
BIOLOGY TEACHERS' VIEWS ON FACTORS INFLUENCING GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KWARA NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Poor enrollment of girls-child in secondary schools in Kwara North; Nigeria has become a worrisome development to educational development. Some teachers accused some parents of disallowing their female children to be registered into the secondary education. This study sought to find out biology teachers' views on factors influencing girl-child education in senior secondary school in Kwara north senatorial district, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive research of the survey type. The population consisted all the 270 biology teachers of senior secondary in Edu, Moro and Patigi Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Convenience sampling technique was used to select sample for the study. The instrument used for the study was Biology Teachers' Views on Factors influencing Girls Child Education in Secondary School Questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency table for the research questions while chi square was used to analyze the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The findings indicated that lack of religious obligation to western school influence girl child education and parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should ensure that people are aware about the importance of educating the girls' child and religion leaders should sensitize their follower about the importance of girl child education and they should try to correct the wrong notion of imposition of western formal education for the purpose of converting people to Christianity.

Keywords: Attitude, Girl child, Religion, Educated parent, Non educated parent

Introduction

Education is a comprehensive process that encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values to foster physical, mental, and economic development, ultimately empowering individuals to reach their full potential (UNESCO 2020). Education in any normal society is accepted as an instrument to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for men and women. It is implicitly a part of culture as it is a life-long learning process that enables a person, irrespective of age; understand the relationship between the environment and his or her peculiar circumstances. It helps towards the development of a complete balanced and rational personality. Education as an instrument for the socio-economic and political development of any nation is never in doubt. Education is the transmission of what is worthwhile to individuals to make them knowledgeable and contributing members of the society (World Bank 2020). Education as the acquisition of certain behavioral characteristics such as skill, attitudes, beliefs, tastes, ability to reason, knowledge and any other trait which enable one adjust and interact effectively with other individuals.

Education involves a combination of physical training with character building and manual activities with intellectual training. Education is also embracing all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will. Hanushek & Weosamann, (2020) put it that modern nations of the world have proved that for economic advancement, political democracy, industrial, technological and scientific breakthrough as well as character development to take place, the highest premium must be placed on education. Education is a dynamic and ongoing process that enables individuals to acquire, update and apply knowledge, skills and values that benefit both themselves and society. (World Bank 2020).

From the above definitions of education, it points out that the scholars emphasize on what education is all about and its importance in the national development. Through education, an individual will develop the capacity to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of his country. For education to play its important roles, it must be functional and effective. Functionality and effectiveness in the sense that it brings desirable changes in what people think, the way people feel and interact with their physical, social, economic, cultural and political environment and human behavior is influenced by the complex interplay between cognitive, emotional and environmental factors, encompassing physical, social, economic, cultural and political contexts (Bronfenbremer, 2020).

Biology is a natural science that deals with the living world: How the living world is structured, how it functions and what these functions are, how it develops, how living things came into existence, and how they react to one another and with their environment or biology is a natural science that deals with the living world, encompassing the study of organisms, their structure, function, growth, evolution, distribution and taxonomy (Campbell et al 2020). It is a prerequisite subject for many fields of learning that contributes immensely to the technological growth of the nation (World Bank, 2020). This includes medicines, pharmacy, nursing, agriculture, forestry, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and many other areas (National Institutes of Health, 2022). Biology is seen as one of the core subjects in Nigerian secondary school curriculum. Because of its importance, more students enrolled for biology in the senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE) than for physics and chemistry (West African Examination Council, 2022). Biology is introduced to students at senior secondary school level as a preparatory ground for human development, where career abilities are groomed, and potentials and talents discovered and energized (National Institute of Justice, 2022). A biology teacher is that trained person who manages teaching and learning process of biology effectively and efficiently.

