

STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY OF GHANAIAIAN LANGUAGE AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ABSTRACT

The study examined the motivation of students' studying Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school. The study also sought to compare the motivation of male and female students for studying the subject as well as the gains they derive from the study of the subject. The study was conducted in senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. The cross-sectional survey utilised second and third-year students who had advanced in their study in the public and private senior high schools in then metropolis. Questionnaire was designed and used for the data gathering. The statistical tools used to analyse the data are frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation and independent samples t-test. The study disclosed that various factors such as the need to gain admission to tertiary institutions, the desire to understand the Ghanaian culture well and the need to be a true Ghanaian influence the students to opt for Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school. The study disclosed further that while there was a significant difference in the motivation of male and female students in choosing Ghanaian language as an elective subject, there was no significance difference in the motivation of students who attended public and private basic schools to study the subject. Moreover, it emerged from the study that the students derive a lot of benefits from the study of the subject while in school. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that basic school authorities need to encourage students at that level to choose Ghanaian language as an elective subject of study at the senior high school and probably continue it as a programme of study at the tertiary level of education.

Key words: Ghanaian language, English language, motivation, multi-lingual country, senior high school.

INTRODUCTION

In every educational system, especially at the pre-tertiary, language features in two forms; as a medium of instruction and a subject of study. In non-multi-lingual countries, the local language tends to serve as a language of instruction and also a subject of subject. In some multi-linguagl countries, the local language serves as the official language and medium of instructions in schools, and also a subject of study. In some other multi-lingual countries, however, a foreign language such as English, French, German and others is the official language while the local language becomes only a subject of study. Most countries in Africa are multi-lingual due to the existence of multi-ethnic groups (Owu-Ewie 2017) and Ghana is

one. As a multi-lingual country, Ghana uses English as a medium of instruction and an official communication while the Ghanaian languages are studied as subjects. This has been the practice since the colonial days. This connotes that the use of English as a medium of instruction is linked to the historic relics of the British rule which is connected with cultural imperialism (Anaya cited by Ankrah, 2015). The country has continued to use the former colonial master's language for all official activities and as a medium of instruction in schools. The use of English as an official language was promoted since the British colonial days and it is still the language of education and communication (Ankrah, 2015). This situation has not been only Ghana's issue as after independence most African countries have maintained the European language as a medium of instruction in school (Appiah & Ardila, 2020).

In fact, since colonial days, language policy has experienced a chequered history (Anyidoho, 2018). Ghana's educational policies have experienced unstable switches by emphasising and de-emphasising Ghanaian transitional bilingual education in the policy model (Ansah, 2014). During the colonial era, various committees were set up under different governors to work on language policies. This trend has continued after independence as a number of policies have been formulated from independence to now. According to Anyidoho (2018), after independence, the local language was taught from Primary 1 to Primary 3 to help students become literate in their local language so as to facilitate a smooth transition to English only instruction as they move up in the academic ladder. In the view of Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021), the uncertainties regarding the language that has to be used as the language of instruction were particularly predominant after independence as a change of government implies a change in the language policy. In 2006, the government of Ghana came out with the National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP), which makes the local languages the language of instruction for the first three years of education while English is used as a medium of instruction in the subsequent levels of education. It is noteworthy that the NALAP concept is not different from what Guggisberg's Education Ordinance of 1925 stressed that the local languages ought to be used as the language of instruction in the first three years of education and be made a subject of study at the upper level of education (Nyamekye & Baffour-Koduah, 2021). So, currently in Ghana, the language policy that regulates the use and study of English and local languages indicates that the local languages should be used as medium of instruction from Kindergarten One (KG1) to Primary Three (P3) while English is

studied as a subject at Primary One to Three (P1 to P3). From Primary Four (P4) to the tertiary level, there is a transition from L1 use as a medium of instruction to English (Owe-Ewie, 2017). This arrangement makes Ghanaian language compulsory from P1 to Junior High School.

Consequently, English is the official language in Ghana and it is widely used in education (Huerini, 2008). It is the language of instruction in schools and universities as well as the language of government and official communication. It is also an essential language in business and commerce as it is vastly spoken in the professional and corporate sector (Appiah & Ardila, 2020). Therefore, students learn English and use it in many spheres. This made Owusu-Ansah and Torto (2013) to assert that without English people may find it difficult to fully participate in social, economic and political life in the urban cities of Ghana. This is probably because, numerous communicative activities are transacted in English, which is regarded as the official and national language of the country.

