in which these women lived are not only almost insurmountable in the cultural context, but also poses threats to their health.

Majority of the Nigerian women interviewed expressed their wishes to have the government pay more attention to women issues and enact laws that support education for all children, not only for boys. Recommendations for sponsorships and the use of government grants were expressed to help further the education of girls and women. Localized efforts in various villages in the Nigerian nation must be established to show village chiefs, elders, leaders, and the population of the village as a whole that education is needed for girls as well as boys and that both can pursue secondary educational goals without any barriers. It is an inherent belief with the village leaders that educating girls and women would skew the traditional status quo that men are the ones to be obeyed and women are the ones to be submissive to them.

Women should be allowed to learn a trade or vocation in order to help the family financially. Sheena (alias), in the first narrative, expressed her wish that “If only the government would look towards the area of kind of elevating the pains for women because you see people take more pleasure in sending their male children to school because they knew it’s been official.” Culturally rooted traditional thinking is difficult to overcome, but providing education at the grassroots can help change the nation’s view and enhance the need for girls and women to have an education.

Another theme that overlaps the cultural aspects of women attaining their educational goals pertains to the role that religion has played in these women’s lives. For majority of the women, religion gave them the drive, perseverance and ability to handle their circumstances they found themselves in and to motivate them in their pursuit of their higher educational goals. On the other hand, the religious traditions posed negative influence and many hurdles to overcome. Again, the male patriarchal ideations that keep

women in the home also pervades the religious ideology that women are neither to be educated nor able to decide their own destiny. When Islamic culture decides for you what to wear or who you are to appear in public with, it becomes extremely difficult for these women to overcome.

Cultural Themes

One of the most difficult, ingrained, and hardest obstacles to overcome is the overwhelming patriarchal ideology that pervades the culture in Nigeria where males are valued and therefore should be educated rather than females. Women are traditionally seen as not worth spending the time or money to send the young girls to school because they will eventually marry and be living with the husband's family. The logic is that the in-law family will then have the "domestic capital" that these young females represent; therefore, as their cultural logic goes, young females and women are not worth the effort.

The stereotypical notions for these women in African culture is that of taking care of the domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, farming, and being a wife and mother to children of the family and are still held to this day. It is highly unusual for the female to leave the family and seek education for herself, setting aside the duties traditionally expected of her. It is also not acceptable among the males that are either directly related to them or who are in the immediate community that surrounds these women.

Sheena, in the first narrative, found that cultural barriers, beliefs, and stereotypes which she experienced are still prevalent today in Nigerian society, but she felt that there were improvements taking place especially in some of the remote villages where traditions and patriarchal norms of past generations barred women from having a voice in their everyday lives. Sheena spoke of a village where if the husband dies from whatever

cause, the widow is forced to drink of his embalming fluid. Tradition has it that if the widow becomes ill, it would prove her guilt that she had killed her husband, regardless of the fact that embalming fluid is poisonous to anyone who drinks of it.

Another cultural tradition Sheena saw as women having to deal was prevalent in eastern Nigeria where female circumcision is practiced. This is a practice which Sheena views as the village males' control to keep a girl a virgin, but it removes all sexual pleasures the woman could experience when she got married. Even when a woman does marry, Sheena expresses the norms associated with marriage as inhibiting a woman's goals in pursuing education. Women become pregnant which leads to having young children that require constant care, in a patriarchal society carried out by women.

Women also suffer from hypertension due to all the demands placed upon them and thus health issues emerge that also need to be dealt with. Sheena stated:

Whatever situation you find yourself subjected to, there's nothing you can do but succumb to it. Things I guess that you have no right of your own, so you see, with education, it empowers you, the woman, to know your rights, but inasmuch as you know your rights, culture is something that tends to tear us apart.

Christy, in the second narrative, related in her discourse how programs for women to be educated must not only be a formative idea but also must be put into practice and followed through on. Women, Christy stated, need to learn more and be taught that culture should be not overshadowing education and that it is quite different.

Christy stated:

. . . education is the key to the bedrock of any human being generally, not only women. So women should drop culture. Women should get educated first. And they get education, under the culture . . . there is no culture that says a woman cannot get educated.

Christy noted the impact that culture has on women in holding them back from seeking education. Women, in Christy's opinion, should disregard culture until they are educated, get the education that they require, then study culture from that educational perspective and not from what the patriarchal society dictates in which they live. Christy stated that she had many role models in her family. Even within her own family, her father had the notion that when there was a rainfall the children were probably going to fall ill. Rain, in his mind, would bring an illness on the children. Christy would assure him that rainfall did not automatically bring fever to his children and did not need to give them medications because of it. Although certainly not as barbaric as what Sheena experienced in the rural Nigerian villages where women were forced to drink their dead husband's embalming fluid to prove guilt or innocence, here we have the same "primitiveness" in thought that rainfall would bring illness to one's children requiring them to have medications which education can easily address.

Christy's narrative has given us an example of what Mwangi (2009) called the "cultural silence" that envelopes many women and girls in Africa (p. 41). In sharing their narratives, women are enabled to strive above the cultural restraints of the patriarchal society in which they find themselves though it is not an easy task to accomplish. Mwangi stated that through the women gaining a collective voice in sharing their narratives of their experiences, they can ". . . transcend the cultural boundaries of silence" and create a "buffer zone" from those who want to silence them" (p. 41).

Loralee noted that being the stereotypical housewife and serving and waiting on your husband is "an abomination." Education, she said, would help women to be independent, provide for themselves, and bring them out of hiding which Loralee feels

that too many women like to do precisely because of their lack of education. Loralee stated that there are some women who do not even know what education is and that is an important aspect of women trying to empower themselves. If Nigerian women do not know what education even is, how can they progress, move forward, and better their lives? Loralee felt that some organizations should be developed to help bring this message to these women who don't know otherwise.

Loralee believed that women should do everything in their power to become educated. Women should be independent and not just be at home and “do everything and wait for a man to come back and give [her] everything.” Loralee noted that if you can provide for yourself, whatever you take in should be put toward educating one's self because she sees the need for every Nigerian woman to know a little about education. Even if a woman does “little things” such as a petty trade, that woman should try and move towards more education such as a computer course to improve herself. Loralee felt that women couldn't be at home and wait for their men to bring them things and be submissive in doing what the men tell them to do. Women need to take back some of their power to help shape their lives as well as other women in Nigeria.

Talia felt that culture plays a role in that different regions in Nigeria have a great deal of diversity. Women in the northern part of the country dress conservatively and cover their bodies properly because that's the way northerners are expected to dress. The eastern region of Nigeria is more liberal in that women can wear dresses with “spaghetti straps” and miniskirts. Talia believed that anyone attending a higher institution should be able to dress “the way the person likes” because, when a woman is at a university, she is mature enough to take care of herself.” Talia noted that parents could also do more to

send their female children to school and leave behind the notion that it's not good for a woman to go to school. Further, opening up a trade center for women funded through government funds would show that training women is not a waste.

Culturally, Beth felt she was leaving a place where, as an educated woman, she meant a lot to the society and was a role model to the children she was teaching. By leaving her home, Beth was coming to a strange land and did not even know what was going to happen when she got there much less know anyone. Another cultural obstacle for Beth was the traditional patriarchal notion that by being an educated woman, men will reject you because [the men see that an] educated woman will no longer be "submissive to us as a wife." Beth stated that men see educated women as off limits for marrying. Likewise, for Beth the difficulty lies in being alone and overcoming the accent in speaking English in the United States.

Beth stated women are viewed as having little value. There is a very distinct notion of a separation of gender where certain things are for men and certain things are for women. Women's opportunities in Africa are related to the perspectives about women that are present in African culture. An example of this, Beth said, is that a woman can never be president nor could they contest for the post of the president. To change this notion, Beth would encourage women to tell men that they could be president and that women need to push for it. Support is needed from both men and women, but women need to overcome their fear of going out and doing things. Beth wanted young women to realize that they can do it and feels that her mission is to tell women they can make things better. Beth saw that the process of empowering women is to know in their mind that they have value. She wanted women to know that whatever they wanted to do,

that they should do it well and not to undermine themselves. Beth wanted women to know that they are just as capable.

One of the major obstacles Heather sees is that “men know that women are like second class.” Heather sees that in their Cameroonian culture men sponsor their sons to go wherever they would like to and finance him over the daughter even if their daughter is very intelligent. Even if they are going to sponsor you by financing education for the daughter, they know that the daughter will go get married to someone and then she goes to that person’s family and, therefore, really do not want to be wasting their money for nothing, which Heather sees as one of the biggest barriers in Africa.

