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Domestic Chores on the Educational Leadership Aspirations of Young Wives in Cameroon

¹Rita Mbateh Mengyentoh, ²Frederick Ebot Ashu, ³Peter Tambi Agborbechem

¹Doctoral Researcher, Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea. | ²Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon President of the Cameroon Council for Educational leadership and Management Society (CCELMS) | ³Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Abstract

This study investigated the impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon. It aims to understand how traditional gender roles and household responsibilities affect women's pursuit of education. Utilizing a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 384 married women residing in Buea, Douala, and Bamenda, who had been married for less than ten years. A structured questionnaire was employed to assess participants' experiences regarding domestic chores and their educational leadership aspirations. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, were conducted using SPSS. Results indicate a significant negative correlation between domestic chores and educational leadership aspirations ($r = -0.336$, $p < 0.01$). Although a majority (83.7%) of respondents expressed optimism about pursuing higher education, domestic responsibilities, particularly related to meal preparation and child care, were identified as barriers that limit their study time and energy. While young wives in Cameroon demonstrated strong educational leadership aspirations, their domestic roles significantly hinder their ability to pursue these goals. The study delved the need for cultural shifts in gender roles and increased support for women. The study recommended promoting shared domestic responsibilities, enhancing support systems for young wives, developing flexible educational programs, conducting awareness campaigns on the importance of education, and advocating for policy interventions that assist in balancing domestic chores with educational leadership aspirations.

Keywords: Domestic chores, educational leadership aspirations, young wives, Cameroon

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Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in fostering and maintaining the growth and development of individuals and society as a whole (Spiel et al., 2018). The impact of education determines the progress and quality of life of people globally (Coetzee, 2023). It not only helps individuals achieve significant success but also enhances their confidence and equips them to tackle life's challenges effectively while shaping a well-rounded personality. However, attaining these outcomes is contingent upon having sufficient educational leadership aspirations especially given the numerous obstacles in the process.

Educational leadership aspirations, defined as the desires and plans individuals hold for their future educational attainment, are critical drivers of personal growth and societal advancement (Alam & Education, 2018). These leadership aspirations influence life choices, shape trajectories, and contribute to broader social and economic progress (Huijsmans et al., 2021). For women, particularly in developing countries, education has been linked to improved health outcomes (Hahn & Truman, 2015), enhanced economic opportunities (Cerf, 2023), and empowerment within their communities (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Despite these transformative benefits, young wives in Cameroon face substantial obstacles to pursuing their educational goals (Meungwe, 2015), with domestic chores emerging as a significant barrier (Aki, 2019; Nkafu Policy Institute, 2020).

Traditional gender roles in Cameroon assign a disproportionate share of household labor to women, a burden that intensifies after marriage (Sikod, 2007). This includes responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, and caregiving, which significantly constrain young wives' time and energy for education (Samtleben & Müller, 2022). Research shows that these unequal expectations not only limit women's opportunities to engage in formal education (Miao et al., 2023) but also reinforce gendered power dynamics that perpetuate cycles of inequality (Dhiman, 2023). The concept of "domestic chores" also known as household chores or housework, encompass the routine tasks and responsibilities involved in maintaining a home and its occupants' well-being. These tasks include cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and other activities essential for a functional and comfortable living environment. The burden of domestic chores, often compounded by financial pressures due to its unpaid nature (Seedat & Rondon, 2021) and limited support systems, places young wives in a condition of "time poverty" (Seedat & Rondon, 2021), (Zacharias et al., 2012) and (Rodgers, 2024). This phenomenon, where excessive household

responsibilities leave little or no discretionary time, significantly impacts women's ability to pursue secondary or tertiary education (Fatoki & Kobiowu, 2015). The challenge is particularly acute in rural areas, where access to educational resources and infrastructure is often lacking (Chakanika et al., 2012). These constraints top the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the systemic factors hindering young wives' educational progress (Brobbe, 2021).

Domestic responsibilities do not merely impose physical demands but also create psychological stress that affects academic performance and motivation (Adedeji, Segun Olugbenga, 2011). Societal expectations within patriarchal households often prioritize a young wife's role as a homemaker over her aspirations as a student (Zhang et al., 2024) and Nkafu Policy Institute, 2021). This tension accentuates the critical importance of reexamining cultural norms and structural inequalities that hinder women's empowerment through education (Brobbe, 2021).

The intersection of domestic chores and educational aspirations among young wives has been a subject of interest in family and gender studies. In his study, (Wang, 2024) observed that although the gender gap in household chores like cooking and cleaning narrowed due to increased male participation and reduced female involvement, women still carried a disproportionate burden, especially in child care. This imbalance, coupled with multitasking and rigid schedules, limits women's time and energy to pursue educational goals.

Research indicated persistent inequalities in household labor. Studies have revealed that despite women comprising over half of Europe's student population, they hold fewer than 15% of full professorships due to barriers like domestic responsibilities (Alshdiefat et al., 2024). Similarly, others have attributed the continued gendered division of labor to factors like gender roles, employment, and life cycle stages, emphasizing its impact on women's well-being, relationships, and

aspirations. Domestic chores are universally time-consuming (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018), which found that the average woman spends 2,175 days on household chores over a lifetime (Adedeji, Segun Olugbenga, 2011). Cooking, washing clothes, and cleaning are particularly demanding (Wei et al., 2018). Despite some male involvement, traditional African households and other settings still predominantly allocate these tasks to women reflecting deep-rooted cultural norms.

The stress caused by unequal chore allocation can harm marital harmony, with Stritof (2022) emphasizing that unresolved disagreements over chores are a major source of conflict, second only to financial disputes. However, structured chore lists, as suggested by Bungalow (2022), can streamline household management and reduce conflicts.

This study employs a multifaceted theoretical framework to analyse the impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon. Role Theory by Robert Merton (1957) was adopted for this study as it offers insights into the societal norms and expectations that shape individuals' behaviors and interactions. According to the theory, roles are context-specific, constructed by social norms, and play a significant part in defining responsibilities and behaviors. These roles often reflect societal values and priorities, influencing how individuals allocate their time and effort. In the context of this article, Role Theory is particularly relevant in understanding how traditional gender roles in Cameroon disproportionately assign household responsibilities to young wives, thereby constraining their educational aspirations. These roles, viewed as essential and legitimate within the societal framework, often prioritize domestic duties over personal development goals, such as pursuing education. Furthermore, the theory reveals how social rewards and sanctions enforce compliance with these roles, reinforcing the idea that a wife's primary role is that of a homemaker rather than a student. This societal expectation exacerbates "time

poverty" leaving young wives with limited opportunities to engage in academic pursuits.

Objective of the Study

In order to carry out a successful study, the researchers were able to bring out the main objective of this study is to explore the impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon.

Research Question

The main objective has been coined into the main research question is as follows:

- i) How do domestic chores affect the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon?

Research Hypothesis

A main hypothesis has been formulated to provide a tentative answer to the main research question. One hypothesis has been formulated to provide tentative answers to the main research question of the study so as to keep the research process scientific and focused. According to Ranjit, 2016, the hypothesis enhances the objectivity of the study.

Main Null Hypothesis (Ho)

Ha1: There is a significant impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon.

Ho1: There is no significant impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon.

Justification of the Study

It is necessary for a study like this to be carried out so as to add value to the quality of education and young married women outcomes in Cameroon. This is because

domestic chores is a concern; women are especially likely to anticipate household needs and notice potential problems before they become actual problems (Daming, 2021). This study is necessary because a lady wishing to get into marriage or any young wife who wishes to attain her academic dream needs to understand the need to better plan as far as domestic chores are concerned. The justification for the choice of young wives is because at the early stage of marriage, a lot of young wives find it very hard to balance home, education and leadership and, as the days unfold, the responsibilities increase and to an extent weighs them on one side. This work will help make suggestions on how to overcome these challenges so they can also lead their kids and other women into achieving their own dreams.