Teaching is an intimate contact between a more mature personality and a less mature one, which is designed to further the education of the later. Teaching has been defined by Shulmen (2017) as a cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, motivating, taking attendance, keeping records of works, students' progress and students' background information. Teaching is the science and art of assisting an individual to learn (Marzano, 2017). The science in teaching entails the use of acquired knowledge from natural and behavioral sciences, in order to aid and appreciate the circumstances and personality of the learner. The art in teaching involves the use of creative and demonstrative skills in aiding the delivery of instruction (Ambrose et al, 2019). Wiggins & Mc Tighe, (2018) opined that teaching is assisting the learner to develop insight into a problem or to form an association between a response and a stimulus. It is based on this that the researchers decided to determine the biology teachers' views on factors influencing girl-child education in secondary school in Edu and Patigi Local Government Areas, Kwara State, Nigeria and that is the gap the study wants to fill.

Religion refers to the belief in the existence of a god or gods. Religious beliefs therefore encompass all the activities, sentiments and opinions connected with the worship of a deity. Studies have shown that some religious practices in Nigeria impact on the educational aspirations of girl-child and certain religious practices in Nigeria can significantly impact the educational aspirations of the girl child, often influencing her access to education, educational attainment and future career prospects (Adebayo, 2020). For instance, certain Islamic practices prevent young girls from schooling in some northern parts of Nigeria. Adebayo (2020) linked this malfunctioning simply to misunderstanding of the position of Islam on the education of girls – largely due to lack of sufficient knowledge of Islam which makes many parents think that formal education is not meant for Muslim girls.

Furthermore, UNICEF (2020) said Islam has been associated with low participation of female in schools. There is that wrong notion of imposition of Western formal education for the purpose of converting people to Christianity. For this reason Islamic communities opposes formal education especially for the female for fear that western education promote value contrary to cultural norms. Ahmed, (2019) in his paper on Women and Education in Islam admitted that religion particularly is cited as a major stumbling block for women's advancement. Similarly and despite Islam emphasis on education for all, women educational advancement is often hindered by religious and cultural interpretations that restrict their access to knowledge and opportunities (Norton & Wadud, 2018).

In a study by Montgomery & Hewett, (2018) found that children from Christian households are five times more likely to attend school than their counterparts from Muslim households. The influence of religion on attendance also ranked as second most important after family wealth influence. In another study, UNESCO, (2020) found that Islamic religion and residing in the Northeast and Northwest have significant negative association with schooling attendance. With an enrolment rate of 53.6%, the author suggested that Muslim children are the least likely to attend school. Gender-Islam interaction was also emphasized in the study. Being Islam and a girl significantly reduce the likelihood of school attendance much more than being Islam and a boy.

Girl child education as a global concern has been shown to be a difficult task that is not easily achievable as usually proclaimed due to many impediments which stands in the way of the girl -child. UNICEF, (2020) Research indicates that parental demand for girls education is often lower than for boys, reflecting entrenched cultural norms and expectations around girls domestic roles and found that Parents' demand for the education of their daughters is low,

reflecting both cultural norms and girls' work in and around the home. In addition, the cultural perception of girls as child minders, marriage material and a burden to the family influences their educational attainment the contemporary society. Also some parents decided in many cultures that, education is not worthwhile for their daughters who will move into their husbands' families when they marry and that the gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of the sons-in-law rather than to them. Prominent among these factors militating against girl child education are poverty, parental influence, early marriage, cultural practices, and religion.

Aikman & Unterhalter, (2019) found that parents' preference for sons encourage more of them to invest for in their sons' well-being to take care of parents in the future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys. For instance, Chisamya et al, (2019) found an association between a family's financial strength and the likelihood of the daughter's dropout in South Africa.

