

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59595/ajie.10.2.5>

Analysis of The Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on Education of the Girl-child in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria

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(Received 15 June 2022, Final revised version received 01 December 2022)

This study investigated the influence of socio-cultural factors on the girl-child education in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study was a causal comparative research by design. The population of the study comprised all the female students of secondary schools in the five Local Government Areas of Mubi Education Zone. From the population, four out of the five Local Government Areas of the Education Zone were sampled using balloting method of simple random sampling technique and from each; two secondary schools were also randomly selected making a total of eight schools. Then from each of the eight secondary schools, fifty female students were sampled making a total of four hundred students. Three research questions and four hypotheses were postulated for the study. A set of structured questionnaire was the instrument used for the data collection where the data was analyzed using t-test statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). From the results of the findings of the study, it revealed that: socio-cultural factors contributed significantly to the influence of girl-child education in the zone; the challenges facing the girls to some extent differ between rural and urban areas; there was significant difference between the mean scores of the factors hindering the girl-child education based on religion; just to mention but a few. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that there is the need for cross cultural, interfaith and social integration as a way of encouraging parents to bring education to the doorstep of the girl-child in Nigeria; that the government and other stakeholders especially in women affairs in the study area should endeavour to constantly promote positive socio-cultural integration by preaching peaceful coexistence among people of differently socio-cultural background; and ways of creating favourable conditions which can discourage societal preference for male children and the traditional belief that the position of a woman is in the kitchen.

Keywords: Influence, Education, Socio-Cultural factors, Tradition, Girl-Child

Introduction

No nation can meaningfully grow without putting the girl child at the centre of its education because it is valued as a part of strategic investment in human, intellectual capital and sustainable development the world over. That is to say, the education of the girl-child is a springboard for enhancing women productivity in personal and optimal nation building as it equips her with organized knowledge, values, attitude, skills, experiences and competencies. However, in typical African communities and especially some parts of Nigeria, the state of the education of the girl children is daunting. The girl child you see today will tomorrow become a woman and/or mother. At her adulthood, the girl child is saddled with a lot of cultural and at times religious expectations, and challenges coming from the home, community and the society at large. Traditionally, women are perceived to be housekeepers, kitchen experts, child-bearers, homemakers, family health caretakers, family economic contributors, and the man's relaxation tool after a day's work. Apart from these perceptions of domestic tasks which may be seen as ways of socialization and convention, women also contribute greatly to the economic sphere of the Nigerian society. All these perceptions about women affect the level of attention accorded the girl-child with regards to western education and preparation for future life (Udeozor, 2000; Alabi & Alabi, 2014; Salvatore, 2019).

As stated earlier, the home, community and socio-cultural practices continue to restrict female enrolment and developments in education. Some of the home-based factors include family size, household income, and parents' education. In some homes, the girl-child is pulled out of school and the boys are left to remain schooling especially when the family income is meager and indicates it cannot support education of all children, the girls miss school when there are chores to be done at home or there is a sick family member to be taken care of, the girls are taken out of school when they mature, they are required to help supplement the family income by hawking or selling some things, farming or performing other money earning activities or are made to get married (Voice & Agency, 2014; Imhangbe & Irabor, 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that some social factors causing gender imbalances in education are related to the classroom, while others are extracurricular and out of school factors, long distance from school, sexual harassment by classmates, teachers and some males in the community and inefficient use of her time which contribute to making poor attendance in school. In addition to all these, when conditions at home, in the school, on the

way to the school and in the community and uncondusive learning environment prevent her from having a meaningful learning, the girl-child drops out of school.

