



Perceived Socio-Cultural Factors of Girl Child Enrolment Gap in Public Secondary Schools in Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived socio-cultural factors of girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state. Simple random sampling was employed, secondary school in the state were grouped based on the two educational zones used in the state Ministry of Education, meanwhile simple random sampling was used to select 30 public secondary schools, 15 secondary schools from each zone in which four teachers from selected schools serves as the respondents, these make the subject of 120 respondents. The instrument was given to expert in the Department of Educational Foundations and expert in Measurements and Evaluation for their input in term of face and content validations. The reliability of instrument was determined using test-retest method of determining consistency. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Mean and standard deviations were employed. Findings of the study was to involve Community participation in school management while Expanding the number of school places and single sex schools to cater for those in rural areas who may not afford to live out of their homes due to economic hardship expanding the number of school places and, Community participation in school management and Girl child (some) returned no schools after marriage. The recommendations of the study was that, the mass campaign on and for the girl- child education should be planned and conducted in Bauchi State.

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INTRODUCTION

The enrolment gap of the girl child in northern Nigeria particularly in Bauchi state has been a basis of concern to the state and all the stakeholders in the education sector. The Girl Child as defined by UNICEF as a female human being below the age of Eighteen (18). The word Education on the other hand could

be given different meaning by different authors in different ways depending on their purpose of defining the term or their view point of the term. According to Castle in Adeyemo (2012) defined education as what happened to us from the day, we were born to the day we die. Farrant (2013) also defined education as the process of learning to live as a useful

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and acceptable member of the society to which one belongs. In the context of this research, Girl Child education is any learning experience organized for student under the age of eighteen (18) in order to make them useful members of the society to which they belong.

Education is generally viewed as a positive force with a wide-ranging impact on society and human development. This force is more unique for the girl-child who is seen as the child today, but who later becomes a woman and also a mother. As often said; Educating girl means educating the whole family. And what is true of families is also true of communities and ultimately the whole nation (UNICEF, 2014).

Bellamy (2013) stated that there could be no positive significant or sustainable transformation in societies and in fact in poverty reduction until girls received the quality basic education, they need to take their rightful place as equal partners in development. In summary therefore Girls Child Education refers to the educational programme which provides ample opportunities for girls to enroll attend and complete their education without any form of discrimination.

Although it is affirmatively stated in the world summit in Copenhagen in the 1995 that, 'we will ensure full and equal access to education for girls and women recognizing that investing in women's education is the key element in achieving social equality, higher productivity and social returns in terms of health, lower infant mortality and the reduced need for high fertility' (Mangwat and Abama 1999). Unfortunately, despite this commitment to female education and girls in

particular, there seem to be constraint militating against girl's education pursuit in Nigeria and northern region in particular. It was expressed by UNICEF (2005) that children below 15 years covered 45 percent of the Country's population in Nigeria. The same population does not attend secondary school in northern region recording lowest attendance of girls especially, the same source said about 4.7 million women of secondary age are still not in school. Udiugwomen (2020) Observations showed that a lot of times the girls who enrolled in to school dropped out without completing. This makes the stride for reducing if not eradicating illiteracy in the country a continued task which may have no end. UNICEF Nigeria in 2005 reported that retention of children in schools is a serious challenge to the issue of ensuring access to education by all children. It stated that, 54% of pupils enrolled into primary school to junior secondary school, leaving out 46% and the ratio of enrolment by gender is 1 girl to 2 boys and 1 girl to 3 boys in some states.

It is believed in Africa and of course in some part of Nigeria that most parents give preferential treatment to boys especially in matters concerning education. It is really so sad that up till now in some societies, girls are still made to live in their shadows, denied education and other right, and socially exploited so much that their rights to attain womanhood before going into child bearing are being aborted and abused (Saleh 2012). In situation, when they are allowed to attend school, a good number of them are later withdrawn for one reason or another before or without completing school.

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The popular adage 'If you educate a man you educate an individual but you educate a woman you educate a nation, because literacy has the power to acquire the essential skills, knowledge and attitude to move the nation forward. The education given to female child who eventually grow up into a woman at marriage has a lot of benefit to not only her person but the nation to which she is a citizen. Perhaps, this is why voices have been made for the female folks by civil society organization, Non-governmental organization, Government Agencies and International Organization at different times to ensure that the girls-child is given the space to acquire qualitative education to help deliver their expected services well.