Ghana is a diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic make-up (Ankrah, 2015) with many languages that experts are uncertain of. While Owusu-Ansah and Torto (2013) assert that it is estimated that Ghana has between 50 and 80 different local languages, Gorodin and Grimes cited by Twumasi (2021) contend that Ghana as a multi-lingual nation has more than 83 spoken languages including English and two sign languages. In the current scheme of things, local languages are compulsory for students at the junior high school while it is an elective subject at the senior high school. The major Ghanaian languages that are studied as elective subjects at the senior high school include Fante, Nzema, Twi, Ga, Ewe, Dagbani, Gurene, Dagare and Sisala (Nyamekye & Baffour-Koduah, 2021).

At the senior high school, General Arts students who have the interest in Ghanaian language choose it as an elective subject in addition to three other subjects. It is at the senior high school that students choose programmes they desire to specialise and that is where students' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language ought to be studied. The choice of a programme and subjects thrives on motivation. Motivation as a concept is seen as a drive to take action or do something (Zanghar, 2012). Gardner (2005) indicates that motivation has three basic concepts which are effort, desire and effect which cohesively work to influence actions. To Grocia cited by Kuranchie (2019), motivation is what influences the arousal,

selection, direction and maintenance of all human behaviour. In this study, motivation is regarded as factors that influence students to choose to pursue a subject or a Ghanaian language as an elective subject of study at the senior high school. The choice of a Ghanaian language as a subject of study is contingent on the geographical location of the school. The dominant tribe or local language in the location of the school becomes the local language for study as elective for students at the senior high school. For instance, the senior high schools in the Ashanti Region offer Akan (Asante Twi), those in the Greater Accra Region offer Ga, those in the Northern Region offer Dagbani, and those in the Volta Region offer Ewe. The current study was conducted in the Ashanti Region, whose pre-dominant local language is Asante Twi. So, those who offer Ghanaian language at the senior high school in the region study Asante Twi as an elective subject.

Problem statement

Language is seen to play dual roles of a medium of instruction and a subject of study. In Ghana, English is used as a medium of instruction and a compulsory subject for senior high school students. English, therefore, is used to determine the academic progress of students, as one needs to possess a credit pass at the senior high school level to pursue higher education (Owu-Ewie & Edu-Buando, 2014). For the Ghanaian languages, they are elective subjects at the senior high school. However, the local languages as subjects of study have experienced unfavourable reception. They do not receive the kind of respect and acceptance as English. It has been observed that parents, students and the generality of the public do not give the study of Ghanaian languages a high accord at the higher levels of education. The prestigious and functional status that English assumed has contributed to the English language receiving favourable attitudes towards its use and study in schools as opposed to the Ghanaian languages (Owu-Ewie & Edu-Buando, 2014).

In spite of the less regards for the study of Ghanaian language, however, at the senior high school, some students opt for it, hence, the motivation for a decision to study the language as an elective subject ought to be unraveled. A search of literature unveils that the motivation for students' choice of Ghanaian languages as subject of study has, however, not received much attention. Prior studies have rather been on students' study of Ghanaian languages at the university level meanwhile the choice of specialisation commences at the secondary level.

Studies have focused on students' attitude towards the study of Ghanaian languages. Owu-Ewie and Edu-Buando (2014) conducted a study into the negative attitude of Ghanaians towards study of L1 at senior high school while Edu-Buando (2010) and Sarfo (2013) studied attitude of students towards the study of Ghanaian language. Bartram (2010) also investigated students' attitude towards the study of language. On her part, Twumasi (2021) studied both attitude towards and motivation for the study of Ghanaian language. Although this study touched on motivation, it fell short of ascertaining the difference in the motivation of opting for the subject of both male and female students. Again, Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021) studied students' motivation for studying Ghanaian languages at the university level. The study was not conducted at the senior high school level. There is, therefore, not much attention on students' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language at the high school level, hence, scarcity of literature to illuminate the motivation of students to study Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school. The above knowledge gap became apparent concerning students' motivation for pursuing Ghanaian language. Hence, this study was conducted to gauge students' motivation for choosing Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school.

Objectives

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the motivating factors that influence students' choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject.
2. To analyse the difference in the motivation of male and female students and students who attended private and public choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject.
3. To find out the gains students derive from the study of the Ghanaian language while in school. [Needs to reframe the objective](#)

Significance of the Study

The study sought to ascertain what influence students to choose Ghanaian language as a subject of study at the senior high school. The results of the study are, therefore, significant in many ways. First, the results portray the situation on the ground and add to literature as there is little knowledge on factors that motivate students to study Ghanaian language at the

secondary level of education. The results add to the existing literature to increase understanding on the phenomenon studied. Second, the results of the study inform teachers of Ghanaian language on what they can also do for students to have motivation to study the subject. Third, parents and guardians also seem to benefit from the study as they will know the factors that motivate their wards to study the subject. Fourth, future researchers stand to benefit from the study as areas that require further research have been suggested.

