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PARENTS' PERCEPTION ON GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated Parents perception of girl-child education. This study aims at finding out whether gender disparities and inequalities still occur despite campaign against it. The researchers employed the descriptive survey method for the study. The population comprised parents in Ilorin metropolis. The sample comprised 250 parents that were randomly selected from all the Local Government Areas in Ilorin metropolis. The questionnaire titled "Perception of Parents on Girl-Child Education Questionnaire" (PPGCEQ) was administered to the respondents to collect relevant data. The t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to test the two null hypotheses generated for the study. The findings show that, there is no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education based on age while there is significant difference on the perception of parents on Girl-child education based on educational qualification. This means that parents in Ilorin metropolis have positive perception regarding girl-child education. Based on the findings, it was recommended that counsellors should intensify effort to evolve guidance and counselling services that will meet the needs of the female students in their respective schools to reinforce the favourable disposition and encourage others who might be less favourably disposed to it.

Keywords: *Equality, Girl-Child, Education, Parents, Perception, Ilorin*

Introduction

In spite of some notable progress made in the recent years, girl-child's education in Nigeria has continued to suffer certain setback. One of the

fundamental human rights a citizen of any nation is expected to enjoy is un-inhibited access to basic quality education irrespective of gender, race, colour, and religious belief. It is un-arguably agreed

that women worldwide contribute immensely and even actively to economy and earnings of any known nation.

Girls are known to be carriers and mothers of the nation. It's a common knowledge that when one educates a woman, he invariably educates a nation. According to Dogar, Azeem, Feroze and Shakoor (2011), it is generally recognized that to teach a boy is to teach one person but to teach a girl is to teach a family. Both boys and girls must have equal access to education in order to become good mothers and fathers and consequently, produce good future generations. Education for both gender is important and non negotiable for building a virile nation (Terhenba & Umaru, 2015).

Girl-child's education is considered an intrinsic right and critical leverage to reaching other development objectives. Providing girls with qualitative and quantitative education helps breaks the cycle of poverty, Educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will, less likely to die in untimely pregnancy and more likely to have healthy babies with ability to send their children to school. When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human right and gender equality, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come (UNICEF, 2012).

Girls' education is essential to the achievement of quality learning relevant to the 21st century, including girls' transition to and performance in secondary school and beyond. Adolescent girls that attend school delay marriage and childbearing and are less vulnerable to disease including HIV and AIDS and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning

power. Evidence shows that the return of a year of secondary education for girls correlates to a 25 percent increase in wages later in life (UNICEF, 2012).

UNICEF (2003) stressed that all hands are on deck in the global political scene, as girl-child education continues to stimulate the involvement of designated United Nation agencies. Notable among the agencies responsible for girl-child education is the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) which is an affiliate of the Millennium Development Goals. This was established in April 2000. It was emphasized that entities and tasks like-minded national and international actors to work in synergy with the program of Universal Primary Education so that, by 2015, without extension, it will bridge the gender barriers experienced in the enrolment of primary and post primary pupils. Negative parental attitudes and perception were among the barriers earlier identified to negatively affect girl-child education, hence the need to assess the current perception of parents in Ilorin metropolis towards girl-child education.

Education has been described as the total process through which an individual acquires knowledge, skills and abilities to enable him or her function maximally and contributes positively towards the meaningful development of her society. It is also an individual's opportunity and should be made available not only to the male child but also to female child (Terhenba & Umar, 2015). Encyclopedia (2005) as being reported by Amirikpa, (2010) sees education as a tool that teaches someone how to solve the particular problems and to know what is fair and unfair, rational and irrational and to help

one defines the life goals and abilities to achieve them. Amirikpa, (2010) noted that education involves an individual to adapt anywhere; it builds self-esteem and self-respect, it brings out the best in individual and enables one to assert yourself positively and most importantly. Education helps one to identify his/her life, be self-relevant and contribute to national and community development. All the above seem to underscore Nigeria's national policy in education (2004) thrust which seeks among other things to create and promote self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress also, Amirikpa, (2010) also stressed.

Abdulkareem (1992) cited in Ibrahim (2005) affirmed that a girl-child is known as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This equivalent the age prior to the time she becomes young adult. This period covers the crèche, nursery and primary and secondary school age. Early childhood represents (0-5years), primary school age represents (6-12years) while secondary school age is between (12-18years).

The issue of girl-child education is of great concern to many educationists, even though its negative impact is more pronounced in the Northern part of Nigeria. Various efforts have been made by Federal Government of Nigeria to facilitate the female child education in some degree and dimension equal to their male counterparts. These efforts include the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000, which was followed up in 2007 by "Education For All", (EFA) proclamation.