Heather saw gender as cultural problem in Africa. When she was in Nigeria, she knew of a family where they had nine female children. The man was looking for his wife to give birth to a male, but when she gave birth to their tenth daughter, he went home, packed his things, and left. This was not the first time Heather saw this happen with the husband leaving the wife because the children were all female. Heather said that education is needed because they grow up regarding this as normal. Once they have some education, Heather believes it will make a difference in how they see things.

Cultural obstacles being what they are, Heather would like to see the rural populations, especially the females, be made aware of their opportunities. Heather said that education for women is absolutely essential, and to garner the support of organizations and agencies that can go out to the rural areas of the country and provide some basic education for girls who may be able to avoid an early arranged marriage would be of great assistance.

Issues in education that Tracy felt needed to be addressed are to do with gender imbalances in education as far as school enrollment. Incentives should be introduced in attracting the girl child into school as it differs depending on the region of the country you are looking at. Tracy saw cultural differences that separate Nigerians but still “we are the same.” Tracy felt that having achieved her Ph.D. allowed her to see that whatever challenge might come her way would be surmountable and that she can now look ahead and be happy.

Carla felt that there should be free education in all parts of the country. Carla would like to “. . . have it as a law, as a rule in the constitution of the country, that every woman should go to school because to train a woman, you train a nation.” The national and state assemblies should take care of providing education for women and making a law to support it. Carla saw that women work hard and still have to come home and feed and care for their family. Women should also earn an equal salary. Carla stated that education helps one to see different cultures as “not so archaic or untouchable as we think.” Education helps you relate with and interact with people from different cultures when you are at a university. Carla noted that Nigerian cultures are not so really different from one another. Carla still sees that education has not brought women up to where they’re supposed to be but it is moving in the right direction. Carla believes the world and society can be a better place when women become educated citizens.

Patti saw the status of women in Nigeria as one that is under or below that of a man. Women are working hard and trying to do something for themselves, but it is still a man’s world. Especially telling was Patti’s exposure to the Islamic culture in the northern part of Nigeria where she says girls are exposed to early marriages and are not

educated or not allowed to be educated. Patti was shocked not only by seeing girls being forced into early marriages, but also by the requirement that they be dressed all in black and forced to cover themselves. Patti feels that in that region “women are nothing.” The Islamic culture in the north in the way they treat girls made Patti feel pity for them. Patti feels that the cultural conditions restrict women in even speaking and doing anything on their own unless a man says that it’s okay to do it. Patti believes the women should be allowed to make decisions for themselves. Patti sees a need for Nigerian women to work on themselves, especially if they think that they need a man to be able to do things. Being independent and being encouraged in that direction is a need and direction that women need to be educated about.

Religious Themes

The women’s personal religious beliefs seemed to help them strive through many of the difficulties they faced. On the other hand, the religious mores of Islam subjugates women’s opportunities, which prevents women from going to school. Religion in these women’s narratives was more of a personal motivating factor because of their deeply held Christian beliefs which helped them to strive for their educational goals instead of being an impediment. Many of these women believed that education for themselves and educating future generations of young African women would help elevate their own self-esteem and their status in society for the most part.

Christy noted the need for women to empower themselves. She stated:

Behavior remains the same, and to practice these two things together, culture or religion, and to be hiding behind all those ones who say that is why we can’t go to school . . . [women should] see the literacy programs that are there for women to grab.

There is a division that Christy saw between where promises are being made by the government to help people get through school and promises about putting that help into practice because it has become a political issue. Loralee's themes concerned her religious faith and the influence of her family in helping her accomplish her higher educational goals. She still strives to obtain her Ph.D. in economics. Faith was strengthened in Loralee as she dealt with obstacles and other experiences. She felt that overcoming the obstacles she dealt with in her educational journey brought her closer to God. Loralee spoke from her heart and gained insight into her identity as a woman first, as a Nigerian second, and as an educator who can make an impact on society.

One of Loralee's most challenging moments was an incident in which one of her grades were lost and, as a consequence, she would have had to spend another year at the university in getting the classes made up. Another incident very similar to that was when Loralee was given an F in a class where she did not earn an F because she knew that all her coursework and papers were completed. This was a transforming experience for Loralee in that she felt she became closer to God, knowing that she could always trust Him, and brought Loralee to believe in miracles in going through this experience. Loralee felt that God had showed her that this was her time and that she could make it through her studies.

Beth's obstacles were not only cultural but also emotional ones. Beth felt as if she were in a cage as well as being depressed and lonely. Again, Beth's faith was the sustaining factor where she felt that by getting her education in spite of the sacrifices she was making, she would return and be a blessing back in her homeland. That is an emotional obstacle that Beth deals with in balancing her desire for obtaining her higher

education degree and knowing that she can later be a benefit to her village and her society as a whole.

In Patti's estimation, women should be given a chance. Unfortunately, Patti sees some women still feel that they need a man for things to be done and, therefore, there is a need for women to work on themselves first and doing things for themselves. Women should be given free education as well as having a law that would assure women would go to school. Patti felt that the law should insist that all females, especially all female children, should be in school and that it should be free to them. Patti was uncomfortable with the northern Islamic culture of Nigeria where the attitude that she sees is one of "Why should I train a girl when at the end of the day she will move to her husband's house into that family?" In northern Nigeria, educating a girl is seen as a waste of money because it will not be of benefit for her family to do so.

Financial Themes

Issues regarding finances were a big concern to almost all the respondents. Either in just getting started or acquiring finances for other living arrangements to transportation to class itself became another hurdle faced with determination by these women to accomplish their educational goals. Many came from extremely large families whose finances were stretched, and being a female in the family, again cultural and religious traditions funneled finances to the males for their education. Some came from very rural villages whose family struggled for just the basics of daily living much less trying to educate the children, even the males, so there were no monies to put towards young females educational goals. Others were lucky enough to have supporting husband who

wanted to see their wives gain a degree and offered both their financial, emotional, and domestic support for them to reach their goals.

Sheena's goal and desire was to enter medical school, but she did not have the chemistry or physics classes that would be required for her to be admitted into the program in her primary program. Sheena had to take a bus to another town in order to attend school and her parents could not afford to help her with her transportation costs. Sheena had seven siblings and eight cousins (due to her uncle's death) that her parents were trying to support which consequently left very little financial help that her parents could provide even if they wanted to. Sheena related that ". . . the only way out was to get married so that I could relieve my parents of this burden because I know without me it's like one person down." Sheena realized with such a large family that she has to somehow fend for herself financially.

So, in order to pay for this transportation, Sheena engaged in prostitution to help pay some of her schooling costs until some of her friends stepped in to financially help her out. Sheena expressly stated: "It was not a fun experience at all for me to engage in acts I never wanted just because I wanted to make a headway. That is the critical mix the Nigerian woman faces." These obstacles that Sheena faced, and with which she was quite candid in talking about with her daughter, were dealt with on Sheena's terms. She is very grateful and very proud that her daughter has the opportunity now to be in medical school without overcoming the some of the same circumstances that Sheena herself struggled with to pursue her educational goals.

Christy's obstacles in gaining her education also entailed securing finances for schooling and living expenses. Christy was able to finance her education through

scholarships from the government. She is now seeking to obtain her master's degree in public health to achieve her goal of ushering in more community development and capacity building regarding health issues. Her most challenging obstacle was in coping with all the work and seeking the financing needed to complete her schooling. Christy now has a deeper appreciation for those who are accomplishing their educational goals without having a financial background on which to rely and she tried to help others in the same situation because she was once there herself.

Beth explained that due to the economic situation, getting a science education at the higher level was very difficult. Since Beth could not go further to obtain her Ph.D., she had to go back to Cameroon and went to Higher Ekonoma to pursue her education in chemistry. She came out with a diploma in education in chemistry. Thereafter, Beth started teaching for 12 years but realized that to be better off she had to go for further education. Beth applied and received admission to come to the University of North Dakota and do her Ph.D. in chemistry. While Beth was teaching in Cameroon though she noticed that women needed help and not only did she share her faith in God with them, but also tried to teach them how to be independent, learn a business, and be financially able to help their families while encouraging them to go to school.

Beth stated that because of finances, young girls and women cannot meet their needs and they “start moving around and big men who have positions that take them and [start] abusing them, and when they abuse them they get pregnant.” The lack of money places these girls at the mercy of men who have money who either get them pregnant or expose them to venereal diseases which has several ramifications. Beth stated that they end up with babies who do not have fathers because the men have no interest in them

other than to abuse them. Another result is that these young girls and women either “. . . die, and most of them, their wombs are destroyed.” Beth sees the culture as encouraging this type of practice because men are allowed to have more than one wife. Beth’s faith and prayer is that women should pursue their dream and that God will help them.