In sub-Saharan Africa, illiteracy among women continues to be high due to the inability of the countries to enroll and retain girl children in schools (Stephens, 1998; UNICEF, 2014). At the Pan African Conference on the Education of the Girl -Child, it was noted that the illiteracy rate for women was over 60% and that there were about 26 million African girls out of school; most of which are in the rural areas. This was projected to have increased to 36 million by the year 2000, and be doubled by 2010 and even beyond 2020, if left unchecked (Ouagadougou, 1993). No policy exists however that debars girls from either enrolling in school or pursuing higher education. In Nigeria for instance, the National Policy o Education by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) stipulated as one of its philosophy “*the provision of equal access to education opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.*” In spite of this, fewer girls than boys are admitted into the primary one each year and only few remain to pursue higher education in spite of the place of education in socio-economic progress and wellbeing improvement of individuals and the nation at large (Arnesen et al., 2008; Alabi & Alabi, 2014; UNICEF, 2014).

There is no doubt in the notion that women are the subjects of a growing national and international interest and this interest stems from the acute recognition that women are crucial to social and economic development. The barrier that worked against women’s self-actualization especially in traditional Nigerian societies was without recourse to the roles the women played in such society. However, things are changing because the Nigerian woman and the girl-child in some parts of the country today are hurrying to regain their virtues through education. For instance, in some years back, 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 presents the worst scenarios (Ofoha, 2011). But an emerging reality today is that more and more women are getting educated, thus, narrowing the gap between them and the men. Also, efforts to boost female education have been made by governments, international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Though the gap is getting narrower, there is still a gender disparity in education (Alabi & Alabi, 2014; Nwobodo, 2018). Also, in the view of Agusiobo (2018), females still have low access to education,

low participation and poor performance in many subjects, especially Mathematics and Science subjects.

Nigeria, as a developing country is being confronted with economic, social, political and educational challenges. These challenges led to the introduction of different reforms at different levels of the national operation. The reforms were designed to bring about developments in areas of needs through infusion of modern methods and values. Specifically, education constitutes of a major focus because it is believed that education is an instrument of national development and thus, it could be employed to achieve political, economic and social developments (Arnesen et al., 2008; Glinski et al., 2015; Somani, 2017). The development of any nation requires the collective efforts of its citizens and all residents. More importantly, to achieve national development, both male and female members of the society need to be carried along (Mohamed et al., 2017; Salvatore, 2019). This discrimination exacerbates poverty by preventing the majority of women from obtaining the education, training, health services, credit, child care and legal status needed to improve their prospects. Some clear areas of noted imbalance against women have been in the areas of education and leadership. It is therefore not surprising that women's inadequate access to education has been seen as the source of the various discriminations that they suffer. Also there is general imbalance against women in terms of leadership positions be it in the higher institutions of earning, politics etc.(Ashimolowo, 2005; Alabi & Alabi, 2014; Okafor et al., 2017; Chizoba & Okeke, 2017; Imhangbe & Irabor, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The issue of gender discrimination in education against the girl-child has become global matter (with wider dimension) and this has necessitated the coming up of various measures to curb the situation such as Education-For-All (EFA), and Nigeria's Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1977 which was later transformed to the present Universal Basic Education (UBE) launched in 1999 by the then government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo. In spite of the fact that education is globally acknowledged as a tool for eradicating all forms of socio-cultural discrimination, deprivation, and as well as a tool for attaining a united, peaceful and progressive society, the situation is yet to be totally eradicated in many parts of Nigeria especially the North.. Though women in Nigeria are more involved than men in some traditional sectors such as different agricultural activities ranging from farm

clearing to processing; household activities and child upbringing, the women are also discriminated against in gaining political positions and other things ranging from labour market discriminations to exclusion from policy-making and making the women suffer much and become victims of social or cultural beliefs and practices that treat them largely as second class role players. This gender discrimination has also been reported by many scholars in the education sector where the male gender is favoured by many traditional African parents against the females and some parents prefer to have their daughters get married with the belief that it avoids promiscuity and to promote family honour especially when the girls are married at younger age as virgins. For gender inequality in education of both male and female children to be successfully eradicated in some parts of Nigeria, all perceived forms of discriminations against women should be looked at holistically.