Significance of the Study

This study is beneficial to parents will be more intentional about the educational lives of their children and educate their daughters on the importance of planning their lives in such a way that education and marriage comes at their appropriate places. Parents will also educate their boys to see the need to educate their wives if possible. Lastly, parents will come to terms with the fact that giving out their daughter into marriage does not mean an end to their academic and career dreams as they can also support the child in achieving her dreams while in marriage in the capacity of their dreams.

The study can therefore serve as a source of information or guide to young couples on how to better plan their lives and meet their aspirations. It is obvious that when things are not going on well in the home and there is misunderstanding or clashes between the husband and wife, it may affect the study and work life of the lady and vice versa. Ndayambaje et al (2002) carried out research on the impact of family conflict on the children's education and, the findings indicated that the prevailing factors of family conflicts in the region are miscommunication,

mismanagement of family property, irresponsibility, and infidelity. Moreover, the majority of children of the respondents are swiftly heading to very low academic performance compared to their school achievements prior to facing the issue. If the academic performance of the children can be negatively impacted due to family conflict, then wives will perform worst if she constantly faces misunderstanding with her husband.

Furthermore, this study is important to school administrators as it will help them to better understand the challenges young mothers face while schooling and leading departments or institutions so as know how best to manage and accommodate them. It is important administrators to know this and bear with young mothers who may miss out on carrying out a certain task because of the work load at home.

Furthermore, this work will help husbands to understand that most women have educational and career aspirations and so, marriage should not be an obstacle on their path to the top. They will better understand the challenges that pregnancy, childrearing and child raising pose a serious challenge to the educational and work lives of their wives and see how they can better assist to help lighten the burden on them. Husbands will understand better the value of a peaceful relationship between couples and how it can influence the educational and work life of their wives. After reading this work, husbands will understand the need to allocate resources for their wives to pursue their academic dreams. Lastly, through this work, husbands will understand how best to help their wives out with domestic chores.

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited in terms of content, geographical, theoretically and methodological scope. In terms of content, this study is limited to educational and leadership aspirations of young wives in

Cameroon with focus on the impact of domestic management. The independent variable is domestic chores. The dependent variable is educational and leadership aspirations with factors such as: perception of school and courses, attitudes to school, academic achievement, importance attributed to school and career choice, sex stereotypes, gender politics, institutional discrimination, socio-cultural beliefs and practices, religious influence, lack of self-confidence, fear of criticism, home responsibilities, lack of role models and economic challenges. Merga (2021) reveals that among the various reasons for low female participation in school leadership social factors, sex role stereotyping has deterring effect as these issues label females as weak and dependent, not as leaders in a family or community.

Geographically, the study will focus on young wives in the English-speaking Regions of Cameroon precisely in Buea and Bamendawhich are the regional headquarters of the two English Speaking regions of Cameroon (North West Region and the South West Region) and the Littoral region precisely Douala. The study is being limited in these areas because a lot of young wives are seen trying to push through with their educational and leadership dreams. The target groups will be young wives (both students, non-students, head teachers, principals and higher institute administrators) in some selected schools (both day and evening schools), churches and some selected higher institutes in the North West, South West and the Littoral Regions of Cameroon.

Methodologically, the study will use the cross-sectional survey and phenomenological designs. Cross sectional survey design will enable assessing a large group of people at one point, such as married women's questions about domestic chores affect young wives educational leadership aspirations in Cameroon.

Theoretically, Role Theory by Robert Merton (1957), The Liberal Feminist theory by Mary Williscott (19th Century) and The Transformational leadership theory by James

MacGregor Burns (1978) were adopted for this study as it offers insights into the societal norms and expectations that shape individuals' behaviors and interactions.

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to find out how domestic chores impact the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon, as well as, make suggestions that can encourage them to go after their educational dreams, achieve them and also encourage, support and help other young wives to fulfill their academic dreams as well. The literature review will base on the main research question of the study. The review of related literature focuses on the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical review.

Theoretical Review

Theoretically, this study will consider three theories that informs and gives the work a scientific base. The three theories include: The Role Theory by Robert Morton, The Liberal Feminist theory by Mary Williscott (19th Century) and The Transformational leadership theory by James MacGregor Burns (1978).

The Role Theory by Robert Morton is a sociological perspective that analyses the nature of different human activities. According to the theory, every society defines its roles and activities. Many societies treat each role as a duty or behaviour. People should be ready to complete most of their societal roles. In today's world especially in the African contexts, some particular roles have been termed feminine and, if young wives have to complete such roles, it may have an impact on their educational and leadership aspirations.

Liberal theory, as defined by Giddens (2001), is a "feminist theory that believes gender inequality is created by lowering access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation

of social resources such as education and employment". This issue is mostly centered on patriarchy, a socially constructed concept that promotes gender inequity. Liberal feminism derives from enlightenment-era liberal political thought and is based on the key ideals of autonomy, universal rights, equal citizenship, and democracy (Tong, 2009). This work is centred on women and their struggles in meeting up with their educational and leadership dreams.

The Transformational Leadership Theory by James McGregor (1978) as the name implies, tries to provide a new way to leadership. The leadership model has gained popularity over time because of its emphasis on intrinsic motivation as well as follower growth, which is in line with the needs of most workgroups that may require inspiration and empowerment to succeed in challenging circumstances (Northouse, 2016). Every mother is a potential leader who seeks a proper growth and success of her kids.

Domestic Chores on the Educational Leadership Aspirations of Young Wives

The conceptual review focuses on what other authors say about the key words on the topic such domestic chores and educational leadership aspirations of young wives. Bianchi and Milkie (2010) puts forward that, the intersection of family care and paid work was the subject of innovative research during the first decade of the 21st century and also continued to be a hot public policy issue. During the 2000 – 2010 decade, a number of studies showed that men's and women's allocation of time to paid and unpaid work had become more similar, with the gender gap in the unpaid work of cooking, cleaning, and child care narrowing substantially (Sayer, 2005). The smaller gender gap in housework was a result of an increase in men's time but also a large decline in women's time in these activities (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2012). With respect to child care, all the narrowing was because of an increase in men's time with their children: Beginning in the mid-1980s,

married fathers' time with their children began to increase (Bianchi et al., 2006; Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001, 2005). Mothers' average time in child care remained high and indeed was as high in the first decade of the 21st century as it had ever been (Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001, 2005; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Despite the increase in fathers' involvement in the home, child care remained much more the purview of mothers than fathers, just as paid work hours remained longer for fathers than mothers. Craig (2006), using Australian time use data, showed that mothers compared to fathers spent more overall time with children, engaged in more multitasking, operated with a more rigid timetable, spent more time alone with children, and had more overall responsibility for managing the care of their children. Bianchi and Milkie (2010) finally found out that as women take on more domestic responsibilities such as household chores, their time and energy for pursuing educational goals may be limited.

In another research by Wallon (2006), women hold less than 15% of the full professorships in Europe, even though more than half of the European student population is female (EU, 2006). In the light of this, there are contrasting views about the future of women in academic research. Some analysts perceive an intractable gender gap at the higher levels of academia owing to the lower success rate of women at every step up the career ladder; others expect the gap to close over time, although it might take many years for equality to be achieved.

Household chores can be defined as tasks such as cleaning, washing, and ironing that have to be done regularly at home. In September 2017, Ideal Home Magazine reported that the average Brit spends a staggering 2175 days in their lifetime carrying out household chores. In their survey of 2000 people, the results show that the most time-consuming chore is cooking. The average Brit spends 253 minutes per week in the kitchen cooking meals. That's

the equivalent of 219 hours per year, or 439 days over the course of your lifetime. Sadly, there are many chores that are difficult to escape from.