METHODOLOGY

This section of the write-up covers the materials and methods that were used to conduct the study. The issues dealt with here are the study design used to guide the conduct of the study, the population and sample used, the instrument used to gather the data and how the data was analysed.

Study Design

The study was conducted following the quantitative approach. This approach permitted the gathering of data from a large pool of respondents. Descriptive survey design served as the blueprint for the study. This design helped to gather data to determine the status of the issue under investigation (Kuranchie, 2021). The design helped to gather data on students' motivation for choosing to offer Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school.

Population and sample

The population of the study was the students pursuing Ghanaian language as an elective subject at senior high school, specifically, those in senior high schools in the the Kumasi Metropolis. Students who were in the second and third years of the senior high schools served as the accessible population. At the time of the study, senior high school one students had not reported to school, hence, they did not take part in the study.

Using Yamane's formular ($n=N/1+N(e)^2$), 80 students pursuing Ghanaian language in senior high schools in the metropolis were chosen. Simple random sampling technique was then used to select the students to participate in the study. The lottery method of simple random sampling technique was used where in each school, the names of the students were written on pieces of papers and were selected in turns. The use of the stratified and simple random

methods was to ensure fairness and representativeness as put forward by Creswell (2014). Kuranchie (2021) also postulates that these sampling methods ought to be used in sampling if the intention of the study is to compare responses of different segments of the respondents such as male and female students and students who attended public and private basic schools. Via these methods, male and female students and students who attended public and private basic schools offering Ghanaian language as an elective subject were fairly represented in the study.

Instrument

The researcher designed a questionnaire to gather the data from the respondents of the study. Questionnaire is a research tool designed to gather data to answer research questions (Oppenheim, 1996). The questionnaire had three parts: Part A dealt with the demographic data of the respondents, Part B concerned the motivating factors that influence students' choice of Ghanaian language and Part C covered the gains that students derive from the study of the subject. The items on the questionnaire were solely close-ended which elicited factual information from the respondents.

Steps were taken to improve the validity of the instrument by subjecting it to critical review. Two experts in Ghanaian language and educational research respectively scrutinised the instrument and their inputs were incorporated prior to the pre-testing. The questionnaire was pre-tested in two senior high schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of the Ashanti Region. The pre-test yielded a result of 0.781 which was considered high for the main study. Experts accept research instruments' reliability co-efficient of more than 0.06 as good to be used for data gathering (Osuala, 2003). On this score, the instrument was deemed good to be used to collect the data.

Data analysis

The data gathered from the respondents was analysed using both descriptive and inferential analyses. Specifically, frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse the demographic data while means and standard deviation were used to analyse the data that addressed the two research questions. Regarding the data to address the differences in the motivation for the choice of study of Ghanaian language at the senior high, independent samples t-test was employed. SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data gathered from the

students who were studying Ghanaian language as an elective subject. When the data was gathered, it was screened and edited prior to analysis. The results of the data analysis are presented in tables.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section of the write-up presents the results of the study. The study sought to gauge students' motivation for the study of Ghanaian language as well as the difference in the motivation based on gender and school-type. The students who were studying Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school are very likely to further it as a programme of study at the tertiary level of education. Students who study the Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school, upon completion, can further it at the College of Education or the university. Ghanaian languages are taught at different levels at the traditional universities in Ghana such as University of Education, Winneba, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University of Ghana (Owu-Ewie & Edu-Buando, 2014). The opportunities for furthering one's education at the tertiary education in Ghana as well as other foreign countries have the potency to induce students to study the language at the senior high school.

Demographic data of respondents

The survey collected background information of the respondents such as gender, basic school attended, age and form. The results of the analysis of the data on the gender, type of junior high school attended, age and form of the respondents are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Table 1 displays the results of data analysis of gender of the students surveyed.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	37	46.3
Female	43	53.8
Total	80	100

From Table 1, the data analysis reveals that out of the 80 students, 37 (46.3%) are males and 43 (53.8%) are females. The result indicates that there are more female students pursuing Ghanaian language in the selected schools than the male students. Thus, the majority of the

students who participated in the study are females, implying that female students in the schools are more interested in the study of Ghanaian than the male students.

Table 2 presents information on the type of basic school that the students attended prior to the senior high school. Since both public and private basic schools offer Ghanaian language as a core subject at that level, there was the need to uncover the motivation of the students studying the subject as an elective at the senior high school.

