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PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON EARLY GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN WAMAKKO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, SOKOTO STATE

By

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the factors that hinders girl-child Education in Wamakko local government, Sokoto State, Nigeria. and the possible solutions. A descriptive research design was used for the study. A total of 135 parents with girls of school-going age were selected from the twenty-five thousand (25,000) study population, using a multi-stage cluster sampling method. The specific objectives of this study were to assess the factors that hinders girl-child education in Wamakko local government area and possible solutions. Therefore, four research question were formulated to guide the study. The instrument for data collection was an adapted instrument title "Parental Variables on Girls' Child Education Questionnaire (PVGCDQ)"that was administered to students after validation and tested for reliability. Data generated from these instruments were analyzed using descriptive statistics (SPSS). A reliability index score of 0.85 was obtained through cronchba alfa. The findings revealed the perception of parents that girlchild education was against their religion and culture, poverty, co-education, parents' lack of education, hawking amongst girls, early marriage and demand for girls' labour at home. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made; adequate career guidance and counselling service should be employed to guide student especially the female, the importance of education and more awareness campaign for improvement in girl-child education that will involve both traditional and religious leaders as they exert great influence upon their people.

Keywords: Girl-child, education, hawking, culture, religion

Introduction

The world demographic profile shows that Nigeria, the tenth most populous country, represents one-fifth of the population of the African continent. Various population censuses have consistently shown that children (0-14 years of age) constitute a significant proportion of the population in Nigeria. Numerous challenges exist especially in developing countries Nigeria inclusive that significantly hinder girls' access to western education. Millions of girls are still being denied education because their parents play a pivotal role in hindering their access to Western education.

Education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of the society (Ocho, 2005), and also a key to a successful life, especially girl-child education (Michael,2011). Denying the girl-child access to education implies making her a dysfunctional member of the society. Statistics show that many girls are not enrolled in school due to attitude of parents toward girl-child education, there are almost five and a half million (5.5 million) out-of-school girls in Nigeria, and only 4% of young girls in North-West can read and write (UNESCO, 2018). Also, (UNESCO, 2018) further stated that two-thirds of the 774 million illiterates' people in the world are females. Furthermore,132 million girls between the age of 6-17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary school-age mostly in developing countries of Africa will never enter a classroom (Bello, 2014).

In traditional Nigerian society, there exists the degenerate belief that women are second class citizens (Enejere, 1991). A woman is considered a man's property or pleasure object, she is also considered a machine meant for producing children, mostly in the northern region of the country such as Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Borno, e.t.c. This situation has resulted in unfair treatment of women especially with regards to education.

Data from Sokoto State Ministry of Education indicate that 44% of the total school-age children are out-of-school. The percentage of male enrolment is (69.8%) compared to (30.2%) for girls. The participation of girls in Western education in the local government like most local governments in Sokoto and North-West in general is very low due to some socio-cultural and religious factors (Ministry of Education Sokoto, 2019).

Wamakko Local Government is among the 149 local governments created throughout the country by the Federal Military Government from 1981 up to 1983. The present reconstituted Wamakko Local Government therefore commenced operation officially on the 1st July, 1989. The local government currently comprises of five (5)

districts namely, Kware, Durbawa, Hamma'ali, Tsaki, and Ummaruma. The local government also consists of 11 wards and more than 200 hamlets with a population of 133,899 (National Population Commission, 2006). Like many other parts of Northern Nigeria, western education came into the area during colonial era. Sokoto girl's centre was established in 1934 in Sokoto for the enrolment of female pupils (Bello, 2014).

Despite the establishment of the centre, females from the area were not opportuned to attend the centre. The first secondary school was established in the area in 1970, even though the school was only meant for male students. For a long time, there was no girls' school in the area. Many parents were reluctant to send their female children to boarding girl's schools available in the state. Only few female pupils from elite and affluent families in the area were able to attend secondary schools in other parts of the state. The enrolment of female pupils improved in the area due to the establishment of some junior secondary schools in Wamakko, Durbawa and Hamma'ali in 2000. The schools accommodated both males and females' pupils. This provides opportunity for female pupils to have access to secondary school education in their respective areas. Problems started arising due to mingling of male and female pupils (Muhammad *et al.*, 2019).

Many females of school age in the local government are still out of school with many of them engaging in hawking. This study aims to find out the factors hindering girl-child Education in Wamakko local government Sokoto Nigeria and the possible solutions.