Davis and Greenstein (2009) on a study on “Cross-National Variations in the Division of Household Labor” revealed that, while the last several decades have revealed decreases in women's overall performance of household labor, and also shown slight increases in men's performance of housework, women still bear the burden for performing the majority of chores in the home. Researchers have shown the patterns of chore allocation to be influenced by gender role attitudes, employment, earnings, the presence of children, the stage of the family life cycle, sexual orientation, and a variety of behavioral, attitudinal, and contextual characteristics. These patterns of chore allocation, however, have been shown to have substantial consequences for the well-being of both women and men, as well as for the quality of their relationships. The variety of theoretical perspectives used in the examination of household labor has increased somewhat, yet researchers still tend to focus on a select few in order to explain why the sex-based division of household labor remains relatively intransigent. This continuing pattern, particularly when considered in conjunction with the similarity between adults' division of housework and those same patterns shown in the chores performed by children, underscores the need to give greater consideration to the question of why these intergenerational patterns of household chore allocation persist.

Here is ideal home's list of Britain's 20 most time-consuming household chores (which may also apply even more to Cameroon, though not all), starting with the worst offender; cooking (253 minutes per week, 439 days in a lifetime), Washing clothes (102 minutes per week, 177 days in a lifetime), Weekly food shop (100 minutes per week, 173 days in a lifetime), Washing up (98 minutes per week, 170 days in a lifetime), Gardening (86 minutes per week, 149 days in

a lifetime), Walking the dog (71 minutes per week, 123 days in a lifetime), Cleaning the bathroom including the toilet (68 minutes per week, 118 days in a lifetime), Vacuuming, especially the stairs (67 minutes per week, 116 days in a lifetime), Ironing (61 minutes per week, 106 days in a lifetime in one survey, almost a third of people avoided ironing altogether), Tidying bedroom (50 minutes per week, 87 days in a lifetime) Changing beds/towels (47 minutes per week, 81 days in a lifetime), Dusting (44 minutes per week, 76 days in a lifetime), Tidying cupboards (39 minutes per week, 68 days in a lifetime), Sorting wardrobe (32 minutes per week, 55 days in a lifetime), Washing windows, particularly exterior windows (32 minutes per week, 55 days in a lifetime) many people either don't bother at all, or pay professionals to do it, Decorating (26 minutes per week, 45 days in a lifetime), Cleaning car (24 minutes per week, 42 days in a lifetime), Sewing/mending clothes (22 minutes per week, 38 days in a lifetime), Driveway cleaning (17 minutes per week, 29 days in a lifetime), Patio cleaning (16 minutes per week, 28 days in a lifetime). It is clear that, every major household chore is very time-consuming.

Starrels' (1994) study on husbands' involvement in female gender-typed household chores used data from the National Survey of Children (sample is 89% White, 9% Black, 2% Hispanic or other) to examine levels and correlates of husbands' involvement in traditionally female household chores. Analyses indicated that the vast majority of wives have primary responsibility for these daily and non-daily duties. Only around one-fifth of husbands participate fully in these activities. OLS and logistic regression models demonstrate that structural and ideational characteristics about women are the best predictors of men's involvement. The resource, time availability, socialization, and life course models of husbands' domestic labor all receive strong support, as does family process.

Another study by Akanle et al (2016), men at work, keep off: Male duties and household chores in Nigeria, finds that women undertake more housework, arguing that many existing studies and popular narratives have compensated for female mainstreaming in domestic duties. This has indeed become common rhetoric to the extent that literature documents the reality in most traditional African households and a few western ones. Fan and Marini (2000) in a study on “Influences on Gender-Role Attitudes during the Transition to Adulthood” explored the factors that shape individuals’ gender-role attitudes and aspirations. Findings from this study suggest that traditional gender role expectations, which often include greater domestic responsibilities for women, can impact their educational aspirations. What is lacking however is the need to capture emerging issues in the same heavily traditional contexts. Hence, more works are needed in the area of objective women/men roles in the domestic realm. What then is the emerging scenario and even the old yet unaccounted for in gender relations in the traditional contexts of household chores? This article explores mainly Nigerian men’s views of the division of household labour. Using qualitative data from a sample of married Nigerian men, we examine men’s participation in housework, their attitudes towards the spousal roles, their attitudes toward men who share housework and sustainability of change. The role of background factors such as socio-economic status and level of education was also considered. This article is on an important topic and the findings could expose and teach processes of change in social norms particularly in the contexts of family.

Stritof (2022) on her part puts forward that, it is possible to keep household chores from hurting your marriage. She further mentions that, when you or your partner is unhappy about the allocation of household chores, the stress level in your home can increase tremendously. If you ask wives what their top source of stress is, quite a few will respond that it is the fact that their husbands don't

want to do their share of work around the house. Stress levels increase in your home when either one of you is unhappy about unfinished chores. Couples fight over who does what around the house almost as much as they fight over money. Surveys and studies consistently point out that even though many women work outside the home, they still tend to do most of the household chores. She further postulates that, uneven chore-splitting can erode the partnership of marriage as, marriage is a partnership that includes the practical business of running the household. That means keeping financial records, home maintenance, shopping, planning, cleaning, cooking, childcare, transportation, etc. When the practical aspects run smoothly, there is more peace and harmony.

A household chores list cannot be underestimated. Bungalow (2022) states that, a household chores list helps you and the members of your household to put upkeep on autopilot. Not only does creating one ensure that everything gets done on time, it also takes the guesswork out of navigating conversations about cleaning. It can be awkward to broach this subject with the people you live with, and if you haven't practiced communicating about household tasks, you might be tempted to avoid it, eventually compounding the issue. That's why creating this list (maybe as an addendum to your roommate agreement, if you have one) is essential. It is also important to learn how to create a household chores list. Whether you live alone, with a partner, or with roommates, the process for creating a chore list is pretty consistent: You compile a comprehensive list of all the tidying and cleaning tasks that needs to be completed for your home to feel clean. If you live alone, you'll compile this list yourself, according to your own standards. If you live with others, you'll need to put your heads together to create a list that captures everyone's preferences. If you co-live with others, you'll want to include both personal chores and communal chores. Personal chores are things you need to do to keep your own space clean and tidy; communal chores are those that go

towards the spaces you share. You can organize your master list by room or type of task, but a more action-oriented method of organization is grouping by frequency. Everyone's list will be a bit different depending on what type of space you live in and what's important to the members of your household. Below are some common types of chores to get you started.

On the other hand, Eagly & Carli (2007) found out that, despite real progress, women remain rare enough in elite positions of power that their presence still evokes a sense of wonder. In *Through the Labyrinth*, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli examine why women's paths to power remain difficult to traverse. First, Eagly and Carli prove that the glass ceiling is no longer a useful metaphor and offer seven reasons why. They propose the labyrinth as a better image and explain how to navigate through it. This important and practical book addresses such critical questions as: How far have women actually come as leaders? Do stereotypes and prejudices still limit women's opportunities? Do people resist women's leadership more than men's? And, do organisations create obstacles to women who would be leaders? Powell and Butterfield (2015) titled "Household Labor and the Perception of Leadership: The Mediating Role of Gender Role Expectations". This study explored how the division of household labor affects individuals' perceptions of leadership. The findings indicated that individuals who perceive a more equitable distribution of household chores tend to have more positive perceptions of leadership potential.

In a nutshell, it is very clear from the above literature that house hold chores demand a lot, most especially from the lady as listed above. So, for a young wife to meet up with her academic and leadership dreams, she and her husband need to properly consider how chores at home will be managed.