Three of the six goals of EFA focus on children and they are as follows;

- i. Expanding and improving comprehensive early children care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- ii. Ensuring that by 2015, children particularly girls and other children in difficult circumstances including those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory basic education of good quality.
- iii. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality by 2015 with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education (Nwigwe, 2005 & Ajavon, 2014).

The above target goals are stressed further in the educational component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which meant to achieve the following;

1. Achieve universal primary education.
2. Ensure that by 2015 children (boys and girls) will be able to complete a full course of primary education schooling.
3. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary school education preferably by 2015, and at all levels not later than 2015 (Nwigwe, 2005 & Ajavon, 2014).

To accomplish all the educational goals of the above before 2015 the Federal Government of Nigeria had organized in 1994, a national seminar on the needs to

encourage girl-child education in the country and consequently inaugurated the National Child Rights implementation committee with the mandate to make all the action plans on girl-child education a reality. Also in 2005 the Federal Government organized another seminar having noticed low enrolment in Nigeria educational system especially at the lower level which affects girl-child education mostly. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria published, in 2006 a national policy statement on gender disparity in Nigerian basic education system. In another endeavour in 2007, another guideline was published for the full implementation of the National Policy of gender disparity in her basic education. The Nigeria basic education witnessed series of grassroots' mobilization in 2006, and the most recent campaign on promoting girl-child education was held 10th of June, 2016. All these campaign programmes were held in the federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Despite all of the afore-mentioned efforts made by the Federal Government in Nigeria, female or girl-child education evidently continues to suffer negligible disadvantage in a world where there impacts and roles cannot be over emphasized.

In a research endeavour by Ibrahim (2015), on factors inhibiting the educational attainment of girl-child as perceived by secondary school teachers in Patigi L.G.A of Kwara State, it was found that most of the parents of the children investigated preferred to send their daughters to Quranic schools rather than western education. The parents were of the opinion that Western education is

occupation oriented and since the occupation of the girl-child is to get married and look after the affair of home so no need for her getting a western education. They believed that a girl-child is to look after the baby, fetch water, gather firewood, go to the farm, fry "kuli-kuli" (groundnut cake) and other household chores in addition to hawking for the sustenance of the family if need be. Ilorin is also a predominantly Muslim society in Kwara state, though the capital city.

Less enrolment of girls' population in the country education system demands some effort of investigation, taking into cognizance different variables that may affect overall situation of girls' education in these areas. Parents' attitude is key variable to be investigated in these circumstances as it played a major role in the girl-child's educational achievement. This is because parents' perception and opinion reflect succinctly the cultural and social picture of the segment of the society she belongs to. Major purpose of this study is to explore the mind-set of parents toward their daughters' education so that if there are some barriers and unhealthy attitude towards girl-child education, it can be unveiled and consequently discouraged through a planned programme of action recommended by the researcher. This study aimed at investigating the perception of parents on girl-child education.

Statement of the Problem

The urge to enhance equity and quality in education at all levels has received enormous motivation over the last decade by governments at all levels. Great effort has been mounted to get more girls into schools, however, data from

Education Management Information System (EMIS, 2010) imply general fall in primary enrollment from 2006 to 2010 with the exemption of Northwest, though data from private schools were not inclusive. Contrarily, the data indicate high enrolment for public Junior Secondary school enrollment. The disparity in enrollment vary based on region with low attendance in the north than in the south, in rural areas than city, for girls than boys and for the muslims than non-muslims

Nigeria Education Data survey (NED, 2010) outlined reasons advanced by parents/guardians to justify the poor state of girl-child education include: distance of the school, the need for girls to do some domestic chores and finance. Other factors identified to contribute to non-enrollment, absenteeism and or dropout of girl child from schools include: ill health, lack of food, child labour, need to care for sibling or sick relations and parental attitudes and perception.

Various studies have identified parental perception that serve as barriers to girls' continual and significant involvement in formal education. Chege et. al (2008), Nyemutu-Roberts et.al (2009) Dunne et.al (2013) reported that some muslim parents/guardians opined that public schools are un-Islamic and or too westernized and or corrupting. Some parents also believed that any economic benefit from formal education will go to the husband's home (Dunne et al, 2013). Okojie had earlier revealed that parents were of the opinion that educating girls may lead to exogamy (marrying outside the community), marrying late and running the risk of being childless or damaging their marriage prospects (UNICEF, 2012).