The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate socio-cultural factors influencing the girl-child education in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the extent of the influence of socio-cultural factors on girl-child education in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.;
- ii. determine the kind of socio-cultural factors that influences girl-child education in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State;
- iii. find out the nature of influence different socio-cultural factors on the girl-child education in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.

Research Questions

1. What are the socio-cultural factors influencing the girl-child Education in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State?
2. To what extent do socio-cultural factors influence the education of the girl-child in urban and rural areas of in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.?
3. What is the influence of socio-cultural factors on both Christian and Muslim girl-child in secondary schools in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State?

4. What is the influence of monogamous and polygamous family type on the education of the girl-child in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State?
5. What influence do rural and urban areas have on the education of the girl-child in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of cultural factors on the education of the girl-child in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of socio-cultural factors on the girl-child enrolment in school and regular attendance between those in urban and rural schools in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.
3. There is no significant difference in the influence of socio-cultural factors on education between the Christian girls and Muslim girls in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.
4. There is no significant difference between monogamous and polygamous families in their influence on the education of the girl-child in secondary schools of Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.
5. There is no significant influence of the educational level of their parents on girl-child education Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa State.

Research Methodology

Causal-comparative research design was adopted for the study. The design is also called ex-post facto design. It is a non-experimental research technique in which preexisting groups are compared based on some variables. It is similar to an experiment because it compares two or more groups of individuals with the same characteristics. This study comprised all female secondary school students in Mubi Educational Zone of Adamawa state. Mubi Educational Zone is comprised of five Local Government Areas (LGAs) namely Madagali, Michika, Maiha, Mubi North and Mubi South. Multistage and purposive sampling techniques were used in the research such that in the first stage, four Local Government Areas were

selected using simple random sampling technique from the Educational Zone. In the second stage, two secondary schools from each of the four sampled LGAs were purposively sampled such that one school was selected from each of the urban and the rural areas thereby having a total of eight (8) secondary schools. In the third stage, putting into consideration also the students' family types and religion, 50 female students were sampled from each of the 8 sampled secondary schools to have a total of 400 female students in all. The instrument used for the study was an adapted one which was titled "Socio Cultural Factors Influencing Girl-child Education (SCFIGE)" which consists of two sections namely A and B. The first section, A, was on respondents' biographical data such as family type (monogamous and polygamous); parental educational levels (Uneducated, Primary, Diploma/NCE, Degree and above); and parents' religion (Christianity and Islam), Section B was made up of 20 items for the respondents to express their opinions on the socio-cultural factors influencing the education of the girl-child in Mubi Educational Zone. The responses options to the items of Section B were structured along Likert's 4-point scale type ranging from "Strongly agree" (SA) to "Strongly Disagree" (SD). The instrument was validated while the reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test on some female students whose schools were not part of the population of interest to the researcher. The data collected from the pilot test was analysed using Cronbach alpha method and it yielded a reliability value of 0.79 and that was reliable enough for the study (Kojigili, 2018). For the research questions, only the main question was answered by comparing the mean response score of each of the items against a criterion mean of 2.5 such that any mean 2.5 and above was considered as agreed or accepted and any score below it was considered disagreed or not accepted. The research hypotheses were analysed using t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Results

The results of the findings are as shown in the tables below.

Table 1: Mean Response Scores on Socio-cultural Factors Influencing Girl-Child Education