Educational Leadership Aspirations of young wives

According to Sherwood (1998) aspirations have two distinctive aspects. First, they are future oriented. They can only be satisfied at some future time. This distinguishes them from immediate gratification. Secondly aspirations are future motivators. They are goals individuals are willing to invest time, efforts or money in, to obtain. She also adds that aspirations motivate for better achievements as, people can only achieve what they have aspired, aspirations are important inputs for achievements. Leadership aspirations are an individual's desire to obtain a status objective or goals such as particular occupation or level of education (Koa and Thompson, 2003; MacBrayne, 1987). Educational leadership aspiration in this study, has to do with that steadfast longing for higher educational goals, the earnest desire to achieve educational goals as a wife. If an interview is carried out among young wives today, asking what they desire to be in future, most of them will gladly say what they want to become and are ready to do all to get to their dreams. With the case of women in Europe and America, there has been reports of high educational aspirations especially for higher education by young women and this is gradually becoming the case with women in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular though, in most cases, these aspirations most often in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular end mostly at this stage because most ladies end up not attaining their dreams.

Aki as cited in Fonkeng & Ntembe (2009) mentions that, no doubt, Africa has experienced an expansion in the number of universities and other higher education institutions but women still remain underrepresented in Cameroon. For instance, female enrolment was 23,288 (36.15%) from an overall enrolment of 40559 in Cameroon universities. In 2001/2002, amongst a total of 71,091 students found in the state universities, only 27572 were girls (Fonkeng, 2005). Equally, analysis made in the SWAp (2006) showed that girls are less educated with a parity index of 0.64, implying two female students for three male students in accessing

Cameroon state universities. In the same light, it was found that only 44% of females constitute the total enrolment of students in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2010). These statistics indicate that even though females now have access to education, their progression to higher levels of education is low.

It is however worthy of note that young wives in particular and women in general also have skills, ideas, hopes and dreams, and that they are also tough, resilient and creative with the energy and drive to shape their own destinies given by chance (UNHCR, 2016). Educational leadership aspirations and goals are important as it encourages and energizes the individual to achieve her goals. Young wives with high educational aspirations will access education to higher heights than those with little or no aspirations.

Educational leadership aspirations for young wives could be influenced by domestic chores (Stewart et al., 2007). They may be different for the women married to educated husbands and to those with a better economic status, than those who live in urban areas (Haller and Virklar, 1993; Akanda, 1987). The educational needs and achievement of women in general and young wives in particular need to become visible to all the stakeholders of education in Cameroon. Individuals' hopes and goals with relation to their educational future plans are known as educational leadership aspirations.

Empirical evidence underlines the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in alleviating domestic burdens and supporting women's education. Programs such as subsidized childcare, community kitchens, and gender-sensitization campaigns have enabled women to balance educational pursuits with domestic responsibilities in similar contexts (Humanium, 2021). In Cameroon, adopting these approaches could provide young wives with the necessary support to pursue their educational goals while challenging entrenched gender norms (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

Encouraging the equitable distribution of household labor is another critical strategy for

fostering educational aspirations among young wives. Promoting male participation in domestic tasks not only challenges traditional norms but also creates a more supportive environment for women's educational advancement (Behrman et al., 2021; Nkeng et al., 2023). Policies integrating gender equity into education and labor reform are essential for achieving sustainable change (CEDAW, 2022; Anyogu et al., 2022).

By investigating the under-researched relationship between domestic chores and educational leadership aspirations, this study aims to contribute to policy and practice. Understanding the specific challenges faced by young wives in Cameroon can inform targeted interventions and support systems that facilitate their educational advancement. Such efforts are essential for empowering women and fostering broader societal development.

Methodology

This section details the research methodology employed in this study, outlining the research design, area of study, population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis techniques (with a focus on the quantitative methods), and ethical considerations. A well-defined methodology is essential for ensuring the rigor and validity of research findings.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This section focused on the quantitative component. The quantitative aspect of this study utilized a cross-sectional survey design. This design is appropriate for examining relationships between variables at a single point in time. It allowed for the collection of data from a relatively large sample, enabling statistical analysis and the identification of patterns and correlations.

This study focuses on three regions in Cameroon: the Northwest, Littoral, and Southwest regions of Cameroon, with specific data collection taking place in the urban

centers of Buea, Douala, and Bamenda. These regions were selected due to their diverse socio-cultural contexts and the presence of established educational institutions capable of encouraging these women pursue their educational aspirations. The target population for the quantitative component of this study comprised married women in Buea, Douala, and Bamenda who have been married for less than 10 years. This timeframe was chosen to focus on contemporary experiences of marriage and its impact on educational aspirations.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Given the absence of precise population data, the sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, a widely accepted method for estimating sample sizes when the population is unknown. Using a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), a 50% estimated proportion ($P = 0.5$, maximizing variability), and a 5% margin of error ($C = 0.05$), the calculated sample size is approximately 384.

$$n = Z^2 (P) (1-P) / C^2$$

$$n = (1.96)^2 (0.5) (1-0.5) / (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 384.16 \approx 384$$

Therefore, the target sample size for the quantitative survey is 384 participants. A non-probability sampling approach, specifically purposive sampling combined with convenience sampling, was employed for the quantitative data collection. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study: being married, having been married for less than 10 years, and residing in Buea, Douala, or Bamenda. Convenience sampling was used to access participants who were readily available and willing to participate. This combination allowed for targeted data collection while acknowledging the practical constraints of accessing a dispersed population. While this sampling technique limits generalizability to the broader population of married women in Cameroon, it allows for in-depth exploration of the experiences of this specific group.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by their Background Information

Items	Option	Frequency (333)	Percentages (%)
Age Range	Less than 20 years	58	17.4
	21 to 30 years	173	52.0
	31 to 40 years	67	20.1
	Above 40 years	35	10.5
	Total	333	100.0
Educational Qualification	FSLC	18	5.4
	Ordinary level	43	12.9
	Advanced level	95	28.5
	Bachelor's Degree	177	53.2
	Total	333	100.0
Duration in Marriage	Less than 1 year	49	14.7
	1 to 5 years	117	35.1
	6 to 10 years	167	50.2
	Total	333	100.0
Occupation	Full time housewife	53	15.9
	Employee	92	27.6
	Student	105	31.5
	Business/Employer	78	23.4
	Others	5	1.5
	Total	333	100.0
Aspiration to advance education before marriage	Yes	298	89.5
	No	35	10.5
	Total	333	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Respondents were sampled across different age ranges; about half 173 (52.0) between the ages of 21 to 30 years, followed by 67(20.1%) who were within the age bracket 31 to 40 years and 58(17.4%) were less than 20 years old while the remaining 35(10.5%) of these women were above 40 years old. This implies that most of these young wives were between the age's twenties and forties; indicative of an early adult population. Figure 1 presents this distribution for clarity. From Table 1, responses indicates that 49(14.7%) of the respondents have been in marriage for about 1 to 5 years, with the highest percentage falling into the category of 6 to 10 years 167(50.2%). A significant portion 117(35.1%) also indicated that they have been married for 1 to 5 years. These findings suggest a diverse range of marital experiences among the surveyed young wives in Cameroon, with majority having more than a decade experience in marriage. Supposedly, they have been long enough to experience diverse aspects of marital stressors like parenthood, husband wife relationship, socioeconomic management and domestic chores; as such constitute an ideal sample representation for the study. Results on respondents' professions record that a significant number of the young wives 105(31.5%) in this study were students, followed by those who were employees 92 (27.6%) and those engaged in their own businesses or self-employed 78 (23.4%). A smaller proportion of respondents identified that they were full-time housewives 53 (15.9%), while a small percentage felt into the "Others" category 5(1.5%).

Data Collection Instruments

The primary instrument for quantitative data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to measure participants' perceptions and experiences related to domestic chores, marital stressors, and educational aspirations. The questionnaire was divided into sections addressing:

Time spent on specific domestic chores (e.g., cooking, cleaning, childcare).

Perceptions of the division of household labor.

Perceived impact of domestic chores on educational opportunities and aspirations.

Educational attainment and current educational pursuits.

Demographic information (e.g., age, length of marriage, number of children).

