

Level of Education in Abuja, Nigeria

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Received: May 6, 2022

Accepted: June 20, 2022

Available online: June 23, 2022

doi:10.11114/ijsss.v10i4.5559

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v10i4.5559>

Abstract

Education is one of the most important tools for increasing personal endowments, developing capacities, overcoming limitations, and expanding the set of available possibilities and options for long-term well-being. This study was carried out to compare the level of education of residents of the six area councils of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. A total of 1200 respondents were interviewed in this study. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 respondents in each of the six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory. Data was collected using a pre-tested, structured questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson's Chi-square test at 5% (95% Confidence Interval). Focus communities in the study area were selected at random. The result of the current study showed that the study population had attained varying levels of education with 95.7% either doing their undergraduate degree or had already graduated or had attained the postgraduate level, whereas, 4.3% had not attained any form of formal education. The study showed a significant ($p=0.001$) association between gender and education specifically in Bwari and Abaji indicating that males had a higher number of respondents who had attained such levels of education as those reported in the current study. Areas, where this was the case, had more rural locations compared to the city center and most developed satellite towns. Religion also played a role in the level of education attained in the current study.

Keywords: education, Abuja, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Education is the oldest discipline in human history; it is concerned with the art of transmitting and acquiring knowledge through teaching and learning, particularly in schools and similar institutions (Ushe, 2012).

Education is the process of learning and building culture, and it is an important tool for social advancement since it improves the human condition through greater knowledge, health, living conditions, social fairness, and productivity. According to Spiel *et al.* (2018) education is expected to promote social progress through the full development of individual and collective human virtues; the enhancement of public life and active participation in a democratic society; and economy, by providing individuals with intellectual and practical skills that enable them to be productive and enhance their lives (Spiel *et al.*, 2018).

Education is one of the most important tools for increasing personal endowments, developing capacities, overcoming limitations, and expanding the available set of possibilities and options for long-term well-being enhancement; its absence can result in low human development. The Human Development Index (HDI), is a summary measure of human progress that takes into account the average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development; a long and healthy life; access to knowledge; and a decent standard of living across geographic areas and over time, shows that Nigeria had an average HDI of 0.521 in 2018 and that all North-East states have HDI scores. The UNDP attributes this to one of the fundamental causes in Nigeria's north-eastern region (UNDP, 2018).

As a result, the value of education cannot be overstated. Education is the source of knowledge that determines a person's behavioural pattern, attitude, and general way of life (Robert, 2011). Education, according to studies spanning from social to medical sciences, is a driver of preventative activities, lifestyle modification and social behaviour, economic growth, and societal integration (Ozturk, 2011).

Education's most essential contribution is not simply to raise citizens' living standards, but also to help them to become better citizens. Education, in addition to being a fundamental right, is now a precondition for development and an effective means of making knowledge-based decisions and promoting democracy. Individuals, communities, groups, institutions, and countries all benefit from education as it enhances and strengthens their developmental capacities. There

have been reports that attribute the rise in disease and death rates (Yaya *et al.*, 2017), conflicts (UNDP, 2018), and poverty (Yaya *et al.*, 2017) to a lack of education.

According to UNESCO (2017), 420 million people would be lifted out of poverty if all adults finished secondary school, reducing poverty by more than half globally and almost two-thirds in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

In saner climes, the educational sector is given top priority by the government in order to achieve an all-inclusive development of their society. The development of all other sectors is inextricably linked to the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system. Other sectors, such as health, economy, tourism, manufacturing, industries, transportation, agriculture, power (electricity), and so on, are all centred on education; it is through this sector that people find their place in society. The inability of the educational sector to satisfy these links is seen in the challenges faced in these sectors currently.

Chineke (2016) has linked the poor development of education, or the sector as a whole, to the absence of morality and sanctity (2016). "The morality and sanctity of education determine the extent to which education can achieve its goal of shaping all aspects of a society's life," writes the author.

However, it has been reported that morality and sanctity are becoming increasingly scarce in Nigeria's educational system. The absence of morality and sanctity in a sector an entire nation and indeed the world should rely on would ordinarily give room for vices that become a malignant tumour in the roots of the system. Chineke (2016) argues that examination malpractices, plagiarism, forged educational certificates backed up by educational institutions, indiscriminate award of academic honours, and forgery of educational certificates at all levels of education have all plagued the sector (Chineke, 2016).

Outside of the moral decadence, Nigerian educational institutions have been plagued by incessant strikes, with the unions blaming the government for not meeting their financial obligations and the government blaming the unions for greed. This has exacerbated inconsistency in Nigeria's educational system.