Another obstacle is the financing to study abroad. As Heather sees it, even if you are female and can get the sponsorship, it is still next to impossible to continue because you have to sit for the TOEFL exam (Test of English as a Foreign Language) which requires a registration and exam fee which bars many from seeking their educational aspirations. Heather believes that changes that could help the situation would include having seminars where they can talk about the importance of women and educating their female children. Also, Heather would like to see scholarships available to the five best students to attend the big universities in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana. Heather believes that this would open people’s eyes to understand that there are outside opportunities.

Petty Trade Options

Financing underpins everyone’s goal when seeking secondary education. Petty trade in African culture is a way that women can earn a living, even though perhaps a meager one. Petty trade, therefore, deserves to be defined and given an explanation as to its role in Africa. Petty traders are those who have a “booth” or “space” from which to sell goods consisting of agricultural products such as produce and grains, other food products (fish and meat), beverages, and small manufactured products. These booths can be located inside a regular marketplace if they can afford to rent the space or outside of it if they cannot pay the rental fee. It is taken up by many as a way to supplement other income or to subsist on whatever they can sell. Petty trade is one way many of these

respondents said was a way for a woman to try to obtain financing for educational goals. Although perhaps not the most desirable way of gaining income, it can be an option from which one can start even though great sacrifices are being made.

Talia had applied to law school at the University of Nigeria but didn't get accepted. Talia did not want to stay at home and waste her youth so she pursued the option at the University of Nigeria Nsukka because she had the commitment to achieve something more even though she was denied getting into law school. Interestingly enough, Talia felt that the intellectual women that she had met at the Abuja Fair were the ones who motivated her to aspire to be like them. Talia felt that by achieving her educational degrees at the university her alternative as a woman would have been as a housewife or as a petty trader which would, in her opinion, make her a "nobody." Talia believes that even if a woman does not have the means to achieve an education, that same woman can learn a trade in something they are interested in and come out better in that area than not doing anything at all. Female teachers can be real role models to women who are really trying in Nigeria. Talia feels that women's status is "doing well."

Tracy believes that "education should be every woman's right." Even where one cannot afford an education, Tracy believes that learning a trade to earn some money so that if the opportunity comes along for adult education you can partake in it. Carla said that alternatives to education for those who cannot afford it would be to learn a trade even though all women should be encouraged to be educated. Carla stated that it is not always the best or easiest option in learning a trade, but "if you educate a woman, you educate a nation." The best thing to do, Carla relates, is to empower women and that would be through education.

Patti indicated that although it is very difficult for those who cannot afford to send their daughters to school, an alternative would be to learn a trade. You have to work hard, very hard, in order to make something of yourself. Women's status continues to be one where women's voices are not heard, and Nigerian women need to be more outspoken in order to advance their needs.

“You have to be Excellent in Order to be Equal”

These thematic issues have placed women in a subservient or second-class position and role in society. Through Heather's narrative (No. 6), she remembers that in her educational pursuit in Africa that one of her professors stated to her “women had to be excellent in order to be equal.” This is a patriarchal ideal where women must do more than the standard, they must excel in whatever they do in order to garner the same recognition that men do for their standard level of work.

Sheena spoke of how the status of women in Nigeria is another obstacle and theme that presented itself which women must deal with not only in trying to educate themselves, but in which women have to deal with sexism on an everyday basis. Sheena sees the status of women in Nigeria as being at the bottom of the totem pole as far as the government is concerned. This is exhibited by the barbaric traditions she sees of female circumcision practices and the fact that some village male elders would think that by making a widow drink of her husband's embalming fluid as indicative of her guilt or innocence.

Sheena wants the Nigerian government to educate women period so that she can be given the chance and opportunity to better herself. The government needs to create awareness among rural women about what they need to know about their bodies, their

rights, and that they are not to be bound by the hold of traditional values and belief systems they've always been taught. Thus, Sheena sees that women by working together can make a difference in their lives and that of their female counterparts in the future. Sheena wants women to make a decision for change within themselves and her own experience in becoming educated was summed up in her following comment: "There's nothing like being educated. Just like they always say, if you think education is expensive, try illiteracy." Women can change things within themselves but also in their country and nation, but they must be given the opportunity and chance with which to do so. Weighing the impact of having an education and dealing with illiteracy were important aspects in changing the country for Sheena.

Christy sees women's status as in need of "some building." She felt the need for capacity building regarding women's knowledge, their attitude, and in the very practice of their day-to-day activities. This can be accomplished through education Christy says. But the cultural practices is one of the impediments Christy says where culture prevents women from gaining the education. Christy stated traditionally culture has overshadowed and prevented women from going to school because of the traditional expectations attributed to women in Nigerian society.

Loralee saw the status of women as being lower to men because men "keep pushing us back." She said that husbands do not ever want their wives to get above them or to have too much power as the traditional thought and tradition is that women are to obey their husbands and do what they say. Loralee felt that women do not get to do anything in the country of Nigeria and that there is a lack of women in positions of power in the country. Loralee mentioned the culture of the Mwahavul tribe where women have

rights and their culture shows them respect. In that culture, family dictates who and what you are. Sometimes Lorelee sees women as being part of the problem because they “hide” and bring the lack of status on themselves. Further, educational issues for women concern the fact that women don’t know what to do with the education that they have.

Sexism was one of the obstacles that Talia encountered in trying to get her educational degree. Some lecturers that she observed would frustrate students, especially the female students “by trying to sleep with them before they were able to pass their classes.” Even so, Talia felt that achieving her educational degree helped her feel that “at last all your dreams” are coming true and that those sleepless nights that you spent studying did not go to waste.

Beth felt that the government neglects women and that women have very few opportunities. Further, she felt that “the perspectives of women in Africa need to change because women are looked upon as people who basically don’t have value. They have to run around men and without a man around you are nothing.” Beth was not in a marriage for a long time and she felt like she was a nobody back in Africa. Beth feels that no matter what you do in Africa, “women are considered not to be anything” and that needs to be changed and men need to be involved in that change. Beth believes there needs to be recognition by the government that women are the backbone of society and therefore need training to help better society.

Beth sees that dreams of women of obtaining an education are due to hard work and great sacrifice if women want to be treated with dignity and respect in her native country. Beth appreciates that a voice can stand up for women and perhaps make a difference in many lives that are affected by the lack of access to education. Beth sees

culture as placing very little value on women themselves and on what they do and it will take a great deal of work by other women, men and the government to keep on striving to create opportunities for girls and women to achieve their educational goals.

Tracy brought up what UNICEF has already pointed out in their own report—that there is a great gender imbalance negatively affecting girls more than boys in accessing education. Tracy wants to organize even just basic reading lessons to be made available to girls in order to improve their status in society. There is a need, in Tracy's own unique vernacular, to 'conscientize' the government to the needs of women and girls, especially in the area of education. This will lead to empowering women, as Duyilemi (2007) defines empowerment as that which gives people or communities the process whereby they can increase their control over their own lives through economic, political or educational means.

Additional Issues

Other issues the women respondents faced include environmental concern, language barriers, the emotional factors in leaving one's family behind and overcoming the differences in culture that they encountered. Emotional strains in being separated from their children and husbands were a definite factor in many narratives. Also of concern was trying to acculturate in their new environment alongside all the other concerns that they were dealing with.

Loralee's obstacles were more environmentally related than culturally related while she was earning her degree. In Benue State where the University of Maiduguri is which she attended, she felt that the variations in weather in combination with the flies and mosquitoes made it very difficult for her in accomplishing the reading she needed to

do to complete her studies. Since she felt a dislike for reading, Lorelee felt this was an impediment.

Heather's motivation stems from the autocratic system that has been established in Cameroon since the times of British colonization. That system fosters the ideal where if you are in authority, "you are the biggest person" and "every person under you is low." Those who do not have an education are "too low down there," so Heather decided that was a signal for her to make a change which motivated her to study and hopefully be able to make a change in her own generation.

A challenge that Heather has encountered in pursuing her higher education degree is just adjusting to the English accent here. Heather was born speaking English and yet found that others here in the United States have a hard time understanding her when she is speaking English. Heather also found that it is a barrier to helping study in class and with others. Heather admitted that she is shy but tried to put herself out to make friends in order to interact not only to overcome her shyness but also to improve her speaking and listening ability.

Another struggle Heather herself has is not being able to type fast. For example, typing pages for an assignment take her a great deal more time than for those who are used to typing assignments. One of Heather's African professors advised Heather that if she goes to the United States to study further, that "you have to be excellent in order to be equal."

Narrative Analyses

Almost every woman who gave their narrative wants to see some policy and governmental changes in the way Nigerian women are educated, and especially see a

change in making it mandatory for girls to go to school. Once the future generations of Nigerian females makes it through primary and secondary school, many women called for the option of “free education” so that girls can attain higher education degrees with the advantage to the country that by investing in their future education you also invest in the future of Nigeria, the culture, and the growth of the nation.