Validation and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, face validity, content validity, and construct validity were assessed. Face validity was established through expert review by supervisors and other faculty members. Content validity was ensured by aligning questionnaire items with the research objectives and relevant literature. Construct validity was assessed through expert review and pre-testing. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. A pilot test was conducted with 20 married women (not included in the main sample) to identify any ambiguous or inconsistent items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the scales. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable.

Data Collection Procedures

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were recruited through various channels, including community organizations, educational institutions (evening schools), and social networks. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before administering the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered primarily in person by the researcher or trained research assistants to maximize response rates and ensure clarity.

Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies,

percentages, means, standard deviations) were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, particularly correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between domestic chore burden and educational aspirations. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and participants

were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data were stored securely and accessed only by the research team.

Findings

This section of the study examined the results on how domestic chores affect the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon? The findings is presented in the ensuing paragraphs and Table.

Domestic Chores and the Educational Leadership Aspirations of Young Wives in Cameroon

Table 2: How does Domestic Chores affect the Educational Leadership Aspirations and Leadership of Young Wives in Cameroon? Respondents Opinion

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I spend much of my time daily in doing home chores like cleaning limiting my ability to engage in education	27 (8.1%)	98 (29.4%)	62 (18.6%)	62 (18.6%)	50 (15.0%)	3.13	1.223
Most home chores like washing of dresses are done by children, yet I supervise the process; which does not give me enough time to do my assignments and study	39 (11.7%)	118 (35.4%)	62 (18.6%)	76 (22.8%)	38 (11.4%)	2.87	1.223
Other chores like cooking require my attention and maybe supervision of the house help; as such, I need time to spend at home than initiate education.	28 (8.4%)	108 (32.4%)	54 (16.2%)	86 (25.8%)	57 (17.1%)	3.11	1.264
Although I have assistance in the house chores, I am solely responsible for the preparation of my husbands' meal affecting my ability to prepare adequately for my assessments and examinations	32 (9.6%)	82 (24.6%)	62 (18.6%)	88 (26.4%)	69 (20.7%)	3.24	1.293
In my home, a chore like fetching water, food shopping, and home tidying are my responsibilities as a wife; which gives me no room for studies	38 (11.4%)	104 (31.2%)	55 (16.5%)	91 (27.3%)	45 (13.5%)	3.00	1.260
The need to keep the home tidy and decorated is the sole responsibility of the wife and does not give room to engage in impact creating ventures	35 (10.5%)	117 (35.1%)	61 (18.3%)	69 (20.7%)	51 (15.3%)	2.95	1.263
I am still forced to spend time at home in order to do some other chores like ironing dresses and mending torn dresses than take up external responsibilities out of home	33 (9.9%)	101 (30.3%)	71 (21.3%)	87 (26.1%)	41 (12.3%)	3.01	1.207
I am solely in charge of serving food to my husband	17 (5.1%)	90 (27.0%)	65 (19.5%)	115 (34.5%)	46 (13.8%)	3.25	1.146
The task to take the children to school and pick them back after school is required of me; and I cannot take up any other role.	39 (11.7%)	123 (36.9%)	63 (18.9%)	68 (20.4%)	40 (12.0%)	2.84	1.225
The demand to frequently clean toilets and baths, sort wardrobes and tidy cupboards, drains my energy a lot; making it challenging to rise up early and prepare for school	42 (12.6%)	83 (24.9%)	41 (12.3%)	102 (30.6%)	65 (19.5%)	3.20	1.345

Source: Field Survey 2024

From Table 2, 27 (8.1%) of the respondents strongly disdained the opinion that their ability to engage in education was limited by the time required for them to spend daily in doing home chores. This was a similar experience to 98 (29.4%) of them. 62 (18.6%) of the respondents were neutral about this point, 62 (18.6%) of the respondents agreed that ability to engage in education was limited by them spending much of their time daily in doing home chores like cleaning and 50(15.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their ability to engage in education was limited by them spending much of their time daily in doing home chores like cleaning. As such, engaging in education was found to be limited for most of these young wives due to the fact that they spend much time daily in carrying out home chores.

Also, majority 157(47.1%) of the respondents disagreed that supervision of chores done by children like washing of clothes does not give them enough time to do assignments and study, 62(18.6%) of the respondents were neutral about this point while 114(34.2%) of the respondents agreed that supervision of chores done by children like washing of clothes does not give them enough time to do assignments and study. This implies, supervision of chores done by children does not give them enough time to do their assignments and study.

As well, 136 (40.8%) of respondents indicated that they do not spend time at home to supervise their house helps. 54(16.2%) of the respondents were neutral about this point meanwhile 143(42.9%) of the respondents agreed that time is needed to spend at home so as to supervise the house help. Going by the results, this does not constitute a stressor to many of these young wives.

Notwithstanding, 157(47.1%) of the respondents agreed that despite having assistance in the house chores, they are solely responsible for the preparation of their husbands' meals which affects their ability to adequately prepare for assessments and examination. 62(18.6%) of the respondents

were impartial about this question and 114(43.2%) of the respondents denied that the adequate preparation of their assessments and examinations were affected by their responsibility to solely prepare their husbands' meal. Implying that preparation of meals for husbands is solely the responsibility of the wives, even if there is someone to assist do that, which in turns affects the way they prepare for their assessments and examinations in school.

Furthermore, 142(42.6%) of the respondents disagreed that in their homes, chores like fetching water, food shopping are their responsibilities as wives giving them no room for studies, 55(16.5%) of the respondents were neutral about this point while 136(40.8%) of the respondents agreed that in their homes, chores like fetching water, food shopping are their responsibilities as wives giving them no room for studies. Responsibilities of a wife like the need to keep the home decorated did not give room for 120(36%) of the respondents to engage in impact creating ventures while 152(45.6%) weren't affected by this factor.

128 (38.4%) of the respondents could not take up external responsibilities like schooling out of home due to some other chores like ironing, while 134(40.2%) of the respondents were not limited to take up external responsibilities at home due to some other chores like ironing. This indicates that most of these Cameroonian young wives did not feel limited in taking up external responsibilities at home.

161(48.3%) of the respondents admitted that they were solely in charge of serving food to their husbands and building leadership and vision will need some time off. 107(32.1%) of these respondents disagreed with the view point of being solely in charge to serve food to their husbands, implying that they were not wholly responsible for serving their husbands food. More to that, 108(32.4%) of the respondents indicated that they could not take up another role because they had the task to drop and pick up children from school.

63(18.9%) of the respondents were neutral about this while 162(48.6%) of the respondents disagreed.

Finally, 167(50%) of the respondents agreed that the demand to frequently clean toilets, sort wardrobes and tidy the cupboards drains a lot of energy making it challenging to rise up early to prepare for school, 125(%) of the disagreed to the fact that demands like frequently clean toilets, sort wardrobes and tidy the cupboards drains a lot of energy making it challenging to rise up early to prepare for school and 41(12.3%) of the respondents were neutral about this fact. From the results above, it implies that majority 167(50%) of the respondents' education is being affected by their marital role.

It was remarkably noted that the mean values for domestic chores ranged from 2.84 to 3.25

> 3.5; in ascending order. Implying that on average, factors used to examine domestic chores like washing of dresses, fetching water, food shopping and serving food to their husbands were not regarded as major marital stressors that can hinder the educational aspiration and leadership of these young wives. Meanwhile the means for domestic chores like cleaning, cooking, preparation of meals for one's husbands did not receive much agreement; indicative that on average these wives could not consider these as marital stressors to affect their educational aspiration and leadership. The responses were further proven by the standard deviation values (SD = 1.223, 1.223, 1.264, 1.293, 1.2601.359, 1.029, 1.020, 1.242, 1.259, and 1.145); indicating a less deviation of responses from the average situation.