S/N	Socio-Cultural Factors	N	\bar{x}	Remark
1	My parents enrolled me late in school because am a female child.	400	2.73	Agree
2	Girl-children are used for domestic activities and this is why they start school late.	400	3.05	Agree
3	Unconducive learning environment do prevent my smooth learning.	400	2.94	Agree
4	In my culture, western education is seen as taboo or sin.	400	2.26	Disagree
5	In my culture, Religious education is more preferred to western education	400	3.01	Agree
6	My parents will not allow me to go further after the completion of my secondary school because of marriage.	400	2.87	Agree
7	Only few girls have been enrolled in my school	400	3.02	Agree
8	I may not complete my education because it is not seen as important in community	400	2.53	Agree
9	My school is very far from our house and this reduces my parents' interest in my schooling.	400	2.93	Agree
10	In my culture, they prefer the girl-children to marry instead of going to school.	400	2.72	Agree
11	In my community, most parents do not encourage the girl-child to attend mixed schools.	400	2.70	Agree
12	My parents often stop me from school to go for hawking and get money for the family.	400	2.96	Agree
13	Intimidations from the male students sometimes make me feel like stopping school.	400	2.84	Agree
14	If I get pregnant as a young girl, I will be stopped from going to school.	400	2.37	Disagree
15	My parents often talk of forcing me to stop schooling when they see other girls doing well in non-educational fields.	400	2.90	Agree
16	Most people in my community feels that the best place for the girl-child is the kitchen.	400	3.03	Agree
17	Pressure from my family often kills my hope of completing my education.	400	2.69	Agree
18	My parents feel that western education will negatively affect me as woman when I get married.	400	2.85	Agree
19	My education will eventually stop whenever I reach the age of marriage.	400	2.41	Disagree
20	My parents' lack of education is affecting us the girls of the family.	400	3.11	Agree
Grand Mean		3.00		

Table 1 show the mean response scores of the students to the factors affecting their education in Mubi North Local Government Area

Table 2: Analysis of Responses of Female Students from Rural and Urban Schools on the Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on the Education of the girl-child

School Location	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	Df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Rural	200	31.14	8.92	180	0.37	0.021	Significant
Urban	200	30.98	8.76				
P < 0.05							

Table 2 shows the result of hypothesis two with P-value of 0.021 which is less than the value of the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, we reject the stated null hypothesis and as such it is significant.

Table 3: A t-test Analysis of Muslim and Christian Female Students’ Response scores to the Influence of socio-cultural factors on their Education

Religion	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	Df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Christianity	200	30.24	7.69	180	0.31	0.00	Significant
Islam	200	29.89	9.15				
P < 0.05							

Table 3 is the result of the analysis of hypothesis three which shows that the P -value of 0.00 is less than significant level of 0.05. Based on this, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, is significant.

Table 4: A t-test Analysis of Responses of Female Students from Monogamous and polygamous families on the Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on girl-child Education

Type of Family	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Monogamous	200	31.14	8.92	180	0.23	0.79	Not significant
Polygamous	200	30.98	8.76				

P > 0.05

Table 4 shows the result of the analysis to hypothesis three where P-value of 0.79 is greater than the level of significance 0.05. By this, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and as such it is not significant.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA of the Influence of Level of Education of Parents of the Girl-Child on their Education

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1536.048	3	36.429		
Within Groups	11621.106	396	51.391	0.614	0.00
Total	13157.154	399			

P < 0.05

Table 5 shows result of the analysis of hypothesis 5 where the f-value of 0.614 with a P-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of findings

From the results of the mean response scores and the standard deviation of the respondents shown in Table one, it can be seen that there are some cultural factors affecting the girl-child education in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State. A major hindrance to lack of equal educational opportunities of female as their male counterparts is a near universal fundamental cultural bias in favour of the male-child.

The widespread socio-cultural and traditional practices and are still maintained in parts of Africa and in fact some parts of Nigeria have been traced as some of the factors contributing greatly the lack of participation or enrolment of girl-child in education. Some of these socio-cultural and traditional practices, though not the same in all cases, are social organization, early marriage, early pregnancy, domestic and duties of females and low regard for the value of females.

The result of the analysis of hypothesis two as shown on Table 2 indicated that there was significant difference between girls from rural and urban secondary schools in their mean responses to the influence of socio-cultural factors on their education. This means that that the socio-cultural practices affecting the education of the girl-child negatively at most times are not the same in rural and urban secondary schools.