Ojobo (2008) formulated several suggestions to improve the status of women and their involvement in education. Those suggestions include: (a) initiating and extensive enlightenment campaign, (b) launching of a curriculum censoring board, (c) involving women in future educational policies formulation, (d) financial assistant, and (e) having more pro-women government policies. Ojobo called on the involvement of civic, social, and religious leaders to ensure progress allowing women formulating curriculum, development of policies concerning education that’s pertinent to them, grants specifically granted to women, and governmental policies for “second Chance” functional and literacy education to adult women.

Agu (2007) supported the recommendation to achieve equality which can be accomplished through women’s empowerment. Agu emphasized that there is need for (a) educational access for women towards effective development, (b) good choice of discipline for quality results, (c) acquire necessary skills for women likewise providing more funding for their education, and (d) equitable treatment of girl child education at all levels of life.

Women’s empowerment can be seen as the capacity of women to increase their self-reliant strategies through the inducement of education. The empowerment of women has been recognized as a prerequisite for achieving effective and people-centered development and empowerment strategy. (Agu, 2007, p. 12)

Women's education implies acquiring formal education with their male counterparts at all levels in the education system to help them compete favorably in the job and life market (Agu, 2007). Not only can education help females be participants in the economic enhancements of a region or nation through education, the more that go on to higher education helps national as well as continental goals of unity and development of transforming the educational policies as they now stand. Johnson, Hirt, and Hoba (2011) wrote that higher education is likely to further development goals by creating a sense of national unity, nurturing collective self-reliance, and reducing social inequalities. Ajayi et al. (1996) argued that African universities must take responsibility for setting and achieving national development objectives. Researchers are elucidating how post-secondary institutions on the continent may be reforming in new ways that include the *intentional* integration of development priorities (Johnson & Hirt, 2011; Morley, Leach, & Lugg, 2009; Winberg, 2006).

At the 4th Annual Women's Parliament Conference in Cape Town, Africa, held in August of 2007, Anzia (2007) quoted Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as saying that "When you educate a woman, you educate a nation." A recommendation that tribes and village elders must be instructed that having their 'girl-child[ren]' educated is just as much as necessity as that of educating their young males.

Gakusi (2010) found that children and adults alike require "basic education and literacy" (p. 221). African countries are missing the link between children's education and adult education. As such, there is no 'synergy' as Gakusi put it between the adult education system which fails to support primary education and vice versa. This finds the countries dealing with literacy issues for both adults and children and youth (Gakusi,

2010). This is in line with the recommendation of ‘coming from behind’ which can be remedied by education mandates of young females and males.

Meena (1991) stated that there is not enough recognition of the different roles men and woman have, need, and are constrained by. There is no recognition of the ‘structure subordination of women to men’ either. “Unequal division of labour, legal discrimination against women and abuse of women’s basic human rights have been more or less ignored by policy makers and planners, despite the lip service paid to the elimination of sexual discrimination. In brief, plans and policies have not been ‘gender responsive’” (Meena, 1991, p. 4). Because of the constraints that subordination places on women, women’s position in society is virtually ignored in development planning, policymaking, and their ‘concrete needs’ and evidenced by the allocation and utilization of resources (Meena, 1991).

As shown in this study, Nigerian women who pursue higher education in foreign countries such as the United States are transformed through their learning experiences (WairimuGatua, 2009). The life and death of each of us has its influence on others, says the Apostle Paul (Romans 14:7-9) which is an affirmation of our common origin and destiny, as well as our mutual sharing in solidarity (Second Plenary Meeting of Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria, 2011).

Women in Nigeria have suffered a great deal from cultural, historical, religious and social stereotypes but which makes them strong in both body and mind. Women want to have stronger minds and more human capacity by educating themselves to help build a better world for not only themselves but the future generations of Nigerian women. To this end, this researcher wishes to make that possible and endeavor to

facilitate some of the needs, issues and concerns facing Nigerian women today. Further, facilitating governmental policies and laws that require female children to attend school would be a good start. It must be one that is mandatory on a national level for all to adhere to, regardless of the region and regardless of the cultural or religious ideologies that exist. Chapter V addresses policies, strategies and recommendations to foster the ideals that the narratives of these women have addressed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The female respondents in the research study show that it is far more difficult for them to obtain their educational goals than other women in more developed countries. Opportunities for females to receive education in Nigeria are farther out of reach and more distant, than opportunities in other parts of the world due to the culture, religion and financial impediments Nigerian women face.

Narrative Analyses

Almost every woman who gave their narrative wants to see some policy and governmental changes in the way Nigerian women are educated, and especially see a change in making it mandatory for girls to go to school. Once the future generations of Nigerian females makes it through primary and secondary school, many women called for the option of “free education” so that girls can attain higher education degrees with the advantage to the country that by investing in their future education you also invest in the future of Nigeria, the culture, and the growth of the nation.

Ojobo (2008) formulated several suggestions to improve the status of women and their involvement in education. Those suggestions include: (a) initiating and extensive enlightenment campaign, (b) launching of a curriculum censoring board, (c) involving women in future educational policies formulation, (d) financial assistant, and (e) having more pro-women government policies. Ojobo called on the involvement of civic, social,

and religious leaders to ensure progress allowing women formulating curriculum, development of policies concerning education that's pertinent to them, grants specifically granted to women, and governmental policies for "second Chance" functional and literacy education to adult women. This is a recommendation that this researcher would highly support.

Agu (2007) supported the recommendation to achieve equality which can be accomplished through women's empowerment. Agu emphasized that there is need for (a) educational access for women towards effective development, (b) good choice of discipline for quality results, (c) acquire necessary skills for women likewise providing more funding for their education, and (d) equitable treatment of girl child education at all levels of life.

Women's empowerment can be seen as the capacity of women to increase their self-reliant strategies through the inducement of education. The empowerment of women has been recognized as a prerequisite for achieving effective and people-centered development and empowerment strategy. (Agu, 2007, p. 12)

Not only can education help females be participants in the economic enhancements of a region or nation through education, the more that go on to higher education helps national as well as continental goals of unity and development of transforming the educational policies as they now stand. Johnson, Hirt, and Hoba (2011) wrote that "Higher education in Africa is perceived by many as a way to further development goals, specifically by creating a sense of national unity, nurturing collective self-reliance, and reducing social inequalities" (p. 2). Researchers are elucidating how post-secondary institutions on the continent may be reforming in new ways that include

the *intentional* integration of development priorities (Johnson & Hirt, 2011; Morley, Leach, & Lugg, 2009; Winberg, 2006).

At the Fourth Annual Women's Parliament Conference in Cape Town, Africa, held in August of 2007, Anzia (2007) quoted Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as saying that "When you educate a woman, you educate a nation." A recommendation that tribes and village elders must be instructed that having their 'girl-child[ren]' educated is just as much a necessity as that of educating their young males.

Gakusi (2010) found that children and adults alike require "basic education and literacy" (p. 221). African countries are missing the link between children's education and adult education. As such, there is no 'synergy' as Gakusi put it between the adult education system which fails to support primary education and vice versa. This finds the countries dealing with literacy issues for both adults and children and youth (Gakusi, 2010). This comports with the recommendation of 'coming from behind' which can be remedied by mandating education of young females from the start together with young males.

As such, Meena (1991) stated that there is not enough recognition of the different roles men and woman have, need, and are constrained by. There is no recognition of the 'structure subordination of women to men' either. "Unequal division of labour, legal discrimination against women and abuse of women's basic human rights have been more or less ignored by policy makers and planners, despite the lip service paid to the elimination of sexual discrimination. In brief, plans and policies have not been 'gender responsive'" (Meena, 1991, p. 4). Because of the constraints that subordination places on women, women's position in society is virtually ignored in development planning,

policy making, and their 'concrete needs' and evidenced by the allocation and utilization of resources (Meena, 1991).

Conclusions

All these women have endured biases that are innate through the cultural, religious, and financial factors in varying degrees. Cultural traditions have tended to bar women from seeking education, even primary education, in certain parts of Nigeria. Patriarchal ideations are hard to overcome and change, but that is the reason why these women have sought they education that they have. It is the goal of some of these Nigerian women to help teach those younger female generations that they are entitled and have a right to education together with helping shape, formulate, and adopt national policies requiring education for all females at all levels.

The female respondents' religious beliefs were, for them personally, very enriching and supporting in dealing with the struggles of negative perceptions and repercussions in their struggle to achieve their educational goals. Their religion beliefs imbued these Nigerian women with the fortitude to overcome obstacles, hurdles, and to continue on, despite the negative perceptions that women "are nothing," "have no status," "are second class citizens," and "must be excellent in order to be considered equal." Religion though was a two-edged sword. Religion as a societal, cultural, and traditional impediment played a role in the deleterious perceptions these Nigerian women had to overcome to just be entitled to attend school as young girls.