Statement of the Problem

The dilemma faced by the education industry in Nigeria as a developing country has also contributed to the widening gap on the issue of gender equity among Nigerian children. Despite the on-going reform programme embarked upon by the federal government of Nigeria to address the issue of gender imbalance in education. This is because girls' access to basic education especially in the Northern states of Nigeria, has remained low (UNICEF 2007) cited in Salman, Olawoye & Yahaya (2011). Buttressing this, the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund states that only 20% of women in the North West and North East of the country are literate and have attended school while the North central and North West present the worst scenario (UNICEF 2007) Despite all this, the girl education for the girl child, just as it is for the male child, is generally considered to be one of the core rights. For instance, in Sokoto, in the North

Western part of the country, UNICEF African Girls Education Initiative is 25% compared to 59% for boys.

The child is bearing the double jeopardy she suffers as a child and suffers additional discrimination as a girl-child. The female child especially in the northern part of Nigeria are denied access to education and several of them are exposed to harmful traditional practices like genital mutilation, denial of education, child-trafficking and early marriage. Therefore, the researcher tends to find out parental influence on early girl child education in Wamakko, Sokoto State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out factors that neglect early-child education in Wamakko, Sokoto State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does poverty prevent parents from sending their girls to school in Wamakko, Sokoto State?
2. To what extent does parent educational background influence girls child education in Wamakko, Sokoto State?
3. To what extent does parental demand for girls labour at home impedes girl child education in Wamakko, Sokoto State?
4. To what extent does parental decision on early marriage to the female child affects girls 'child education?

Concept of the Girl-Child Education

Within the context of the Nigerian environment, several definitions of the child exist. The national Child Welfare Policy (1989) as cited by Ada (2007) defines the girl child as person below 14 years of age. Offorma (2009) defines the girl-child as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This period is made up of infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stages of development. The girl-child is seen as a young female person, who would eventually grow into a woman and marry. She is conditioned to look after the young ones, the home and the kitchen. She is taught to be obedient and to internalize the notion she is someone' s property and responsibility. She is her parent property and responsibility at childhood and her husband's in adulthood.

The gender apartheid places the girl-child in a disadvantaged position. Her potentials are suppressed and self actualization is not achieved

Factors that Affect Girls Early Girl's Child Education

Cultural belief

On the problems hindering girl-child education, the study found out that girl-child education was against the cultural belief of the society, the society believes that the girl-child future is in the hands of the parents. This means that all domestic activities within the home is her responsibility as a daughter to take care of while when she passes a certain age in her adolescent period, she supposes to get married not to stay in her parents house any longer. After marriage she becomes a house wife to take care of the children and handle the domestic work at home. Going to never meant for the girl child rather it was meant for the males to attend and provide food for the family. The girl-child education was against the cultural and religious beliefs. Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) also argued that there was a very slow progress on girl-child education over the years due to cultural traditions and practices of the parents.

Poverty

Poverty was also another factor hindering girl-child education, as found out by that poverty was among the factors preventing parents from sending their girls to schools. Families that couldn't take their children to schools especially the female's child was due to socio-economic background of the parents, if they can't afford to send the females to school, they will rather engage the child into hawking within the community especially in the rural area of the state. Thereby exposing the child to unethical behaviors practices that is forbidden in the society. Muhammad et al (2014) also found similar findings among parents in Sokoto South local government.

Early Marriage

When parents undergoing financial crisis within the home, they are been tempted to get their daughter into marriage in their early age (adolescent stage). Most common parents that fall as victims in getting their children into marriage are those that easily convince by the Sharia Law and her very religious within the community. Early marriage was another factors hindering girl-child education. This correspond with the findings of Onoyase (2018) who found out that parents in Sokoto state believed that girls should be given out in marriage and the scarce resources available should be used to provide

education to the male children. Other factors hindering girl-child education identified by the study includes the existence of co-education in schools, lack of parents' education, street hawking amongst girls as well as the demand for girls' labour at home.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This research employed a survey method. The descriptive survey was used with the aim of finding out the attitude of parents toward girl-child education in Wamakko local government.

Population of the Study

The study population consists of all parents with female children of school going age in Wamakko local government area, Sokoto State. The study population is estimated to be around twenty-five thousand (25,000) (National Population Commission, 2006).