This study was carried out to assess the level of education in different age groups, gender and religion. The current study adopted the cross-sectional study design while randomly assessing the level of education in the six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

Study Area

Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory is the administrative headquarters of Nigeria. It has a landmass of about 8000km² (Badaru *et al.*, 2014), with a current projected population of about 3,464,000 (Population Stat, 2021). The FCT is divided into six area councils namely, Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, and Kwali.

Study Design

The current study adopted a cross-sectional study design approach targeting 1200 respondents. Two hundred (200) respondents were randomly drawn from 6 area councils in the Federal Capital Territory; Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, and Kwali.

Data Collection

The study areas were first selected purposively; the Federal Capital Territory is made up of six area councils and the six area councils were represented in the current study. The satellite towns with the FCT were however selected at random to minimize bias in the representation of the population studied. The questionnaire was administered to 200 respondents manually from each area council, making a total of 1200 respondents. Data were obtained with the aid of a pre-tested and well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into sections with the aim of ascertaining respondents' level of education, age, gender, and religion.

Data Analysis

Data collated were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 23). Frequency distribution of variables and cross-tabulation of variables were recorded and tested for association with the level of education using the Chi-square test; the level of significance was set at 5% at a 95% Confidence Interval.

3. Result and Discussion

The current study assessed the level of education in the FCT. The study indicates that 95.7% of the respondents in the current study had attained one form of formal education or the other. The study also indicated that 4.3% had not undergone any form of formal education.

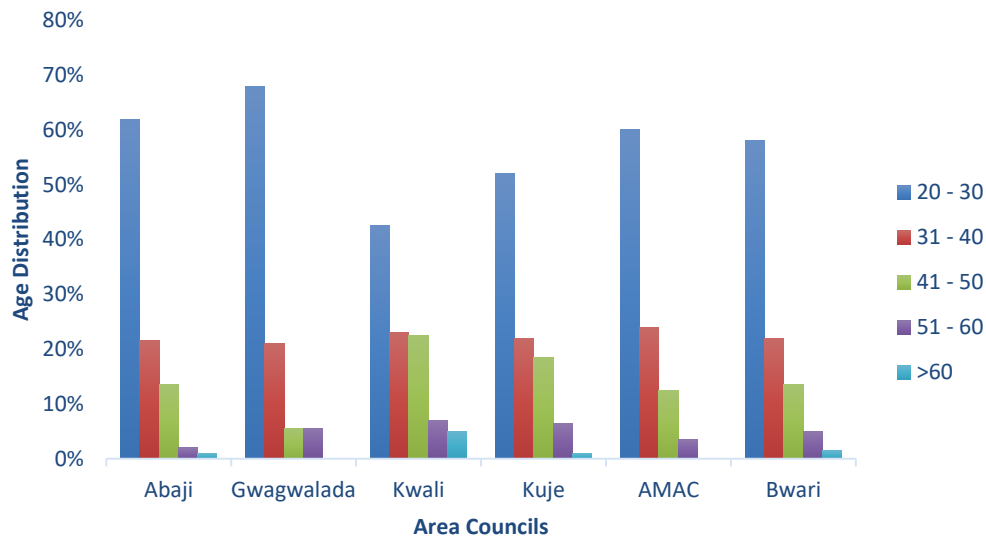


Figure 1. Age distribution across study area

The age demography of the six area councils in the FCT (Fig. 1) according to the data gathered in this study showed that in Bwari the age group with the significant contribution to the study population is 21 – 30 (36.0%).

Data shows that the age bracket 21 – 30 years had the highest population in all the six area councils. This age group also had the highest ($p < 0.05$) number of participants who are undergraduates. The age bracket 31 – 40 years formed a significantly ($p < 0.05$) high number of participants who had attained graduate and postgraduate levels of education in the study area.