Financial constraints were also major factors these Nigerian female respondents had to negotiate to further their educational goals. Juggling their marriage, their family, and the costs of studying in different cities than their own or different countries of their

own imposed great financial hardship on them personally as well as their families. Some of the respondents were lucky enough to have a supportive spouse and/or family, but most were struggling financially to maintain both a family life and their collegiate life.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in no particular order of importance, but are of all equal value in helping women achieve their educational goals and in providing future opportunities for women striving to participate in their own development as well as that of their community and nation. The policy recommendations come from the women participants themselves as well as this researcher's own observations and life experiences living in Nigeria.

Equalizing Educational Opportunities

From the interviews, the research here shows that higher education can serve as a veritable tool for African women and, Nigerian women specifically, for empowerment and national development. In these women's interviews, a recommendation emerged that through the placement of females in leadership positions would help the level of growth and education for women and future generations of young females in Africa today. Cultural beliefs, especially in rural and tribal areas of Nigeria, must be enlightened towards the fact that education of the women and upcoming young female generations can help in the furtherance of their community and society as a whole and to let go of the old adage that women are only "domestic capital" and subservient to men.

Also, if more women in Africa and Nigeria specifically are encouraged and provided with all the support necessary to acquire higher education, consequently there would be more females in leadership positions in the future. Equal rights and privileges

should be enjoyed by both male and female at whatever level in the world, especially in Africa, and in Nigeria as a nation. This will go a long way to promote the values of Africa and promote national unity and development.

Similarly, the equalization in educational opportunities for women will help in forging the sharing of skills together with the integration into and improving the Nigerian economy. Dauda (2007) noted that by equalizing the educational opportunities allows women to contribute more to economic development and helps reduce gender imbalances while contributing to economic progress. Women's education helps improve their own social and economic status, improves their confidence, self-worth, and increases decision-making and development on a national scale (Dauda, 2007).

If Nigeria wants to progress as a nation, it must start with educating females as well as males. This is demonstrated by the preceding interviews provided in this research of some Nigerian women in their quest to obtain higher education degrees. Through their attainment of higher education, these women have become more confident, self-supporting, and "strong" that enhance the economy and help in the development of policies that will affect future generations of women and girls in Nigerian society.

Policy Recommendations

Greater emphasis should be placed on the empowerment and improvement of the quality of lives of Nigerian women through both formal and non-formal education in order to facilitate their full integration into every aspect of the Nigerian economy. Recommendations would include more than mere lip service at the governmental level. As the narrative responses show in this research, governmental entities need to follow

through with executive policies throughout the nation to bring the education of Nigerian women into focus.

Another recommendation is that governmental mandates to educate women, especially young females from primary through to secondary educational levels, is one that is approved by the government which rural tribes and villages need to adhere to. Nigeria's domestic and societal development depends on women taking part in academic and political processes that help shape the nation and in order to do so women need to be educated. Women's opinions, concerns, and issues cannot be marginalized, trivialized, or ignored as has been the patriarchal culture to do so.

The recommendation that stereotypes of women being only 'domestic capital' must be set aside to forge new pathways for the nation of Nigeria. The concepts that pervade local, state, and national policies regarding the Nigerian woman as being related only to domestic aspirations must be overcome such that the Nigerian woman who seeks higher education should not be condemned or require permission from the male authority figure of the family in order to seek such education. Women must no longer be socially ostracized and suffer repercussions and consequences if they desire to seek further education in order to work outside the home.

There must be a concerted effort to re-educate and change the centuries' old belief of tribes and villages that women need to stay and be a wife, mother, and household caretaker to beliefs that encompass education as being beneficial to their village as a whole for its own development as well as to the nation. If the young females are not educated, there is a gap that cannot later be filled in secondary education for these

women to become educated unless there is an exhaustive effort on their part to basically 'come from behind' due to their lack of education.

Since there is a greater gap between males being educated as compared to females, special funding efforts should be made to incorporate more females into the educational programs and should be available at all levels of education. The learning environment should also ensure that females feel that they are in a safe environment to study and take part in educational activities. The curriculum must be addressed to be inclusive and relevant to both genders.

Furthermore, many research participants mentioned that most of all the government must have the courage to take on political forces and the interest groups who would rather not see females improve their status or gain in power culturally or financially. The Nigerian government must address the nation's educational policies to see that there is equitable access for all, that the educational access is mandatory, is funded properly, and that sufficient grants, scholarships and other funding becomes available for women to contribute to their nation's health, growth, and implementation of policies for the good of their community.

Religious Recommendations

Efforts must be made to reach religious leaders to encourage education for all children, not just males. Efforts also must be made to discourage sanctions and repercussions for women and young females who try to pursue educational goals for themselves, treat them with dignity, and have them be self-autonomous for the sake of society. The paradox is that you must educate the religious leaders and show that it is economical and prudent to educate females in the community as well as boys. The

education for religious leaders must include curtailing the age-old patriarchal notions that women are ‘subservient’ to men but can be productive members if given the education to do so. Eons of gender bias and behaviors must be overcome in order for religious freedoms to be enjoyed by women also.

The conflicts today in Nigeria, especially in northern Nigeria, are largely over access to political control and economic resources which are brought about by the efforts of one ethnic group to gain advantage over another. Politicians take advantage of religious factors to manipulate and to score political and socio-economic points. Since most people are described as a ‘common people,’ they are convinced that the solution to the socio-economic ills of Nigeria lies in their religion, for instance, the two major religions in Nigeria—Islam and Christianity. The Muslims see *shari’a* as a religious right and duty but also as their only hope for a better tomorrow. Since independence in 1960, religion has played an important role in denying access to education, political participation as well as to economic empowerment for women.

Updating educational policies and eradicating the religious ideations that females are not to be educated should move from the past towards implementing policies creating a valid and effective quality education at all levels. Creating the physical structures of learning and providing safe environments for quality education, especially for women, will encourage good results. Accountability is very important. This can all be possible by true assessment and implementing strategies that will provide accurate data based on demographics without bias for both genders in the country and Africa at large (Dauda, 2007). In this way, it will show religious leaders and various tribal leaders that religion restricting education for women is not in the best interests of Nigeria.

Outreach educational initiatives must be taken up by the government and taken to the tribal and rural regions of Nigeria so that community elders understand the importance of educating the females of their community as well as the males. In order to enhance a prosperous nation, the rural communities should help to educate the women and young females as well as the males. It will foster cooperation in helping address community concerns and help in achieving greater status for women overall.

Financial Recommendations

With the narrative research as the background foundation, it would be recommended to the Nigerian government and other African countries to mandate that education be available and lawfully required for all children—boys and girls alike—and have financial resources available to families to do so. There must be governmental efforts to shift the tide of sentiment in educating only male children, not only for the future of the Nigerian nation, but for Africa's continued reformation in utilizing the global economy to help foster national progress. In this way, it will help develop the nation of Nigeria as a whole and add to the political processes more and more to bring about changes, both economically and developmentally for Nigeria.

Financial resources for scholarships and free education should be made available to young females throughout the country in order to secure their primary and secondary education, and for women seeking to gain advanced degrees. Since African women on the whole and Nigerian women particularly have been discriminated against in the past, it is incumbent for the governments, business institutions and academic facilities to adopt programmes which promote and accommodate females in the educational path together with heeding women in academia who have forged those hard-fought pathways already.

The participants mentioned the difficulty in obtaining the financing to pursue their educational goals. Several participants mentioned the subsistence level of living that they had to endure. It would be fair to say that both men and women are concerned about the socio-economic poverty in their country particularly in the far northern part of Nigeria and thus try to find ways to overcome such poverty. Not only should financial resources be used to reach out to rural and tribal communities in changing the idea that females should also be educated as well as males, but financial resources needs to be set aside specifically for women to fill the gap for women representatives in both national government and at administrative institutional levels nationally.

Policy implications must also incorporate ‘gender responsiveness’ rather than ‘gender blindness.’ An example of gender imbalance lies in the fact that women’s role is evident in supplying the biggest majority of the farming productivity in terms of labor but yet women are not allowed to own the land they work on. Men are allowed to own the land with very little human labor expended. This negates women’s access to acquire loans and become a vital part of the economy

It is also recommended that resources are sent to progress primary education for young Nigerian females and actively sustain that development. It becomes incumbent upon the nations to plan also for secondary and tertiary development also. History shows that secondary education has been neglected for far too long. Evoh (2007) reiterated this, saying that “Secondary education is of strategic importance to Africa’s development and capacity building, particularly because students of secondary school age and young people in general make up more than 60% of the population of Africa” (p. 64) (as cited in Akoojee & McGrath, 2005; Bregman, & Stallmeister, 2002; Lewin, 2004)

Unfortunately, many African countries are unable to meet the increasing demand for secondary education due to their inability to build on the successes of the universal primary education system.