Sample and Sampling Technique

This research work selected one hundred and thirty-five (135) respondents out of the twenty-five thousand (25,000) study population. The sampling technique employed in the study was probability sampling using multi cluster sampling. The study area Wamakko local government consists of five (5) districts, namely Wamakko district, Durbawa district, Hamma'ali district, Ummaruma district, and Tsaki district. The local government also comprises eleven wards. One ward was selected from each of the aforementioned districts. Therefore, the wards selected includes Wamakko ward, Tsaki/walaka'i ward, Durbawa ward, Hamma'ali/Marabawa ward, and Gidanrugga ward. Therefore, twelve (12) questionnaires were allocated to each of the five (5) selected wards.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection is Parental Variables on Girls' Child Education Questionnaire (PVGCDQ) will consist of two section A and B.The instrument used in collecting data from the respondents for this study is self-designed structured questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents concerning their attitude toward girl-child education. Considering the fact that majority of respondents of this study could not answer the questionnaire in English language, the questionnaire was translated into Hausa language to enable them fill it appropriately without difficulties.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instruments were trial testing using a separate sample size from the same population of the study. After collecting data from the trial test, the reliability coefficient

of the instrument (PVGCDQ) was computed using Cronhach's coefficient alpha method on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software Version 25, and reliability of the instrument was 0.78 which shows a good reliability.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was employed in analysing the data gathered from the respondents through the use of tables, frequencies and percentages.

Research Question One: To what extent does poverty prevent parents from sending girls to school.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by whether poverty prevents parents from sending girls to school

Parents' lack of education prevents them from sending girls	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Strongly agreed	63	47
Agreed	31	23
Disagreed	27	20
Strongly disagreed	14	10
Total	135	100

Table 1 displays the distribution of respondents by whether poverty prevents parents from sending girls to school. 63 respondents(47%) strongly agreed that poverty prevents parents from sending girls to school, thirty-one (31) respondents (23%) also agreed, twenty-seven (27) respondents (20%) disagreed, while fourteen (14) respondents (10%) strongly disagreed. From the responses, it shows poverty prevents parents from sending their girl-child to schools.

Research Question Two: To what extent does parents' educational background prevents from sending their girls to school

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by parents' lack of education prevents parents from sending girls to school.

Parents' lack of education prevents them from sending girls to school.	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Strongly agreed	33	25
Agreed	51	38
Disagreed	37	27
Strongly disagreed	14	10
Total	135	100

Table 2 shows distribution of respondents by whether parents' lack of education prevents them from sending girls to school. Thirty-three (33) respondents (25%) strongly agreed, fifty-one (51) respondents (38%) also agreed, thirty-seven (37) respondents(27%) disagreed, while fourteen (14) respondents (10%) disagreed. From the responses in the table, it shows that most parents' lack of education prevents them from sending their girl-child to school.

Research Questions Three: To what extent does demand for girls' labour at home impedes girl-child education.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by whether demand for girls' labour at home impedes girl-child education

Demand for girls' labour impedes girl-child Education	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Strongly agreed	33	24
Agreed	20	15
Disagreed	43	32
Strongly disagreed	39	29
Total	135	100

Table 3 shows distribution of respondents by whether demand for girls' labour at home impedes girl-child education. Thirty-three (33) respondents (24%) strongly agreed, twenty (20) respondents (15%) agreed, forty-three (43)respondents (32%) disagreed, while thirty-nine (39) respondents (29%) strongly disagreed. From the responses, it can be deduced that most respondents disagree that girls' labour at home impedes girl-education in Wamakko.

Research Question Four: To what extents early marriage hinders girl-child education

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by whether early marriage hinders girl-child education

Early marriage hinders girl-child education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	91	76
No	44	23
Total	135	100

Table 4 shows distribution of respondents by whether early marriage hinders girl-child education. Ninety-one (91) respondents(76%) opined that early marriage hinders girl-child education, while Fourty four (44) respondents (23%) opined otherwise. From the above response, Early marriage is also a factor that hinders girl-child education.

Conclusion

Education is the right of every girl-child, a key to transforming her life and making her a responsible member of society. Without education, girls are denied the opportunity to develop their full potentials and play productive roles in the society. Although some efforts has been made to improve girl-child education in Nigeria, much still needs to be done if women must realize their potentials and fully contribute to the political, socio-economic and technological transformation of the country.

On the solutions to the problems hindering girl-child education as identified in this study, measures such as increased awareness campaign for improvement in girl-child education, monetary assistance for parents with girls of school going age, cancellation of co-education sending female teachers to girls' schools, providing more schools'

infrastructure, banning street hawking among girls as well as delaying marrying girls until after secondary school were identified as measures to be taken for improvement in girl-child education.

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