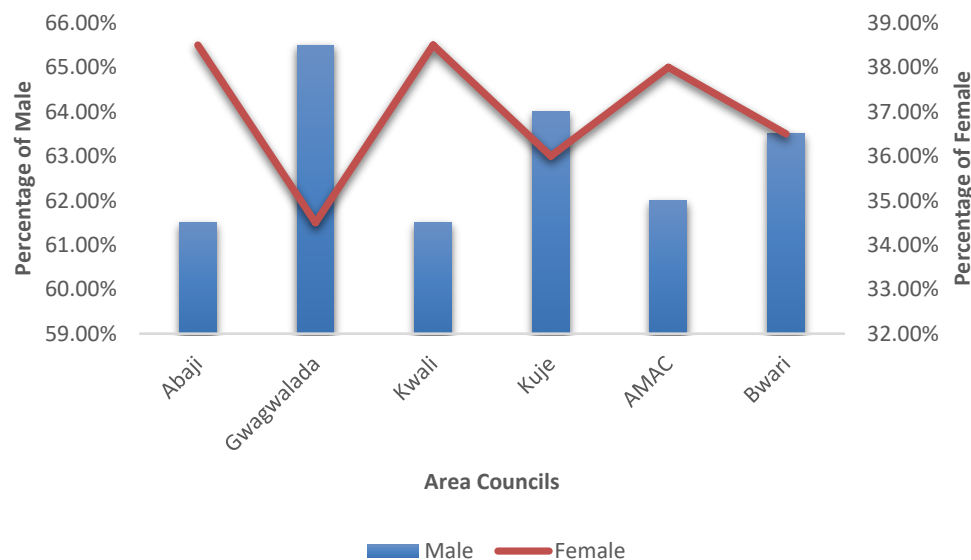


Figure 2. Gender Distribution across study area

The distribution of participants according to gender (Fig. 2) shows that males made up 63.5% of the population in Bwari while their female counterparts made up the remaining 36.5%. This trend continued in Abuja Municipal Area council with males accounting for 62.0% and females 38.0% of the study population. Similarly, in Kuje, males were 64.0% and females were 36.0%. In Kwali the males (61.5%) still made up the majority of the participants and females 38.5%. This was also the trend in Gwagwalada (males, 65.5%; females 34.5%), and Abaji (males, 61.5% and females, 38.5%). This

result varies from the study of Parajuli and Thapa (2017) who reported equal distribution of the population between males and females in India.

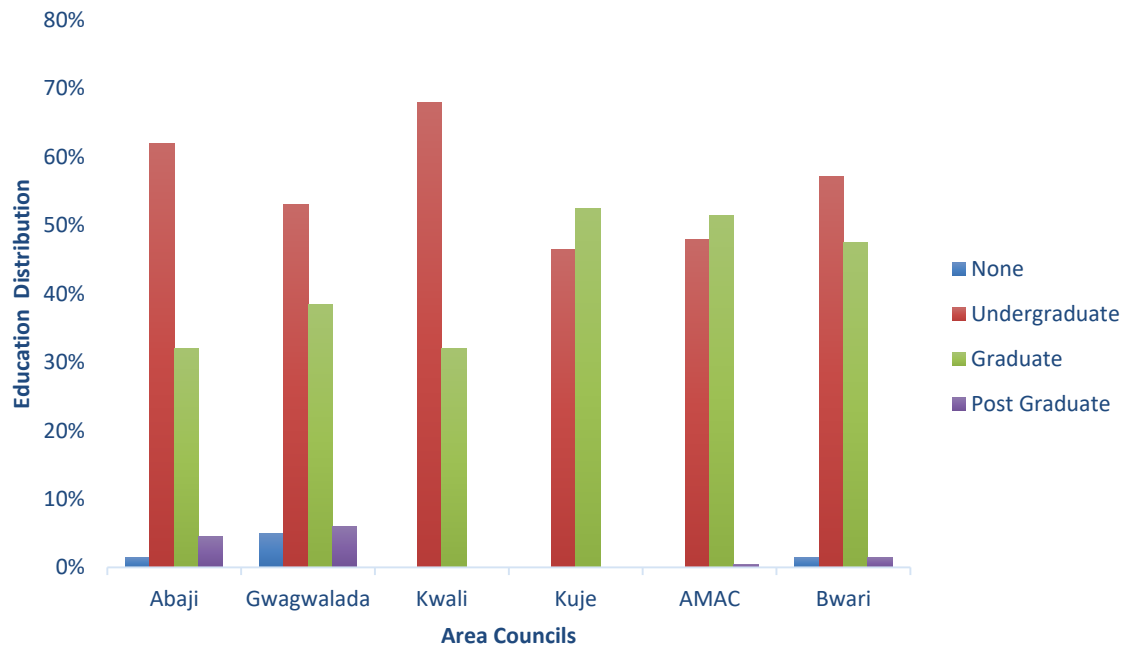


Figure 3. Level of Education across study area

In a normal distribution, it would be suggested that participants in the Municipal area council would have more people reaching the postgraduate level of education (Fig. 3). However, the result of the current study points otherwise, showing that Gwagwalada (6.0%) had the highest number of participants with postgraduate degrees, followed by Abaji (4.5%) and Bwari (3.5%). This may be partly attributed to the fact that the majority of people in the FCT reside in satellite towns rather than the city center.