Another voice that added to the call for women's empowerment is Hormats (2010) who explained that "There are few better ways to empower women—particularly in Africa—than investing in their education" (para. 4). Hormats feels that countries that promote girls' education experience higher rates of employment, higher wages, and lower maternal and child mortality. Better health, better jobs, and better businesses are all easier goals to reach when government has the priority of getting girls in schools and giving them a good education in Africa—and around the world (Hormats, 2010).

In conclusion, access to free education should be provided from primary and secondary to higher education of learning especially for exceptionally brilliant girls in the country. Likewise, there's a need to organize enlightenment campaigns, create awareness and education for Nigerian women and children towards their educational illiteracy, deal with poverty, and derive the benefits of women's empowerment. Policies and programmes should be constantly remaining consistent as they reflect the universal view of all genders in the country. This should be done in view of taking into consideration views of women in strategic planning of the education system in the country. Funds are to be evenly distributed with huge amounts given to education so that sufficient skills will be promoted and supported.

Women must be given a voice, not only through encouragement, but in the decision-making policies that affect everyone. Programmes should be offered to those who wish to pursue higher educational opportunities. In this way, Nigerian women

wanting to meet that challenge can do so without the cultural stigma that currently marginalizes them from the rest of their families and community. There must be a concerted effort to get the word out at the very basic level, both rural and urban, that girls need education both now and in the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

University of North Dakota Human Subjects Review Form

All research with human participants conducted by faculty, staff, and students associated with the University of North Dakota, must be reviewed and approved as prescribed by the University's policies and procedures governing the use of human subjects. It is the intent of the University of North Dakota (UND), through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Research Development and Compliance (RD&C), to assist investigators engaged in human subject research to conduct their research along ethical guidelines reflecting professional as well as community standards. The University has an obligation to ensure that all research involving human subjects meets regulations established by the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). When completing the Human Subjects Review Form, use the "IRB Checklist" for additional guidance.

Please provide the information requested below:

Principal Investigator: Vincent Bulus

Telephone: 701-215-1681

E-mail Address: vincent.bulus@und.edu

Complete Mailing Address: Dept. of Educational Leadership Dakota Hall Rm. 122; 231 Centennial Dr., Stop 7189 Grand Forks, ND 58202

School/College: College of Education & Human Development Department: Educational Leadership

Student Adviser (if applicable): Dr. Gary Schnellert

Telephone: 701-777-3584

E-mail Address: gary.schnellert@und.nodak.edu

Address or Box #: Dakota Hall 231 Centennial Dr., Stop 7189, Grand Forks, ND 58202

School/College: College of Education & Human Development Department: Educational Leadership

Project Title: Narratives of Nigerian Women pursuing Higher Education in Western Universities

Proposed Project Dates: Beginning Date: Fall 2010

Completion Date: Dec. 2012

(Including data analysis)

Funding agencies supporting this research: None at this time

Did the contract with the funding entity go through UND Grants and Contracts Administration? YES

or NO

Attach a copy of the contract. Do not include any budgetary information. The IRB will not be able to review the study without a copy of the contract with the funding agency.

Does any researcher associated with this project have an economic interest in the research, or act as an officer or a director of any outside entity whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by the research? If yes, submit on a separate piece of paper an additional explanation of the financial interest. The Principal Investigator and any researcher associated with this project should have a Financial Interests Disclosure Document on file with their department.

YES or NO

YES or NO Will another organization (ex., hospitals, schools, YMCA) help in the recruitment of research subjects, or will assistance with the data collection be obtained from another organization?

If yes, list all institutions: N/A

Letters from each organization must accompany this proposal. Each letter must illustrate that the organization understands their involvement in that study, and agrees to participate in the study. Letters must include the name and title of the individual signing the letter and should be printed on letterhead.

Does any external site where the research will be conducted have its own IRB? YES NO N/A

If yes, does the external site plan to rely on UND's IRB for approval of this study? YES NO N/A
(If yes, contact the UND IRB at 701 777-4279 for additional requirements)

If your project has been or will be submitted to other IRBs, list those Boards below, along with the status of each proposal.

N/A _____ Date submitted: _____ Status: Approved Pending
 _____ Date submitted: _____ Status: Approved Pending

(include the name and address of the IRB, contact person at the IRB, and a phone number for that person)

Type of Project: Check "Yes" or "No" for each of the following.

- YES or NO New Project YES or NO Dissertation/Thesis/Independent Study
- YES or NO Continuation/Renewal YES or NO Student Research Project
- YES or NO Is this a Protocol Change for previously approved project? If yes, submit a signed copy of this form with the changes bolded or highlighted.
- YES or NO Does your project involve abstracting medical record information? If yes, complete the HIPAA Compliance Application and submit it with this form.
- YES or NO Does your project include Genetic Research?

Subject Classification: This study will involve subjects who are in the following special populations: Check all that apply.

- Children (< 18 years) UND Students
- Prisoners Pregnant Women/Fetuses
- Cognitively impaired persons or persons unable to consent
- Other Nigerian women all who have earned their Ph.D. _____

Please use appropriate checklist when children, prisoners, pregnant women, or people who are unable to consent will be involved in the research.

This study will involve: Check all that apply.

- Deception (Attach Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Requirements) Stem Cells
- Radiation Discarded Tissue
- New Drugs (IND) IND # _____ Attach Approval Fetal Tissue
- Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) # _____ Attach Approval Human Blood or Fluids
- Non-approved Use of Drug(s) Other _____
- None of the above will be involved in this study

I. Project Overview

Please provide a brief explanation (limit to 200 words or less) of the rationale and purpose of the study, introduction of any sponsor(s) of the study, and justification for use of human subjects and/or special populations (e.g., vulnerable populations such as children, prisoners, pregnant women/fetuses).

II. Protocol Description

Please provide a succinct description of the procedures to be used by addressing the instructions under each of the following categories.

1. Subject Selection.

- a) Describe recruitment procedures (i.e., how subjects will be recruited, who will recruit them, where and when they will be recruited and for how long) and include copies of any advertisements, fliers, etc., that will be used to recruit subjects.
The imbalance of opportunities for access to higher education, the lack of prospects of employment in governmental positions because of gender bias, and the definition of women primarily as mothers in Nigerian society drive women to travel abroad to Western Universities in pursuit of higher education. The overall purpose of this study is to ascertain the primary challenges and actual experiences of 40 Nigerian women regarding their educational pursuits, and to share these insights with other aspiring African female leaders in an attempt to overcome the barriers and challenges faced by their predecessors.
- b) Describe your subject selection procedures and criteria, paying special attention to the rationale for including subjects from any of the categories listed in the "Subject Classification" section above.
It is a special area of interest because it is my native country and my past cultural experience in working with women in higher education for the past 17 years in my country
- c) Describe your exclusionary criteria and provide a rationale for excluding subject categories.
I want to explore national and international educational policies as they apply to socioeconomic development of the disadvantaged. I want to understand ways and strategies to combat stereotypes, misconceptions, and restrictive attitudes that are often internalized by the vulnerable groups such as women, minority tribes, and people with disabilities who are women also.
- d) Describe the estimated number of subjects that will participate and the rationale for using that number of subjects.
The number of subjects will be 40 Ph.D. Nigerian female faculty and others in government positions in the country of Nigeria. This number was chosen to have a vast in-depth understanding of their true experiences while they were still obtaining their degree and the challenges that they are still having as women in Nigeria and women in higher education within the universities, government centers, and the corporate world.
- e) Specify the potential for valid results. If you have used a power analysis to determine the number of subjects, describe your method.
This is valid because it is one-on-one interviews and that will give me access to authentic information and factual results because it is in their voice and coming directly from the subjects.

2. Description of Methodology.

- a) Describe the procedures used to obtain informed consent.
A written informed consent form will be presented to each subject to be read and signed at the time of the interview.
- b) Describe where the research will be conducted. Document the resources and facilities to be used to carry out the proposed research. Please note staffing, funding, and space available to conduct this research.
Research interviews will take place in various universities and government offices in the country of Nigeria.
- c) Indicate who will carry out the research procedures.
Vincent Bulus
- d) Briefly describe the procedures and techniques to be used and the amount of time that is required by the subjects to complete them.

Research procedures will be one-on-one interviews digitally recorded. Time of interviews will range from 1 to 2 hours per subject.