Table 2: Type of Basic School Attended by Respondents

School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public	47	58.8
Private	33	41.2
Total	80	100

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it can be observed that out of the number of respondents, 47 (58.8%) were from public basic schools while 33 (41.2%) were from private basic schools. This indicates that a significant majority of the respondents attended public basic schools.

The age range of the respondents who participated in the study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 16	2	2.5
16-18	68	85.0
Above 18	10	12.5
Total	80	100

According to the data analysis presented in Table 3, only 2 (2.5%) of the students were below the age of sixteen. The majority of the students, 68 (85.0%), were between the ages of 16 and 18 years, while approximately 10 (12.5%) were over 18 years. The result indicates that the largest group of respondents were those between 16 and 18 years, which is the normal senior high school age. Normally, by six years, the Ghanaian child starts basic school and at age 16, he/she should be in the senior high school. The result portrays that the vast

majority of the students who took part in the study started their formal education education on time and did not have breaks along the way.

The result of the data analysis on the forms of the respondents are reported in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Forms of Respondents

Form (%)	Frequency	Percentage
SHS 2	36	45.0
SHS 3	44	55.0
Total	80	100

The result indicates that 36 (45.0%) of the students were in SHS2 while 44 (55.0%) were in SHS3. Therefore, the majority of the respondents came from SHS3, implying that the final year students who were offering Ghanaian language at the selected schools outnumbered those who were in the second year.

Main Results of the Study

In order to address the research problem of the study, two research questions and one hypothesis were developed. While the first research elicited data from the respondents on the factors that influenced the students to opt for Ghanaian language as an elective subject, the second ascertained the gains that they derive from the study of the subject. On the other hand, the hypothesis was formulated to examine the male and female students and students who attended public and private basic schools' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as a subject of study.

Research Question 1: What motivate students to study Ghanaian Language at the senior high school?

Table 5 depicts result on the motivation of respondents for the study Ghanaian Language as an elective subject.

Table 5: Motivation for offering Ghanaian Language as an elective subject

	N	M	SD
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I chose to pursue Ghanaian lang. as part of Gen Art	80	1.50	1.19
It is easy subject I can do very well	80	2.19	1.09
It will enable me to gain admission in tertiary	80	3.38	1.14
It will help me get employment easily	80	2.44	1.05
I want to understand Ghanaian culture well	80	3.76	1.08
I want to improve my proficiency in Ghanaian lang	80	3.78	0.93
It will make me a true Ghanaian	80	3.86	1.00
It will help me acquire competency to teach	80	2.16	1.03
I hope to pursue Ghanaian lang. at tertiary level	80	3.38	1.31

According to Table 5, the respondents identified several motivating factors for offering Ghanaian language as an elective subject. These include a desire to understand Ghanaian culture well ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.08$), improve proficiency in the language ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.93$), become a true Ghanaian ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.00$), the hope of pursuing it at the tertiary level ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.31$) and its potential to enable admission to tertiary level ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.14$). However, pursuing Ghanaian language as just part of the General Art subjects ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.19$), the perception that it is the easiest subject to do well in ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.19$), its perceived ability to facilitate employment ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.054$), acquire the ability to teach others ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.03$) were not found to be significant factors that motivated the respondents to offer Ghanaian language as an elective.

It is observed that the major motivators for the students' choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject are their desire to understand Ghanaian culture, the quest to improve their proficiency in the language, their wish to become true Ghanaians, and the potential of the subject to facilitate their admission to the tertiary level level of education. This is consistent with the findings of Twumasi (2021) that both instrumental and integrative factors motivated the students to study Ghanaian language. Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021) also found similar factors that motivate students to study Ghanaian languages at the university level.

H0: There is no significant difference in the male and female students' motivation for studying Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school.

Having established the motivating factors for offering Ghanaian language as a subject of study at the senior high school, there was the need to examine the differences in the motivation of the male and female students. To aid the understanding of the motivation of male and female students' choice of Ghanaian language as a subject of study, a hypothesis

was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the independent samples t-test is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test on male and female students' motivation

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
M o t i v a t i o n	Male	37	2.92	1.03	78	4.125	0.034
	Female	43	2.11	0.98			

The result in Table 6 portrays that there is significant difference in the male and female students' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject, Male (M=2.92, SD=1.03) and those of female (M=2.11, SD=0.98), t(4.125), p=0.034. The p-value is less than the significant value 0.05. Hence, significant difference was found in the two genders' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject at the senior high school. The result implies that the gender of the students did influence their motivation for the study of Ghanaian language.