Other studies found that ordering of the socialization process, for some Muslims Hausa and Hausa-Fulani in particular, demands that girls should be sent to hawk goods as a means of strengthening self-reliance and meeting potential suitors (Robson 2004 & Usman 2010). It was also reported by Sibbons et al. (2006); Para-Mallam (2010) that if parents/guardians can only afford to educate one child or a few children, boys are often preferred. In a survey in the North Central, 28% of respondents thought that where funds are limited a boy should always receive an education before a girl, compared to just 13% of respondents in the South-South (Afrobarometer, 2012). From the review of literature, it could be deduced that economic factors, cultural beliefs regarding marriages as well as ethnicity affect parental perception on girl-child education. Ilorin is a predominantly muslim populated community, a factor that has been identified to affect perception of some parents on girl-child education, hence the need to investigate whether parents in Ilorin will also be affected by this misconceived religious notion. The study also tried to find out how age and educational attainments affect parent perception on girl-child education.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of parents on girl-child education in Ilorin Metropolis?
2. Is there any difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education on the basis of age?
3. Is there any significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education on the basis of educational qualification?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education on the basis of age.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education on the basis of educational qualification.

Methodology

The type of research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey method. Ibrahim, Landu and Opadokun (2004) argued that descriptive survey method assists the researchers to cover a wide range of educational information through the use of questionnaires and observations. This is in line with Akindutire (2009) also noted that a descriptive survey method entails collection of data to test hypotheses or to answer research question pertaining to the current status of the subject of the study.

The samples of this study were purposively selected from the three (3) Local Government Areas that constitute Ilorin metropolis. They are: Ilorin East, Ilorin West and Ilorin South. Two (2) secondary schools were purposively selected from each of the L.G.A. From Ilorin East (Government Day Secondary School, Maraba and Government Girls Day Secondary School, Amilegbe), Ilorin West (Queen Elizabeth School and Baboko Secondary School) and from Ilorin South (Government Day Secondary School, Tanke and Bishop Smith Memorial College). In line with this, a total of ninety (90) respondents (consisting of both academic and administrative staff that have children) were selected from Ilorin East, eighty (80) respondents were

selected from Ilorin West and eighty (80) respondents were also selected from Ilorin South making a total of two hundred and fifty (250) respondents that participated in this study.

Researchers' self-designed questionnaire was used to gather most current information on perception of parents towards girl-child education. The instrument has two conspicuous sections; these include sections A and B. Section A elicits personal /demographic data of the respondents while section B deals with perception of parents on girl-child education. The popular Four Point Likert-type rating scale system was adopted for section B of the instrument. However, to justify the validity of this instrument seven drafted copies were given to seven experts in the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin for scholastic scrutiny, criticism and suggestions. Consequently, necessary amendments were made in line with their recommendations.

The instrument's reliability was also ascertained through the use of test-retest method. This was done by administering the instrument to a total of twenty (20) married adults of different age groups across socio-economic status that were not part of the final study and after an interval of four weeks the same instrument was administered to same set of respondents. The two set of scores obtained from this mini study were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistical method. The figure obtained was given at 0.82 at 0.05 alpha levels. With this coefficient, the instrument was adjudged reliable for this study.

Demographic data of the respondents were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages. Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) statistical method were used to test the null hypotheses of the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	34	13.6
26-32 years	156	62.4
33 years and above	60	24.0
Total	250	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. The Table shows that 34 of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25 years, 156 of the respondents were between the ages of 26-32 years while 60 of the respondents were 33 years and above.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School Certificate	6	2.4
Secondary School Certificate	52	20.8
DIP/NCE Certificate	58	23.2
1st Degree	98	39.2
Postgraduate	36	14.4
Total	250	100

Table 2 shows that 6 of the respondents had primary education, 52 of the respondents had secondary school certificate, 58 of the respondents had Dip/NCE certificate, 98 of the respondents had 1st Degree while 36 of the respondents had postgraduate. This indicates that respondents who had 1st degree participated more in the study.

Table 3: Mean and Rank Order on Parents' Perception on Girl-child Education in Ilorin Metropolis

Item No.	As a Parent, I Believe Girl-child Education	Mean	Rank
1	should be made compulsory	3.60	1 st
19	makes girls to behave well and more responsible	3.33	2 nd
2	should be sponsored by government	3.28	3 rd
4	prevents early marriage	3.24	4 th
3	allows educated women to bear healthier babies	2.91	5 th
9	prevents teenage pregnancy	2.85	6 th
5	exposes girls to be good housewives in future	2.76	7 th
17	lowers maternal mortality rates	2.73	8 th
8	disallows girls from involving in the domestic chores	2.53	9 th
15	exposes girls to sexual harassment	2.38	10 th
7	increase rate of abortion among young girls	2.36	11 th
16	gives little or no time to care for the family	2.30	12 th
14	increases rate of unemployment	2.14	13 th
13	gives room for immorality among girls	2.12	14 th
11	is more expensive than that of boys	2.11	15 th
12	promotes divorce and separation	2.09	16 th
20	is not good religiously	2.07	17 th
10	makes wives to disrespect their husband	1.98	18 th
6	is a waste of time	1.89	19 th
18	should focus on home economics education only	1.86	20 th