Table 3: Respondents Opinions on the Educational Leadership Aspirations in Cameroon

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
I am very optimistic about pursuing my academics to every level I desire	4 (1.2%)	13 (3.9%)	37 (11.1%)	121 (36.3%)	158 (47.4%)	4.25	.889
I strongly believe in my ability to succeed in my academics	7 (2.1%)	10 (3.0%)	25 (7.5%)	114 (34.2%)	177 (53.2%)	4.33	.898
Balancing my marital activities with my educational goals is challenging, but I am determined to overcome it.	7 (2.1%)	22 (6.6%)	33 (9.9%)	128 (38.4%)	143 (42.9%)	4.14	.983
I feel motivated that no matter the marital demands I can still enroll in school and achieve what I aspired to be	3 (9%)	20 (6.0%)	25 (7.5%)	121 (36.3%)	164 (49.2%)	4.27	.905
I greatly desire to continue my education because I have goals that can only be achieved after education.	5 (1.5%)	20 (6.0%)	28 (8.4%)	124 (37.2%)	156 (46.8%)	4.22	.939
I receive encouragement from my husband, children, and other family members to pursue my academic journey.	11 (3.3%)	26 (7.8%)	36 (10.8%)	125 (37.5%)	135 (40.5%)	4.04	1.061
Despite being involved in my marital activities, I maintain a strong ambition to continue my education.	9 (2.7%)	19 (5.7%)	31 (9.3%)	131 (39.3%)	143 (42.9%)	4.14	.988
There is an earnest zeal and desperation to scale in my education even as a young wife	6 (1.8%)	15 (4.5%)	38 (11.4%)	147 (44.1%)	127 (38.1%)	4.12	.908
While I desire to pursue my educational dreams, I understand the need to balance my commitments at home.	3 (.9%)	18 (5.4%)	28 (8.4%)	152 (45.6%)	132 (39.6%)	4.18	.865
I feel empowered to pursue my education because I have access to the necessary resources.	13 (3.9%)	48 (14.4%)	61 (18.3%)	123 (36.9%)	88 (26.4%)	3.68	1.129

Source: Field Survey 2023

Results on educational leadership aspiration showed that 279(83.7%) of the respondents were very optimistic to pursue their academics to every level desired despite the challenges encountered daily from the marital stressors. 37(11.1%) of the respondent were impartial about being optimistic to pursue their academics to desired levels while 17(5.1%) of the respondents were not very optimistic to pursue their academics. From the percentages, it was implied that despite all the challenges faced by the respondents in balancing between marriage and education due to stressors from marriage, majority 279(83.7%) were still very enthusiastic to pursue their academics to every level desired. Similarly, majority 291(87.4%) still trusted in their ability to succeed in their academics, as opposed to 25(7.5%) were neutral on this aspect.

Notwithstanding the challenges associated with balancing marital activities and educational goals, 271(81.3%) of the respondents were determined to overcome these defies, 29(8.7%) of them were not determined to overcome the challenges while 33(9.9%) of the respondents were just uncertain on what to do on this aspect. Meanwhile, 285(85.5%) of the respondents admitted that they were motivated that no matter the marital demands they can still enroll in school and achieve what they aspire to be, 25(7.5%) of the respondents were impartial about being motivated that no matter the marital demands they can still enroll in school and achieve what they aspire to be and 23(6.9%) of the respondents negated being motivated that no matter the marital demands they can still enroll in school and achieve what they aspire to be. As well, 280 (84%) of the respondents greatly desire to continue their education because they have goals which can only be achieved after education. Only 28(8.4%) of the respondents were uncertain about having a great desire to continue their education, while 48(7.5%) of the respondents denied having a great desire to continue their education.

Moreover, 385 (78%) of the respondents indicated that they receive encouragements from their spouses, children and other family members to pursue their academic journey, 36(10.8%) of the them did not explicitly indicate whether they receive encouragements or not from spouses, children and other family members. On the other hand, 37(10.1%) of the respondents outrightly indicated that they do not receive any encouragement from their spouses, children nor family members to pursue their academic journey. This implies that majority 385 (78%) of the respondents have a strong support system which help them overcome challenges they encounter daily.

Besides, 274 (82.2%) of the respondents, 31(9.3%) of the respondents were impartial about maintaining a strong ambition to continue with education despite being involved in marital activities while 28(8.4%) of the respondents could not maintain a strong ambition to continue with education despite being involved in marital activities. More so, 274(82.2%) of the respondents have the earnest zeal and desperation to in scale in their education even as young wives, 38(11.4%) of the respondents were neutral about this point while 21(6.3%) of the respondents lacked the earnest zeal and desperation to in scale in their education even as young wives.

Likewise, 284(85.6%) of the respondents understand the need to balance commitments at home while having the desire to pursue their educational dreams, 28(8.4%) of the respondents were unbiased about understanding the need to balance commitments at home with educational dreams while 21(6.3%) of the respondents do not understand the to balance commitments at home with educational dreams. 211(63.8%) of the respondents feels empowered to pursue their education because they have access to the necessary resources., 61(18.3%) of the respondents were impartial about feeling empowered to pursue their education because they have access to the necessary resources and 47(18.3%) denied being empowered to pursue their education because they have access to the necessary resources.

Amidst the elements utilised in assessing educational aspiration, only empowered to pursue education recorded relatively lower means ($M = 3.68$). Yet, all the means were greater than 3.5 indicating a strong agreement

of educational aspiration among young wives; necessitating the inference that these marital stressors or challenges actually boost educational aspiration.

Table 4: Correlations between Domestic Chores and Educational Leadership Aspiration

		Domestics Chores	Educational Aspirations
Domestics Chores	Pearson Correlation	1	-.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	330	330
Educational Aspirations	Pearson Correlation	-.336**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	330	331

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between domestic chores and educational aspiration ($r = -.336$, $p = .000$). This suggests that as domestic chores increase, the desire for young wives to continue their educational aspirations is inhibited. While domestic chores may impact daily educational activities, they do significantly affect the overall educational aspirations of young wives.

Discussion

In relation to leadership, this study did not find any significant relationship between domestic chores and educational leadership of young wives in Cameroon. Although, the results established that there was a strong positive link between domestic chores and leadership; implying that in carrying out domestic chores young wives exercise more and more leadership. Compared to literature, an article by Eagly and Carli (2007) titled “Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders”, examined the various factors that contribute to women’s leadership development. While the study does not specifically focus on the relationship between domestic chores and leadership, it highlighted that woman often face unique challenges and expectations in balancing family responsibilities with leadership roles. As such, making house hold chores to be positively related to the leadership abilities of these young wives. Another study was by

Powell and Butterfield (2015) titled “Household Labor and the Perception of Leadership: The Mediating Role of Gender Role Expectations”. This study explored how the division of household labor affects individuals' perceptions of leadership. The findings indicated that individuals who perceive a more equitable distribution of household chores tend to have more positive perceptions of leadership potential. While this study did not directly focus on young wives or educational leadership, it suggested that the relationship between domestic chores and leadership may be mediated by gender role expectations.

However, it was noted that conflicting findings existed in the literature; as Rudman and Glick (2001) for instance, in their study “Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes and Backlash Toward Agentic Women” found that women who deviated from traditional gender roles, such as engaging in leadership positions, may face backlash and negative

evaluations. This suggested that the relationship between domestic chores, gender roles, and leadership may be complex and context-dependent. In essence, while the specific findings indicated no significant relationship between domestic chores and educational leadership among these young wives, literature both supports and conflicts with these findings.

It must be acknowledged that the transition from educational aspiration to achievement remains fraught with challenges. The balancing act required to manage both educational pursuits and parental duties often results in a gap between aspiration and actual educational attainment. This reality points to a need for targeted support systems that can help young mothers navigate their dual roles more effectively, potentially involving greater familial and community support, along with institutional policies that accommodate the unique needs of parenting students. This was supported by young wives in educational leadership, who through interview attested that, the overwhelming demands of managing household responsibilities, particularly with multiple children, lead to considerable time and energy depletion. Many leaders expressed that the exhaustion from helping children with homework, cooking, cleaning, and other chores leaves them with little opportunity to focus on their educational pursuits or attend professional events, ultimately hindering their academic growth. This time drain is compounded by challenges in work-life balance, as some women find themselves bringing work home, which further affects their ability to meet work deadlines.