Pearsons' Chi-square analysis showed that there was a significant association between gender and level of education in the Bwari area council ($p=0.001$). This association is evident in the 22.0% of females as to the 1.5% of males without formal education in the council area and in the 3.0% of males who had attained post-graduate degrees as to the 0.0% of females in the same area council. Data also suggest that more males had reached undergraduate and graduate levels of education compared to females.

The significant difference and margin of educated males compared to females in the current study buttresses the challenge and fight for the inclusion of the girl child in educational achievement in sub-Saharan Africa and particularly in Nigeria. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021) reports that large gender gaps exist in access, learning achievement, and continuation in education in many settings, most often at the expense of girls; and despite progress, more girls than boys still remain out of school; their report indicates that 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom and women account for two-thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills.

Gender had no significant association with level of education in the Municipal area council ($p=0.596$). The males and females in the area council had a non-significant distribution across levels of education. There was no participant in this area council who had not reached at least undergraduate level. Similarly, in the Kuje area council, there was no significant association between gender and level of education ($p=0.130$); this was also the occurrence in Kwali ($p=0.189$) and Gwagwalada ($p=0.453$) area councils. This result and the significant association observed in this study varies from the report of the National Center for Education Statistics (2019) who reported higher education attainment rate in females than males in the United States of America.

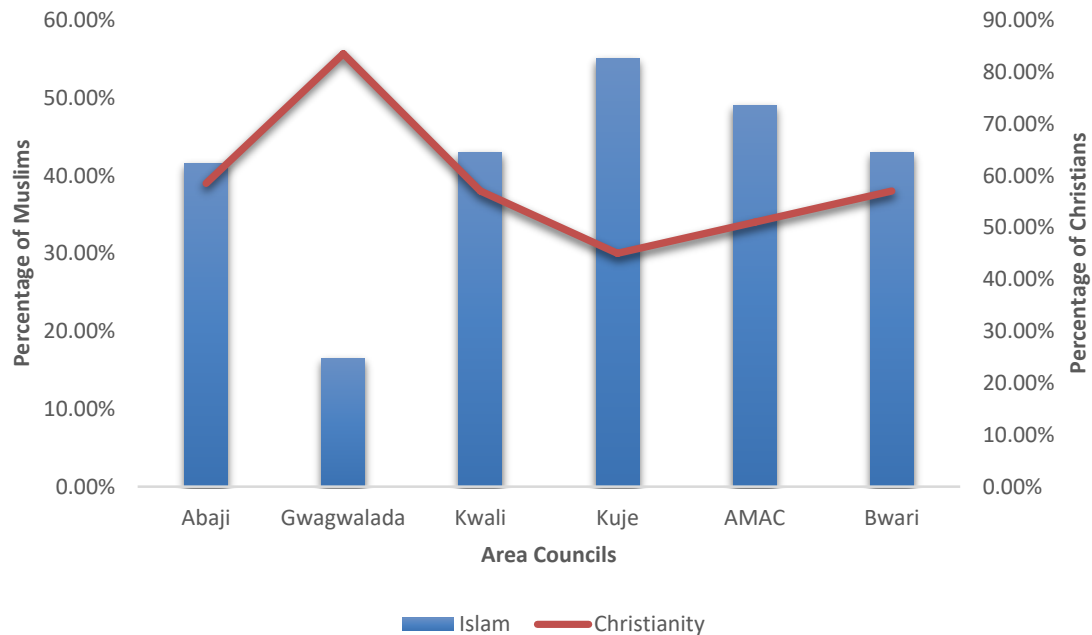


Figure 4. Distribution of religion in the study area

There was a significant association ($p=0.001$) between education and religion in the Bwari area council with Christians being the most educated respondents in the current study (Fig. 4). There was also a significant association ($p=0.020$) between education and religion in the Kuje area council, however, in Kuje, Muslims accounted for the majority of the educated respondents in the current study. A similar trend was observed in Kwali as well, only that Christians accounted for the majority of the educated respondents ($p=0.003$); in Gwagwalada as well, Christians accounted for highest educated respondents ($p=0.0034$) and in Abaji ($p=0.003$). In the municipal area council, however, there was no significant association ($p=0.596$) between education and religion. The shift between the association between religion and level of education in the different area councils in the current study could be a function of the varying population of Christians and Muslims in the study areas covered and a function of random sampling.

4. Conclusion

This study showed that the study population had attained varying levels of education with 95.7% either doing their undergraduate degree or had already graduated or had attained the postgraduate level. Whereas, 4.3% had not attained any form of formal education. The study showed a significant association between gender and education specifically in Bwari and Abaji indicating that males had a higher number of respondents who had attained such levels of education as those reported in the current study. Areas, where this was the case, had more rural locations compared to the city center and most developed satellite towns. Religion also played a role in the level of education attained in the current study.

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