Statement of Problem

It is pertinent to educate the girl child in every society, in different ways; many questions have been asked on the issue as to why enrolment of female student in Bauchi state public secondary schools is still low. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by UNO in 1948 noted that "Everyone has the right to education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria provided at section 18 of 1999 constitution stated that, government shall direct its policy toward ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

Despite the effort made by different governments, both at local, state and federal level, enrolment of female students is still low in Bauchi state.

It was based on this, that the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) has advocated investment in girl's education as a way for all children to fulfill their right to a

quality basic education. Also due to high number of girls drop out in secondary schools, (UNICEF) has been investigating the causes of socio-cultural enrolment gap in public secondary schools. There is a report which confirmed that female enrolment in Bauchi state metropolis is very low (Kwache 2012). The other explores the concern of the stakeholders in the issue of low enrolment of female students into public secondary schools. The women enrolment tends to be low compared with male counterpart, in the north women appears disadvantaged compared with their counterparts elsewhere in southern part of the country. In view of the above, the fear is that if the recent situation persists, it will set the girl child in affected communities backward.

The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To find out the extent to which Early marriage affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state,
2. To find out the extent to which Cultural practices affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state,

Research Question

The research questions intended to found out the perceived socio-cultural factors responsible for the enrolment gap and drop out of girl child in public secondary schools in Bauchi state.

1. To what extent, does early marriage affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state?

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2. To what extent, does cultural practices affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. The research was intended to elicit information aim at establishing the Perceived Socio-cultural Factors of Girl Child Enrolment Gap in Public Secondary in Bauchi State, it was considered appropriate for this study because it described phenomenon the way they are without bias. Nworgu (1991) described survey design as one in which it allows the researcher to gather information from a large group of people or items studied and analyzed data from a few peoples considered being true representative of the entire group.

The focus of this study was Bauchi state of Nigeria, Bauchi State is located in the North eastern geo-political region of Nigeria. According to the 2006 Census, the state has a population of 4,653,066 and a land area of 49,119 sq Km. representing about 5.3% of Nigeria's total land mass and it is located between latitude $9^{\circ} 31'$ and $12^{\circ} 31'$ North and Longitudes $8^{\circ} 50'$ and 11° East of the Equator. It comprises of twenty (20) local Government areas. Bauchi is the state capital. The three educational zones, namely Katagum North comprises Gamawa, Giade, Itas- Gadau, Jamaare, Katagum, Shira and Zaki has thirty-five (35) Senior Secondary Schools. Bauchi South comprises Alkaleri, Bauchi, Bogoro, Dass, Tafawa Balewa, Kirfi, and Torohas fifty (50) Senior Public Secondary Schools. And Bauchi Central comprises Dambam, Darazo, Ganjuwa, Misau, Ningi, and Warji has thirty (30)

Public Senior Secondary Schools. Two educational zones were used for the purpose of this study. Bauchi state also shares boundaries with Kano and Jigawa to the North, Taraba and Plateau to the South, Gombe and Yobe to the East and Kaduna to the West (Bauchi State Ministry of Education, (2013).

The population for this study consisted of 126 Public Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State, from the two major educational zones in the state. Fifteen Public Secondary Schools from Bauchi Zone and 15 Public Secondary Schools from Katagum Zone. The data shows that we have Two Thousand five Hundred and twenty (2520) teachers in Bauchi State. (Source, Bauchi State Ministry of Education) These formed the population of the study.

The Sample of the study consists 120 teachers; the researcher adopted the stratified sampling technique. The two major educational zones constituted the strata. First, the schools were group according to the two educational zones of the state. This represent 50% of the public secondary schools in the state, thereafter simple random sampling was used to select fifteen public secondary schools (15) from each zone. The total of 120 teachers' makes up the sample size, sixty (60) from each zone. This was allowed for good representations of four (4) teachers who were randomly selected from each school. The sample was based on Krecjie and Morgan (2011) template for sample determination.