UNHCR (2015) Nansen refugee peace prize winner established that women are the ones who play the highest role in the lives of their children as far as child upbringing is concerned, if these women are educated, they will better raise up their kids by teaching them good morals and virtues leading to a better society of tomorrow and the world will be a better place to live in and when children bring up each other; since the mother cannot possibly supervise everything, much is left to the older children, who thereby learn their

responsibilities early, and who, spiritually, very often remain strong and sound. Likewise, Hout and DiPrete (2006) stated that given that education remains the single most important pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty and to enjoying upward mobility cannot and should not be taken lightly. Smith Battle (2007a) argues that teen motherhood has the potential to serve as a positive turning point in the life trajectories of disadvantaged youths if these youths are provided with the necessary support.

Kolpashnikova & Koike (2021) carried out a study where they looked at educational attainment and housework participation among Japanese, Taiwanese, and American women across adult life transitions, that women with higher levels of education spend less time on housework than do women with less education. They found that this argument holds true for single women and married women without children, their numbers of years of education correlate inversely with their daily hours of domestic labour; however, this correlation does not exist for married Taiwanese women with children. Also, the educational levels of married Japanese women with or without children have no bearing on their housework participation.

Nguyen (2011) established in their study on Hmong girls studying at high school and secondary level were found to have particular aspirations pertaining to their marriage, education and career, but lacked confidence in their abilities to create their desired future. This might imply that these girls recognised the importance of personal development and growth beyond traditional gender roles and marital expectations; which is similar to the situation of these young wives whose educational aspirations were found to be very high despite the various marital stressors. This empirical study points out that these young Hmong girls lacked confidence in their abilities to create their desired future. This lack of confidence may be influenced by various factors, such as cultural norms, limited access to resources and opportunities, and societal pressures. It suggests as well that despite having aspirations, these young wives

may face challenges and barriers that hinder their confidence in pursuing their educational and career goals.

Findings also revealed that there is no significant correlation found between domestic chores and educational aspiration. The negative effect implied that as domestic chores increase, the desire for young wives to continue their educational aspiration is reducing. These findings suggested that while these young wives acknowledge some impact of domestic chores on their educational activities, this did not translate into a measurable effect on their educational aspirations. As found out in a study by Bianchi and Milkie (2010) on “Work and Family Research in the First Decade of the 21st Century”, they discuss the changing dynamics of work and family responsibilities and how they impact individuals’ educational aspirations. The study highlights that as women take on more domestic responsibilities, such as household chores, their time and energy for pursuing educational goals may be limited. This aligns with the negative effect mentioned in the findings, where increased domestic chores are associated with reduced educational aspirations.

The similarity in this finding and the above supporting literature pointed to the fact that the traditional gender roles that societies often hold which requires that women take on more domestic responsibilities create a social expectation in which young wives prioritise chores over their education. Wallon (2006), supports this view as she reveals in her research how traditional gender roles have kept women from attaining high levels in academia because of poor success rates. Many women who desire to venture into the sciences have greatly been limited. This was present in this setting which turned to discourage them from pursuing educational aspirations especially when these chores increased. It was likely that the increased chores directly impacted the amount of time available for studying and educational activities. This time crisis could make it

difficult to manage both responsibilities effectively, potentially leading to a downgrading of educational aspirations as a coping mechanism. This was confirmed by the Focus Group results as women mentioned that the overwhelming nature of house chores combined with their personal businesses leave them with little time; and they prefer to rest and handle these chores than to venture into education.

Results on the nature of chores recorded the presence of conventional household chores as all the women acknowledged in the Focus Group Discussion as they admitted that they were responsible for undertaking chores like cleaning, washing and cooking which occupied them as wives, such that a great proportion of their time was spent handling these chores. All these turned to affect their ability to pursue education because this required handling so much at a time. Emmanuel (2015) agreed with what constitute household chores as he stated that domestic chores have to do with tasks such as cleaning, washing, and ironing that have to be done regularly at home and uneven chore-splitting can erode the partnership of marriage as, marriage is a partnership that includes the practical business of running the household.

By implication, chores can be physically and mentally draining, leaving young wives with less energy to dedicate to pursuing educational goals. This reduced cognitive capacity can make it challenging to maintain focus and motivation for further education. This is likened to the results obtained by Philip et al (2016) who studied the effect of domestic chores on role performance of academic women in tertiary institutions and the need for effective management and counselling in cross river state – Nigeria. The result of the study showed that domestic chores influenced the role performance of the married academic women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State and the influence was negative. Based on the above, recommendations were proposed that women academics should learn to cope with stressful

conditions at home by strategising ways of overcoming such.

It was understood from the above argument that Bianchi and Milkie (2010) suggested that factors like access to supportive helpers could lessen the burden of chores on the women. That is, assigning some tasks for others in the house to cater for could reduce these responsibilities on the women. In view of which the study confirmed that some women receive support from their children and elderly people in the home which helps to reduce the responsibilities of these wives. Besides, a significant proportion of these women admitted that their ability to engage in education was not limited by the need to spend much of their time doing home chores like cleaning neither in supervising the children in washing of clothes. This implies that some of these women had children that assisted them in carrying out some chores; and they trusted their efforts to the extent that they did not deem it necessary to spend time in supervising them. As mentioned by Stritof (2022), that it is possible to keep household chores from hurting your marriage so, chores should be shared where she says, the biggest mistake you can make in your quest to have your partner do more chores around the house is to ask for help and doing a good job dividing up the housework is essential to ensure a happy marriage.

Notwithstanding the support received by these women, majority of these young wives indicated that they were solely in charge of serving food to their husbands, which made it challenging for them to spend much time in pursuing some dreams like education which required time off the home. As well, a great proportion admitted that they were responsible for taking children to and back from school. This implied that although some of these women receive support from their children and external parties, their ability to pursue their educational aspirations was limited by some tasks that were particular to them like serving their husbands food; which left them with less time available for pursuing their own interests, hobbies, or aspirations.

Also, the absence of time off to focus on personal development and build leadership and vision could limit young women's ability to excel in their academic pursuits and succeed in their chosen careers. The finding tie with the results from Davis and Greenstein (2009) on a study on "Cross-National Variations in the Division of Household Labor" which found that, the division of household chores does not significantly affect women's educational attainment. This suggests that the relationship between domestic chores and educational aspirations may vary across different cultural contexts.