From Table 3 on the other hand, the result of the analysis to hypothesis three shows that the P-value of 0.00 is less than the level of significant value of 0.05. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean scores of factors hindering the girl-child education with respect to their religion. This shows that religion of parents influences girl child education in the study area. Furthermore, based on the analysis, the girls from the Muslim families are a little more affected negatively by religious factors than their Christian counterparts. These religious factors are often influenced by fundamental socio-cultural bias in favour of males. The fact that most religious practitioners and leaders are males makes it easier for them to create a powerful image in favour of their gender. The finding is in agreement with what Ojobo (2009), Ojewole & Adegbenle (2017) and Omeike (2017) reported that societies are characterized by uneducated and conservative adults, religious conservatives, retarded development, and early married females. In the words of Somani, (2017), although policies exist in most cases for such developments as universal primary education, equal educational opportunities in terms of gender and the eradication of gender bias from texts and other materials, the political will to carry these out seems to be lacking.

From Table 4, the result of the t-test analysis to hypothesis three shows that the P-value of 0.63 is greater than 0.05. Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis. It then implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response scores of girls from monogamous and polygamous families which is an indication that family type has no significant influence on the education of the girl-child in Mubi educational zone. In other words, the socio-

cultural factors influencing the education of the girl-child is not based on family size or being from monogamous family but occurs irrespective the type of the family. This similar to the findings of Okafor, Balogun, Abdulaziz, Oniye and Iyekolo (2017).

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to hypothesis five as shown in Table 5 revealed the p-value is 0.01 which is less than is 0.05. That means the null hypothesis was ejected and therefore concluded that there is significant difference in the influence of parental educational background of girls on the lack of enrollment or full participation in education. It clearly revealed from the respondents' mean scores that girls from uneducated families face more resistance to education than their counterparts from educated families. That is, there is a statistically significant difference between the influences of levels of education of parents on the girl-child education in Mubi educational zone of Adamawa state. The difference can be attributed to some illiterate parents' attitude to education because the higher the level of parents' education, the higher the number of their girls attending school and the success rates of girl-child education. Just like Amadi (2013) said parents' involvement in their children's education is not only necessary but it improves quality education. Parent level of education is a sine qua-non to girl-child education. This is also in line with findings of Kojigili (2005, 2008) and the United Nations' (UN, 2017; 2020) report which stated that some families especially the uneducated ones try to maintain their forefathers legacies or practices and by protecting family honours and to prevent the girls from promiscuity, they prefer their girls to get married at early age as virgins to western education. On the contrary, the finding is not in line with that of Okafor (2020) where she found that there is no significant difference in the influence of socio-cultural factors on girl-child education based on parental educational background in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara state.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is a global right of the child irrespective of gender and it is an essential tool for achieving the goals of unity, peace, equality and development. Furthermore, promoting gender equity in education between boys and girls is very important especially in terms relationship between men and women which creates a healthy living, in terms of bring up more educated women in the society and consequently having productive human resource. It is time therefore to begin to do the right thing in order to train and educate our girls and maximize the God given potentials just like the boys. If this is done

holistically, the nation will be greater through women participation in nation building and to help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also known as agenda 2030 set by United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and intended to be achieved by 2030.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should a wide sensitization campaign in Nigeria both at the church and mosque levels, through mass media and radio, and through community-based information dissemination method for all parents to be made to understand the benefits of education and the importance of girl-child education.
2. Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders in women affairs should strive to create conducive enabling socio-political and economic conditions which will discourage societal preference for male children and the traditional belief that the position of a woman is in the kitchen.
3. The Government should promote exchange programmes among schools owned by religious organisations or organize programmes that will bring parents/students of different faiths/cultures together for them to interact well and learn from each other which enhances socialisation and learning.
4. The stakeholders in women development affairs should as a matter of serious concern dwell on adequate the provision of formal education of the girl-child and in improving their working conditions.
5. Various religious leaders or organizations across all faiths and denominations in Nigeria especially in the study area should speak out strongly against female discrimination in all spheres of life. They should also create awareness or enlightenment programmes on regular basis using religious centres, market places and other social gatherings for them to properly understand the value of western education their children especially the girls.

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