The instrument for data collection for this study was questionnaires adapted and it was used for gathering data. The questionnaire items were adapted from Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and

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Learning International Survey (Talis, 2013). The researcher adapted the research questionnaire and it was called Perceived Socio-cultural Factors of Enrolment Gap Questionnaire. This research instrument enables the researcher to elicit information from respondents. The instrument was in two parts, the first part was expected to collect information Bio-data of the staff.

Second part of the instrument elicited information on the perceived socio-cultural factors of enrolment gap of public secondary school, where the respondents produced honest answers to the questions asked without bias and influence

The instrument was given to three experts from the Department of Educational Foundation Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, for validation. The instrument was also given to some experts in the field of Test and Measurement in the Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, to ascertain the validity of the instrument that was used for this study. Comment and remarks from these experts were used to revise and modify the instrument before administering.

The Perceived Socio-cultural Factors of Enrolment Gap Questionnaire (COQ) instrument was pretested for reliability, using a test -retest method. The researcher administered 15 copies of this questionnaire to five different Public Secondary Schools in Bauchi state, who were not be part of final sample. After duration of two weeks, another 15 copies of the same questionnaire were administered to the same schools. The result of the first set of questionnaires was correlated with the second set of questionnaires to yield a correlation

coefficient of r , which was adjusted by the Spearman Brown formula to obtain the reliability coefficient, $r = 0.84$, this means that the instrument was highly consistent.

The researcher collected introductory Letter from the Head of Department, Department Educational Foundation to the Commissioner, State Ministry of Education, Bauchi State. A research permitted from the Ministry to various schools of the respondents. The researcher administered the research instrument personally, in order to ensure confidentiality. The administration of the instrument lasted for three weeks and the researcher hang around to collect data. The purpose of this is to guarantee a high return rate and avoid some problems usually associated with posting of instrument, more so in order to offer explanation when and where necessary.

Data collected for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. In analyzing the research questions of the study, the Mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) was employed. First the points on the scale of response would be assigned numerical values as follows, Very High Extent (VHE) = 4-point, High Extent (HE) =point 3, Low Extent (LE) = point 2, Very Low Extent (VLE) =point 1. The first two would be consider as positive response, while the last two as Negative response.

Decision rule: In interpreting the result of the data analysis, value allocation of numbers adapted from Owusu-Manu *etal* (2017) was used as shown in the table below:

RESULTS

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Research Question 1: To what extent, does early marriage affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state?

To answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation on the teacher’s opinion to what level does the Cultural Practice causes girl child Enrolment gap in secondary school were calculated and tabulated in Table 2.

From the table, the items that have the highest mean score was “custom and tradition” with the mean score of 3.38. Cultural habit has the lowest mean score of 2.69 which indicated positive rating. From the calculated results, it was clearly indicated that from all six statements extracted from the question were being positively agreed by the teachers that Cultural Practices are still cause’s girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools in Bauchi State.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Early Marriage causes’ girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools.

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Dec.
1.	Force marriage cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools	104	3.25	1.059	High Extent
2.	Cultural habit cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools	103	2.69	1.029	High Extent
3.	Custom and tradition cause early marriage in Bauchi State?	104	3.38	.851	Low Extent
4.	Insecurity causes early marriage in Bauchi state.	103	2.89	1.212	High Extent
5.	The pressure of society and relatives cause early marriage in Bauchi state.	103	2.98	1.010	High Extent
6.	Parent’s lack of awareness/western education cause early marriage in Bauchi state?	106	3.29	.915	Low Extent
Average Mean			3.08	1.01	High Extent

Research Question 2: to find out the extent to which Cultural practices affect girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools in Bauchi state,

In order to answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation on Early Marriage was calculated and tabulated in Table 3. From the table, the item that has the highest score was “Showing Less important to girl child education” which has the mean

score of 3.19. Unequal Opportunities has the lowest score of 2.33 which indicated Negative rating. From the calculated results, it can be observed that all the six statements that makes up Early Marriage cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools in which the information given by the teachers agreed that early marriage causes girl child Enrolment gap in Bauchi State secondary schools.

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Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Cultural Practice causes' girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools in Bauchi State.