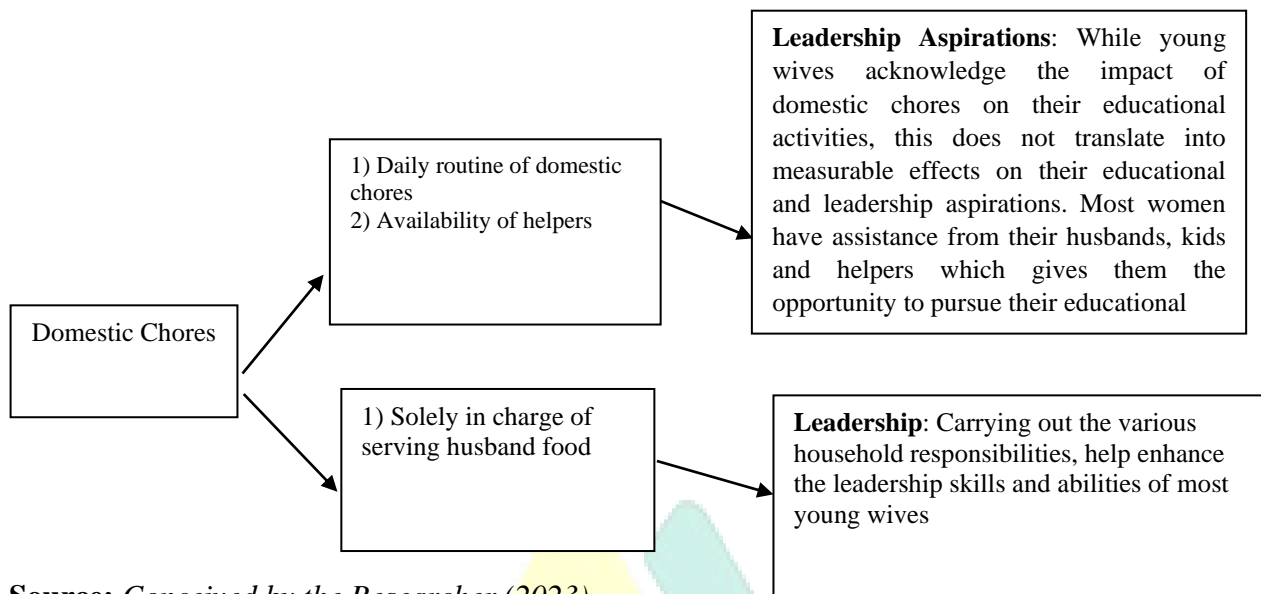
Still in relation to support, it was established from the Focus Group results with wives that some of these women receive support from their husbands; but in other aspects order than house hold chores. For instance, husbands in their interview expressed that they were often very willing to support their wives by respecting and accommodating their educational and career dreams. This basically showed the extent to which some of these husbands were willing to help their wives achieve their educational ambitions in life despite the presence of marital stressors. Stritof (2016), supports this notion as he reveals that, less educated husbands appeared to have provided their wives with higher levels of instrumental support because they were more likely to believe that their wives inclusive educational attainment will raise the total family income. Nonetheless, some of these women have employed effective strategies to manage their time and responsibilities. By waking up early and setting specific times for chores, they demonstrate resilience and commitment to both domestic and educational obligations. These strategies include utilising technology to ease household tasks and dedicating weekends to complete extensive chores in advance. This structured approach allows them to prioritise their educational goals while still fulfilling their domestic roles, showcasing the importance of planning and discipline in achieving a balance between home and educational leadership aspirations.

As such, the findings remarked the presence of role differentiation in these family settings, such that most of the activities at home were expected to be executed by the wives as opposed to their husbands. As the Role Theory by Robert Merton (1957) states, every society defines its roles and activities and many societies treat each role as a duty or behaviour. People should be ready to complete most of their societal roles; human beings also conform to this theory by behaving in a particular manner. This fact explains why people's behaviours are usually "context specific". Social norms and positions play a significant role towards reshaping such duties. As such, the women exercise their motherly role by undertaking the above examined activities. Aside, Philip et al (2016) stated that women have been naturally endowed to take care of their homes and as such should see domestic chores as their responsibility and do not perceive the demands as a burden, however they can hire house helps or bring their relations to help them.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the impact of domestic chores on the educational leadership aspirations of young wives in Cameroon. The findings concluded that there was no significant correlation between domestic chores and the educational leadership aspirations of young wives. Domestic chores like cleaning, washing of dresses, cooking, supervision of the house help, preparation of husbands' meal, food shopping, home tidying, ironing dresses, etc; are the responsibilities of the wife which do occupy a considerable amount of their time and energy. This predominant role undertaken by the wives, reflect the traditional gender roles within the

household. However, this traditional distribution of chores does not significantly dampen their educational leadership aspirations. That is, other factors may likely play a more pivotal role in influencing educational leadership aspirations among these young wives other than domestic chores. While the negative effect implied that increased domestic responsibilities likely reduced their desire to continue educational leadership pursuits, the impact did not translate into a measurable effect on their overall educational leadership aspiration's ability. As well, it was concluded that while the demands of household responsibilities drain time and energy, many women find ways to manage their commitments through effective planning and the use of technology. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining focus on their educational and leadership goals. Hence, there is a strong positive relationship between domestic chores and the leadership abilities of these young wives. Carrying out the various household responsibilities, such as cleaning, cooking, and child-rearing, appeared to enhance their leadership skills and capacities. This aligns with literature suggesting that the management of domestic duties can contribute to the development of certain leadership qualities, such as organisation, multitasking, and decision-making. Interestingly, it was resolved that some young wives were able to mitigate the burden of domestic chores through the support of their children, elderly family members, and even their husbands. This external assistance helped to alleviate the time constraints and cognitive demands associated with household responsibilities, potentially enabling these wives to better balance their educational aspirations and leadership development.

Figure1: Contributions of the study to Knowledge

Source: *Conceived by the Researcher (2023)*

The study settled on some notable challenges faced by the young wives in balancing their educational pursuits and marital responsibilities. Notably, the time-consuming nature of maintaining a strong bond with their husbands was found to limit the time these wives could devote to their studies and interactions with classmates and even at their job sites as school administrators. Nonetheless, the spiritual responsibilities associated with marriage, such as praying for the relationship, were not seen as a significant hindrance to the wives' educational leadership aspirations as the study found a shared understanding and commitment between the husbands and wives in fulfilling these spiritual obligations.

Despite the societal expectations that marital bonding and intimacy could enhance support for personal goals, the study indicates that such relationship dynamics do not significantly hinder or promote educational leadership aspirations among the women studied. Instead, the quality of these relationships appears to have a neutral effect on their academic and career ambitions, underscoring a broader narrative that individual agency and external social influences might be more critical

determinants in this context. As well, despite societal expectations, many young wives are determined to pursue their educational leadership aspirations, challenging traditional roles and demonstrating a willingness to engage with broader societal dynamics that influence their personal and professional growth. This pointed to a complex interplay of factors that influence leadership development and educational pursuits, where marital quality is just one of many elements. This aligned with broader research indicating that a positive marital relationship can have a broader impact on various aspects of individuals' lives, including their leadership capabilities.

Specifically, it was settled that these young wives both those who are currently out of school and those holding educational leadership positions face significant financial constraints and competing demands on their resources, which posed substantial barriers to their ability to pursue educational opportunities and likewise leadership. The high cost of living, the need to prioritise basic needs and family support, and high living costs and substantial financial responsibilities, particularly those associated with family and childcare, emerge as primary barriers; all

hindered their capacity to invest in their own educational advancement. These economic pressures often necessitate prioritising immediate family needs over personal educational goals, thereby impacting the potential for academic and career advancement.

Despite these challenges, the study found that many young wives in Cameroon still expressed strong educational aspirations, demonstrating a willingness to challenge traditional societal expectations and prioritise their personal growth and development. However, their ability to translate these aspirations into tangible educational achievements was often limited by the socio-economic realities they faced. This aligned with existing literature, emphasising that while socioeconomic factors are influential, they are but one of many elements affecting educational aspirations. Other critical factors include family support, personal interests, and the perceived benefits of education. This multi-faceted approach is crucial in understanding the dynamics at play in the educational pursuits of married women.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications, the following recommendations are proposed:

Firstly, promoting shared domestic responsibilities between spouses is crucial. Encouraging shared domestic responsibilities can alleviate the burden on young wives and provide them with more time to focus on their educational pursuits. Secondly, enhancing support systems is vital. Strengthening support systems, including family and community support, can provide young wives with the necessary encouragement and resources to pursue their education.

Thirdly, developing and promoting flexible educational programs that accommodate the unique needs of young wives is essential. This could include online courses, evening classes, and part-time study options. Fourthly, conducting awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of education for young wives and the benefits of shared domestic

responsibilities in achieving educational and leadership goals is recommended. Lastly, advocating for policy interventions that support young wives in balancing domestic chores and educational aspirations is necessary. This could include subsidized childcare, scholarships, and mentorship programs. By implementing these recommendations, it is possible to create an enabling environment that supports the educational aspirations and leadership potential of young wives in Cameroon, ultimately contributing to their personal and professional development.

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