Table 3 shows that Item 1 (should be made compulsory) had the highest mean score of 3.60 and was therefore ranked 1st. Item 18 (should focus on home economics education only) had the lowest mean score of 1.86 and was therefore ranked 20th. Nine out of the twenty items have mean scores that are above the mid-mean score of 2.50. Items that depict girl- child education as having negative impact have low mean scores. This indicates that parents in Ilorin Metropolis have positive attitude towards girl-child education.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education in Ilorin metropolis based on age*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Parents' Perception on Girl-Child Education Based on Age

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	2	177.954	88.977	1.462	3.00	.234
Within Groups	247	15034.222	60.867			
Total	249	15212.176				

Table 4 reveals that the calculated F-ratio of 1.462 is less than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of 0.234 which is greater at 0.05 level of significance; hence the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in parents' perception on girl-child education in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Educational qualification

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Parents' Perception on Girl-Child Education Based on Educational Qualification

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	4	2383.941	595.985	11.38*	2.37	.000
Within Groups	245	12828.235	52.360			
Total	249	15212.176				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 reveals that the calculated F-ratio of 11.38 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 2.37 with a corresponding p-value of .000 which is less at 0.05 levels of significance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used as a post-hoc test. The results of the DMRT procedure are displayed in Table 6 in order to determine the mean value(s) that caused the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of Table 5.

Table 6: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) on Parents' Perception on Girl-Child Education Based on Educational Qualification

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Education
A	6	67.00	1	Primary School
B	98	51.46	2	1st Degree
C	52	50.35	3	Secondary
C	58	50.10	4	Dip/NCE
D	36	46.25	5	Postgraduate

Table 6 showed that Group 1 with a mean score of 67.00 significantly differed from Groups 2 with a mean score of 51.46, but slightly differed from Group 3 and 4 with mean scores of 50.35 and 50.10 but differed from Group 5 with a mean score of 46.25. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of the mean of Group 1. Hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 5 was brought about by respondents who had primary education. Therefore, the hypothesis is not accepted.

Discussion

The result of the findings indicates that parents in Ilorin Metropolis have positive perception regarding girl-child education. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents demographic data based on age and educational qualification. The first null hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education in Ilorin metropolis based on age differences. This indicates that parents across all ages have positive disposition towards girl-child education. This correlates with the finding of Amadi (2013) that traditional and cultural beliefs of people are significant factors that militate against girl-child education in Nigeria. The reason for this could be that parents across ages have realized the import of western education for individual's survival and relevance in the society irrespective of age especially with increased campaign and sensitization by government and non-governmental agencies.

The second null hypothesis of this study revealed that there was a significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education in Ilorin metropolis based on educational qualification. The finding could be as a result of the fact that experience and knowledge that human beings have coloured their thought processes and affect their perceptions about a particular phenomenon. The finding corroborates that of Dogar, Azeem, Feroze and Shakoor, (2011) that the higher the educational level of parents, the more favourable their attitude towards their girl-child's education. That is to say, with an increase level of parents' education, the

girl-child education is given more priority and support.

The result of the study also revealed that parents were of opinion that girl-child education should be made compulsory for everybody and that education informed adaptive behaviour among young girls. It is also revealed that parents were of opinion that education should be sponsored by government and that education prevents early marriage among young girls irrespective of their background.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded as follows:

1. There was no significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education based on age.
2. There was significant difference in the perception of parents on girl-child education based on educational qualification.
3. Education should be made compulsory.
4. Education assists girl-child to live a productive life.
5. Education should be free for all, and
6. Education discourages early marriage among adolescent girls.

Implications for Counselling

From the findings of the study girl-child's education is accorded priority in Ilorin. However, it is imperative for the counsellor to sustain the tempo and those in rural areas should also be encouraged by government agencies as well as well meaning Nigerians to realize the importance of education and to ease access

to education for them. Various means through which all the stakeholders in education system will take adequate charge of giving girl-child's education an equal priority as the case is with their male counterparts should be devised. Counsellors must play a proactive role to see that each female child enrolls in their respective schools are given adequate attention, encouragement, guidance and support to help them achieve their educational goals like their male counterparts.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Professional counsellor should intensify effort to evolve guidance and counselling services that will meet the needs of the female students in their respective schools in order to retain them. This is necessary to sustain the positive disposition of parents and to encourage others whose disposition might not have been very favourable.
2. Besides this, counselling centres should be set-up at strategic locations within the community with competent counsellors for the enlightenment and sensitization among parents/guardians and general public especially in areas with less educational privilege on the needs for equality in the education of both boy and girl-child.
3. Also, the school management should design girl-child-centred programmes that will encourage

attendance and involvement of every girl-child in the educational activities in and outside the school.

4. Government should sustain and encourage parents to send their wards to school irrespective of their sex through adequate policy formulation and implementation.
5. Religious organizations should be used as platform to sustain parents' courage to let their girl-child have equal opportunities in life like their male counterparts.

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