SN	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	Abduction cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools	104	3.17	1.136	High Extent
2.	Girl child discrimination causes their Enrolment gap in secondary schools.	105	2.94	.818	High Extent
3.	Less important to girl child education cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary school.	103	3.19	.961	High Extent
4.	Unequal opportunities of girl child education cause their Enrolment gap in secondary school.	104	2.33	1.101	High Extent
5.	Ways of punishment cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary school.	105	2.35	1.209	Low Extent
Average Mean			2.81	1.05	High Extent

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Lowering direct cost of education for girls by ensuring free education in reality.
2. Expanding the number of school places and single sex schools to cater for those in rural areas who may not afford to live out of their homes due to economic hard ship.
3. Child minding/care should not be placed hard on the girls in the family to help them read at home.
4. Community participation in school management
5. Girl child (some) returned to schools after marriage.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The analysis of the data collected for this study shows that there was the positive response on the perceived factors of socio-cultural factors of girl child enrolment gap in public secondary schools. These results agreed with the findings of Maangyvat and Abama (1999), this study found out that Cultural Practices had positive response that cause girl child Enrolment gap in

secondary school in Bauchi state, it is implied that Government should organize a mass campaign on and for the girl child education should be planned and conducted in the state toward community sensitization and mobilization.

The study also revealed that Early Marriage in relation to the girl child education was no longer a factor militating against women education in the state, based on the responses in research its indicated that the rating Negative, in which contradicted with the work done by Balkisu Yusuf (2008) in which the study focused on Bauchi and Borno in the core North. The review highlighted early marriage hindered girl child from the school, but on the process of conducting the research some girls returned to school after marriage to complete the study and nowadays even at the marriage contract agreements used to pronounce for bride to continue with the study.

Remarkable changes are occurring in the median age, at first

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marriage and in women's educational attainment in northern Nigeria. The girl child marriage has raised notable change and there is an increasing tendency for young women to attain higher level of education after marriage.

The findings however, disagreed with the findings of Garba (2003) Educational challenges are particularly acute in rural areas; globally 25% percent of children in rural areas are out of school compared with 16% percent of children in urban areas, this is because educational institutions are often scarce in rural areas. Even when accessible, children may have to walk long distance to attend, which could have a greater deterring effect on girl due to safety reasons. Based on the results of this research, it's clearly indicated that the teacher's responses on the School Distance as a cause of girl child Enrolment gap in Secondary School was Negative, which means nowadays School Distance cannot serve as the factor militating girl child Education in Bauchi state. In this regard Day Secondary Schools were upgraded to Senior Secondary School in the state.

Based on the findings of this research, the economic hardship has the positive response which indicated that it can cause Enrolment gap in secondary schools, this was agreed with the finding of Garba (2003) Although payment allow parents to finance education for their children when quality publicly financed schooling is not available, voluntary school attendance may lead to some parents not to send to school. In general, the higher the fee, the likely it is that families will decide not to educate their children or be force to make choices about which of their children to educate.

The results also reaffirm and tallying with the work done by Abama (1999) in which itemized child labour as the factor cause girl child Enrolment gap in Secondary School, in the findings of this study the teachers response indicated positively that child labour cause girl child Enrolment gap in secondary schools in Bauch state.

CONCLUSION

Findings of this research indicated that early marriage was not considered as a perceived socio-cultural factors of girl child enrolment gap in Bauchi state public secondary schools. Based on these findings, it could be concluded that there was no significant and positive relationship between the early marriages and girl child enrolment gap in Bauchi state public secondary schools. It was also discovered on the findings that community participation in schools management will became necessary, child care should not be placed hard on the girls in the family to help them read at home, paying allowances to girls from less privilege homes in schools among others are panacea that enhances enrolment and completion (Avoided drop out) of girl child enrolment gap in Bauchi state public secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made as follow:

1. A mass campaign on and for the girl-child education should be planned and conducted in the north towards community sensitization and mobilization.
3. The programme should be well spread around rural areas where



- most of the out of school girls are located.
4. There should be a collaborative approach with community and religious leaders of the area; if possible, they should take the lead in the campaign. Funding of the literacy centers and supply of adequate learning/instructional materials.
 5. Equip learners with the skills to understand and analyze prevailing gender issues that negatively affect girls' development.

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