- e) Describe audio/visual procedures and proper disposal of tapes.
Since I am an international student and a Catholic priest who is involved in confidential counseling, audio tape recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet for 3 years in my faculty advisor's office (Dr. Gary Schnellert) at the University of North Dakota. After 3 years, all recordings, correspondence and research will be destroyed.
- f) Describe the qualifications of the individuals conducting all procedures used in the study.
I am a graduate student at UND in good standing. I am also a Catholic priest and in this capacity am involved in confidential counseling as clergy. I have completed my course work and am currently working on my dissertation towards my graduation by 2012. I am Nigerian and an adult learner. I've had extensive experience in working with women in Europe, Asia, America and Africa.
- g) Describe compensation procedures (payment or class credit for the subjects, etc.).
This research is for my own class credit and the subjects are volunteering to have their voice heard by contributing to this research.

Attachments Necessary: Copies of all instruments (such as survey/interview questions, data collection forms completed by subjects, etc.) must be attached to this proposal.

3. Risk Identification.

- a) Clearly describe the anticipated risks to the subject/others including any physical, emotional, and financial risks that might result from this study.
We anticipate no risk to the subjects, minimal or otherwise.
- b) Indicate whether there will be a way to link subject responses and/or data sheets to consent forms, and if so, what the justification is for having that link.
No link is anticipated.
- c) Provide a description of the data monitoring plan for all research that involves greater than minimal risk.
N/A
- d) If the PI will be the lead-investigator for a multi-center study, or if the PI's organization will be the lead site in a multi-center study, include information about the management of information obtained in multi-site research that might be relevant to the protection of research participants, such as unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others, interim results, or protocol modifications.
N/A

4. Subject Protection.

- a) Describe precautions you will take to minimize potential risks to the subjects (e.g., sterile conditions, informing subjects that some individuals may have strong emotional reactions to the procedures, debriefing, etc.).
No risk is anticipated.
- b) Describe procedures you will implement to protect confidentiality and privacy of participants (such as coding subject data, removing identifying information, reporting data in aggregate form, not violating a participant's space, not intruding where one is not welcome or trusted, not observing or recording what people expect not to be public, etc.). If participants who are likely to be vulnerable to coercion and undue influence are to be included in the research, define provisions to protect the privacy and interests of these participants and additional safeguards implemented to protect the rights and welfare of these participants.

Consent will be obtained from the subjects and where they will feel comfortable to conduct the interview. It will be in a safe and secure area to insure subject confidentiality. Subjects will remain anonymous through alpha-numeric designations.

- c) Indicate that the subject will be provided with a copy of the consent form and how this will be done.
 A printed hard copy of the Informed Consent provision will be provided to the subject prior to the interview taking place so that should they have any questions or concerns, they can immediately get answers from the principal investigator.
- d) Describe the protocol regarding record retention. Please indicate that research data from this study and consent forms will both be retained in separate locked locations for a minimum of three years following the completion of the study. Describe:
- 1) the storage location of the research data (separate from consent forms and subject personal data)
 - 2) who will have access to the data
 - 3) how the data will be destroyed
 - 4) the storage location of consent forms and personal data (separate from research data)
 - 5) how the consent forms will be destroyed
- 1) Storage of the research data will be in the faculty advisor's office located at the Department of Educational Leadership presently located in Dakota Hall, Rm. 122, 231 Centennial Drive, Stop 7189, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, 58202.
 - 2) Access to this data will be the principal investigator (myself), my faculty advisor, and the transcriptionist who will have access just to the recordings from the interviews.
 - 3) Data will be destroyed through incineration.
 - 4) Since I am an international student, my faculty advisor (Dr. Gary Schnellert) will keep consent forms, personal data, and research data in his locked office cabinet.
 - 5) Consent forms will be destroyed through incineration or shredding the documents.
- e) Describe procedures to deal with adverse reactions (referrals to helping agencies, procedures for dealing with trauma, etc.).
 No medical issues are expected for this research.
- f) Include an explanation of medical treatment available if injury or adverse reaction occurs and responsibility for costs involved.
 None.

III. Benefits of the Study

Clearly describe the benefits to the subject and to society resulting from this study (such as learning experiences, services received, etc.). **Please note:** extra credit and/or payment are not benefits and should be listed in the Protocol Description section under Methodology.

This project will give me access to factors of educational achievement that then can be used to help other women to achieve higher levels of education.

IV. Consent Form

Clearly describe the consent process and be sure to include the following information:

- 1) The person who will conduct the consent interview
- 2) The person who will provide consent or permission
- 3) Any waiting period between informing the prospective participant and obtaining consent
- 4) Steps taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence
- 5) The language to be used by those obtaining consent
- 6) The language understood by the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative
- 7) The information to be communicated to the prospective participant or the legally authorized representative

- 1) The principal investigator, Vincent Bulus, will conduct the consent interview.
- 2) The subjects will provide consent/permission.
- 3) No waiting period.
- 4) Participants have been contacted by my Bishop in Nigeria and have accepted to be a prospective participant.
- 5) English.
- 6) English.
- 7) Information provided to subject is date and time of interview prearranged; principal investigator will provide hard copy of Implied Consent, and will proceed with interview questions.

A copy of the consent form must be attached to this proposal. If no consent form is to be used, document the procedures to be used to protect human subjects, and complete the Application for Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Requirements. Refer to form IC 701-A, Informed Consent Checklist, and make sure that all the required elements are included. **Please note:** All records attained must be retained for a period of time sufficient to meet federal, state, and local regulations; sponsor requirements; and organizational policies. The consent form must be written in language that can easily be read by the subject population and any use of jargon or technical language should be avoided. **The consent form should be written at no higher than an 8th grade reading level**, and it is recommended that it be written in the third person (please see the example on the RD&C website). A two inch by two inch blank space must be left on the bottom of each page of the consent form for the IRB approval stamp.

Necessary attachments:

- Signed Student Consent to Release of Educational Record Form (students only);
- Investigator Letter of Assurance of Compliance;
- Consent form, or Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Requirements (Form IC 702-B)
- Surveys, interview questions, etc. (if applicable);
- Printed web screens (if survey is over the Internet); and
- Advertisements.

By signing below, you are verifying that the information provided in the Human Subjects Review Form and attached information is accurate and that the project will be completed as indicated.

Signatures:

(Principal Investigator)	Date:
(Student Adviser)	Date:

Requirements for submitting proposals: Additional information can be found on the IRB web site at www.und.nodak.edu/dept/orpd/regucomm/IRB/index.html.

Original Proposals and all attachments should be submitted to: Institutional Review Board, 264 Centennial Drive Stop 7134, Grand Forks, ND 58202-7134, or brought to Room 106, Twamley Hall.

Prior to receiving IRB approval, researchers must complete the required IRB human subjects' education. Please go to <http://www.und.edu/dept/rdc/regucomm/IRB/IRBEducation.htm> for more information.

The criteria for determining what category your proposal will be reviewed under is listed on page 3 of the IRB Checklist. Your reviewer will assign a review category to your proposal. Should your protocol require full Board review, you will need to provide additional copies. Further information can be found on the IRB website regarding required copies and IRB review categories, or you may call the IRB office at 701 777-4279.

In cases where the proposed work is part of a proposal to a potential funding source, one copy of the completed proposal to the funding agency (agreement/contract if there is no proposal) must be attached to the completed Human Subjects Review Form if the proposal is non-clinical; 5 copies if the proposal is clinical-medical. If the proposed work is being conducted for a pharmaceutical company, 5 copies of the company's protocol must be provided.

**INVESTIGATOR LETTER OF ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE
WITH ALL APPLICABLE FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

I _____
(Name of Investigator)

agree that, in conducting research under the approval of the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board, I will fully comply and assume responsibility for the enforcement of compliance with all applicable federal regulations and University policies for the protection of the rights of human subjects engaged in research. Specific regulations include the Federal Common Rule for Protection of the Rights of Human Subjects 45 CFR 46. I will also assure compliance to the ethical principles set forth in the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research document, The Belmont Report.

I understand the University's policies concerning research involving human subjects and agree to the following:

1. Should I wish to make changes in the approved protocol for this project, I will submit them for review PRIOR to initiating the changes. (A proposal may be changed without prior IRB approval where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects or others. However, the IRB must be notified in writing within 72 hours of any change, and IRB review is required at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the full IRB.)
2. If any problems involving human subjects occur, I will immediately notify the Chair of the IRB, or the IRB Coordinator.
3. I will cooperate with the UND IRB by submitting Research Project Review and Progress Reports in a timely manner.

I understand the failure to do so may result in the suspension or termination of proposed research and possible reporting to federal agencies.

Investigator Signature

Date

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: As of June 4, 1997 (based on the recommendation of UND Legal Counsel) the University of North Dakota IRB is unable to approve your project unless the following "Student Consent to Release of Educational Record" is signed and included with your "Human Subjects Review Form."