This finding of the study is inconsistent with that of Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021), which did not find significant difference in the motivation of male and female students in the study of Ghanaian language. The difference in the findings of the present study and that of Nyamekye and Baffour-Koduah (2021) may be due to the differences in the levels of education used in the respective studies. While the previous study gauged university students' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as a programme of study, the present study assessed senior high school students' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject.

H0: There is no significant difference in the motivation of students who attended public and private schools' choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject.

Having established the motivating factors for offering Ghanaian language as a subject of study at the senior high school, there was also the need to examine the differences in the motivation of the students who attended public and private basic schools. To aid the understanding of the motivation of students from public and private basic schools, a

hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the independent samples t-test is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test on public and private school students' motivation

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
M o t i v a t i o n	Public	47	2.72	1.15	78	4.352	0.214
	Private	33	2.57	1.46			

The result in Table 6 portrays that there is no significant difference in the motivation of students who attended public and private schools' choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject, Public (M=2.72, SD=1.15) and those of private (M=2.57, SD=1.46), $t(4.352)$, $p=0.214$. The p-value is greater than the significant value 0.05. Hence, no significant difference was found in the two categories of schools' motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language as an elective subject of study. The result implies that the category of the basic school the students attended did not influence their motivation for the study of the subject.

The result is a bit surprising as one would have expected differences in the motivation for the choice of Ghanaian language between students who attended public and private basic schools. This is because students who attend private basic schools are regarded as those from the elitist homes and would not prefer the study of local language.

Research question 2: What are students' views on the benefits of studying Ghanaian Language?

The study deemed it fit to find out from the students the benefits they derive from studying the subject while in school. This question is necessary as it would help know whether students' aims of choosing to read the subject were being achieved or not. The results of the data analysis are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Benefits from Pursuing Ghanaian Language

	N	M	SD
It is helping me study other subjects	80	3.63	0.95
It is helping me become important	80	1.85	0.99
It is helping me build good relationship with others	80	3.53	0.95
It is helping me communicate effectively	80	3.74	1.04
It is helping me gain more knowledge in life	80	2.04	0.88
It is helping to boast my cultural identity	80	3.96	0.96
It is helping me to develop myself	80	3.61	0.89
It is helping me to feel famous	80	1.48	1.14

The purpose of data in Table 8 is to determine the opinions of respondents on the advantages of studying Ghanaian language at the senior high school. According to the results, studying Ghanaian language was beneficial in the following ways: it helps them to learn other subjects ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.95$), helps build good relationships with other students ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.95$), improves their communication skills ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.04$), it helps to boost cultural identity ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.96$), and it aids in personal development. However, there was a unanimous disagreement that pursuing the subject helps them become important ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.99$), helps to gain more knowledge in life ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.88$) and it helps them feel famous ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.14$).

It is realised that while in school, the study of Ghanaian language is helping them to study other subjects, develop good relationship with others, improve their communication skills, boosting their cultural identity and feel famous. These ideas indicate that the study of Ghanaian language is beneficial in many ways. These are noteworthy discovery that ought to be of interest to students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders of education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ghanaian language as an elective subject of study at the senior high school level has been a practice in the Ghanaian educational system for long, yet, the motivation for students' choice of the subject had received little attention. The need to uncover the students' motivation for the study of Ghanaian language is essential as that is the first instance that they have the option to do that. To fill the knowledge gap, a cross-sectional survey was conducted in both public and private basic schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. The study discovered that varied reasons accounted for their decision to choose Ghanaian language as one of their elective subjects. The motivation for the choice of the subject, however, differed between the male

and female students of the selected schools. The male students had higher levels of motivation than the females. However, same result was not found between the students who attended public and private basic schools. There was no significant difference in the motivation of students who attended public and private basic schools concerning their choice of Ghanaian language as a subject of study. The study further revealed that the students derive a lot of benefits from the study of the subject while in school. It can be concluded that the study of Ghanaian language at the senior high school is triggered by many reasons, which pay off as the study of the subject is beneficial to students.

It is, therefore, recommended that authorities in basic schools need to encourage more students at that level to choose the subject as an elective subject of study at the senior high school. Besides, as the present study was conducted on students who had opted for Ghanaian languages as an elective subject, future research ought to gauge the demotivators for not opting for Ghanaian languages as an elective subject. Such a study should target the senior high school General Arts students who are not offering Ghanaian language as a subject. Again, future research should compare the motivation of public and private students for pursuing Ghanaian language as a programme of study at the tertiary level of education.

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