STUDENT CONSENT TO RELEASE OF EDUCATIONAL RECORD¹

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I hereby consent to the Institutional Review Board's access to those portions of my educational record which involve research that I wish to conduct under the Board's auspices. I understand that the Board may need to review my study data based on a question from a participant or under a random audit. The study to which this release pertains is Narratives of Nigerian Women pursuing Higher Education in Western Universities.

I understand that such information concerning my educational record will not be released except on the condition that the Institutional Review Board will not permit any other party to have access to such information without my written consent. I also understand that this policy will be explained to those persons requesting any educational information and that this release will be kept with the study documentation.

ID #

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Student Researcher

¹Consent required by 20 U.S.C. 1232g.

Appendix B

INFORMAL INTERVIEW AND EXPLORATORY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe your social and academic background.
2. Why did you choose to go for further studies abroad?
3. What motivated you?
4. What obstacles (Familial, cultural, societal) did you encounter upon deciding to come to the United States?
5. How did you deal and continue to deal with the obstacles?
6. What changes did you experience in your life?
7. What are your educational aspirations and opportunities at home in your country?
8. What implications did your decisions about going away from home for an extended period of time have on your life as a woman, your family, and the society in general?
9. What alternatives do women in Nigeria have in matters related to education?
10. What are your perceptions about the status of women in Nigeria?
11. Why do you think this is so?
12. What do you think needs to be done to address the issue of women's education in Nigeria?
13. How did you experience the different culture in the United States?
14. What was your most challenging moment?
15. What was your most transformative experience?
16. What do you expect to be the major challenges when you go back to Nigeria?

Appendix C

Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota

INFORMED CONSENT

Narratives of African/Nigerian Women Pursuing Higher Education in Western Universities – A doctoral dissertation by Vincent Bulus

Dear Participant:

I would like to request your cooperation in the conduct of a study entitled ‘Narratives of Nigerian Women Pursuing Higher Education in Western Universities.’ Thank you for accepting my request to participate in my research. You will be participating in an informal in-depth interview to explore your personal experience in your pursuit for higher education abroad. The information I need will be used for my dissertation for my doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration. This will be read by the dissertation committee and other faculty members at the University of North Dakota located in Grand Forks, North Dakota, United States.

If you should decide to continue with your participation, a one hour in-depth interview will be conducted using a digital tape recorder. Follow-up interviews to clarify issues in the study will be planned when necessary. Your participation is voluntary and as a participant you may ask any questions about the research process and method, review information in the written portion of the study, and negotiate any changes with the researcher prior to the completion of the study.

I, Hassan Vincent Bulus, as the principal researcher, will be available for any questions at the time of this interview and afterwards should you wish to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279. Please call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone else.

Any information that is obtained during the course of the interview for this research study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your (the participant’s) permission and consent. Real names and other forms of identification that may reveal job place, location, or facilitate in the identification of you the participant will not be used at any time in the study. Special permission to use anecdotes and direct quotes from the qualitative data obtained is needed from you the participant. You have the right to withdraw at any time from the research, for any reason, and the data will be returned upon request. Your withdrawal or refusal to participate will not result in any penalty against you. The research data, surveys and recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet for three (3) years in the office of my faculty advisor, Dr. Gary Schnellert, at Dakota Hall, Room 122, 231 Centennial Drive, Stop 7189, Grand Forks, North Dakota, USA, 58203.

Possible risk factors from your participation in this research study are minimal. However, should you feel at any time that you are experiencing any type of emotional distress or trauma in recalling or relating your experience during or after your interview, I will be available for counseling. Confidentiality and your anonymity as a participant are of utmost importance to me as a researcher, and if you feel that your well-being, work position or identity are being compromised or pose a risk by your cooperation in this study, again you may withdraw your participation at any time. The potential benefits of your participation

will be giving voice and encouragement to Nigerian women in the future who can find encouragement in your narrative experience for this research when it becomes published.

If you agree to participate in this research work according to the preceding terms, please sign below. Thank you so much for your participation and time.

_____ **I do not grant permission to be directly identified in this research.**

_____ **I do grant permission to be directly identified in this research.**

Vincent Bulus (Principal Investigator)
Tel: 701-215-1681 email Vincent.bulus@und.edu
Address: 580 Carleton Ct #115.
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Participant Survey

PARTICIPANT SURVEY FOR STUDY OF

CODE: _____

'NARRATIVES OF NIGERIAN WOMEN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION IN WESTERN UNIVERSITIES'

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey below:

- 1) My age is: ___ 25 and under ___ 25-35 ___ 36-49 ___ 50 – 60 ___ 60 and over
- 2) My present employment status: ___ Full-time ___ Part-time ___ Not employed ___ Retired ___ Not employed but actively looking for work
- 3) My degree is a (n): ___ Bachelor's ___ Master's ___ Ph.D.
- 4) I obtained my higher education degree in: (Please select all that apply)
___ Europe ___ United Kingdom ___ Far East ___ Middle East
___ Australia ___ United States ___ Canada ___ Asia ___ Africa
- 5) I am: ___ Married ___ Single ___ Religious ___ never married
___ Divorced ___ engaged to be married
- 6) I have _____ (number) of members in my immediate family.
- 7) I have: ___ (number) children ___ no children ___ currently pregnant
- 8) I live in: _____ (city, state, Country, Continent).
- 9) My Religion/Faith Tradition is: _____
- 10) What age did you start: ___ primary school? ___ junior secondary school?
___ senior secondary school? ___ vocational/technical school
___ college of education? ___ polytechnic school? ___ university?
- 11) Who encouraged you to pursue your career and/or dream for higher education?
(Please check all that apply.)
___ My parents ___ My Father ___ My Mother ___ My siblings
___ Relatives ___ Friends ___ Clergy ___ Business associates
___ My Teacher ___ My government ___ Missionaries ___ Nuns
___ Moral values ___ Societal values ___ Personal experience

12) If there is anything that you would change in Nigerian higher education what would it be? (Please check all that apply.)

- Policies Accessibility Scholarship/Financial aid
 Family Support Educational Facilities Curriculum
 Building structures Personnel Faculty Assessment
 Government control/bureaucracy

13) What did the role of religion play or exercise in your decision in your pursuit of your higher education goals? Major Average High Low None at all

14) What are the motivating factors that keeps you focused on pursuing your dreams from secondary school to higher education? (Please check all that apply.)

- My parents My Father My Mother My siblings
 Relatives Friends Clergy Business associates
 My Teacher My government Missionaries Religious/Nuns
 Moral values Societal values Personal experience

15) In obtaining my higher education degree, the following people were proud of me for accomplishing my dreams, careers and goals: (Please check all that apply.)

- Husband Parents In-laws Friends Children
 Other relatives Clergy Missionaries Religious/Nuns

16) The level of motivation to obtaining my higher education degree by mission schools was: Major Average High Low None at all

17) The level of motivation to obtaining my higher education degree by government schools was: Major Average High Low None at all

18) The level of motivation to obtaining my higher education degree by public schools was: Major Average High Low None at all

19) The level of motivation to obtaining my higher education degree by private schools was: Major Average High Low None at all

Please circle and answer the following questions regarding your experiences with your pursuit in obtaining a higher education degree abroad as to whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral(3), Disagree (4), or Strongly Disagree(5).

By obtaining my higher education degree.....		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20	I have been able to have a positive impact on Nigerian society	1	2	3	4	5

21	I am a positive role model for other women	1	2	3	4	5
22	I have made enormous sacrifices.	1	2	3	4	5
23	My family has been adversely affected while studying for my degree.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I have had a positive impact on my family.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I felt that the culture in Nigeria was trying to keep me from obtaining my goal	1	2	3	4	5
26	I feel that religious factors in Nigeria tried to hinder me from this process	1	2	3	4	5
27	My family discouraged me	1	2	3	4	5
28	I am respected and listened to in my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
29	My opinions are still disregarded because I am female.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I fear that I may suffer repercussions by taking part in this research.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I feel the political climate in Nigeria discourages women from obtaining this goal	1	2	3	4	5
32	I feel that men in Nigeria discourage women in pursuing my higher education degree	1	2	3	4	5
33	I can have a positive global impact.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I will be in a strategic position to influence government policies positively	1	2	3	4	5
35	I will create more awareness of educational obstacles for women	1	2	3	4	5

By obtaining my higher education degree.....		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36	I will make a huge difference	1	2	3	4	5
37	I will be more equipped to speak for voiceless	1	2	3	4	5
38	I will be in a better position to create resilience obtain their higher educational goals for future generations.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I am in a better position to find ways to create access for women to reach out to fulfill their potential.	1	2	3	4	5
40	My husband is proud of me for reaching my goals	1	2	3	4	5
41	My children are proud of me for reaching my goals	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E

Map of Nigeria



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