A study in the southern part of Adamawa state revealed that fathers are deliberately not allowing their daughters to go to school because they consider investment in female education as unprofitable, since the girls are likely to end up in another man's home (Abdullahi, 2020). Parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting girl student academic achievement; parents' education and encouragement are strongly related to improved student achievement (UNICEF, 2019). Parental education and social economic status have an influence on student achievement. Students with parents who were both college – educated tended to achieve at the highest levels. Children whose parents are of high educational status have a better statistical chance of participating in secondary Education (NPC & ICF, 2019). Important factors include parental involvement in their children education, how much Television children are allowed to watch and how often students change schools (Adebayo, 2020). Considering the fact that female education are very crucial in every nation, hence this study was aimed to investigate biology teachers views on factors influencing girl-child education in senior secondary School in kwara north senatorial district, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that poor enrollment of girl-child in secondary schools in Kwara North senatorial district has become a worrisome development to educational development (Ifeoma, Balogun, Isiaka, Oniye & Iyekolo, 2017). Some have eluded it as a result of poor enlightenment of parents on the need for the girl child education in the area. Some teachers accused some parents of disallowing their female children to be registered into the secondary education. Parents may have different views on why they prefer sending their boys to schools in the area of study.

The education of the girl child is undoubtedly important in the development of the nation as such access to quality education for them is very important (World Bank, 2020). This could be possible through increased secondary schools enrollment of girls. The research was therefore needed to find out other socio-cultural factors influencing girl child education in secondary school. The researcher needs to find out what other traditional practices and religion factors prevailing in the research region that contributes to low participation of girls in secondary education. The researcher also wants to find out the parental factors that influence girl-child education.

It is on the above premise, that the researcher has undertaken to investigate senior secondary school biology teachers' views on factors influencing girl-child education in Kwara north senatorial district, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate senior secondary school biology teachers' views on factors influencing girl child education in Kwara North senatorial district, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether:

- 1 Religious factors influence girl-child education in secondary school in Kwara North Senatorial district, Nigeria; and
- 2 Parental factors affect girl-child participation in secondary school in Kwara North Senatorial district, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions had been formulated to guide the study:

- i. How does religion influence girl child education in secondary school in Kwara North senatorial district, Nigeria?
- ii. What influence do parental factors have on girl child education in secondary school in Kwara North senatorial district, Nigeria?

Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive research of the survey type for the study. The population for this study includes all the 270 biology teachers of senior secondary schools in Edu, Patigi and Moro Local Government Areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. This formed the population from which research sample was drawn. Total enumeration sampling technique was used for this study. All the 270 biology teachers of senior secondary schools in Edu, Patigi and Moro Local Government Areas were selected.

The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire which helped to gather factual in-depth information desired. The questionnaire is closed ended, titled "senior secondary school biology teachers' views on factors influencing girls child education". The questionnaire adopted a four Likert Scale format with the alternative of Strong Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree will be used to enables the respondents to choose the answer they think is appropriate and best represents their opinion. The statistical tool for this study was descriptive statistics of frequency table for the research questions.

Results and Interpretation

Research Question 1: How does religion influence girl child education in secondary school in Kwara North senatorial district, Nigeria?

Table 1 shows the response rate of how religious factors influence girl child education. The highest response rate on the table is lack of religious obligation to western school education influence western education with 3.27 mean score follow by fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls influence girl child education with mean score of 3.18. the least response rate on the table are girl child education is morally condemned and lack of religious legal action against girl child education influence girl child education with both having 2.86 as their mean score.

Table 1: Religion Factors influence on Girl Child Education

S/N	Religious Factors	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1.	Lack of religious obligation to western School education influence girl child education	137(55.2)	63(25.4)	27(10.9)	21(8.5)	3.27
2.	Girl child education is morally Condemned	75(30.2)	94(37.9)	49(19.8)	30(12.1)	2.86
3.	Lack of religious legal action against Girl-child education influence girl Child education	71(28.6)	95(38.3)	58(23.4)	24(9.7)	2.86
4.	Fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls influence girl child education	113(45.6)	85(34.3)	32(12.9)	18(7.3)	3.18
5.	Absence of religious guidance on girl child education influence girl child education.	71(28.6)	107(43.1)	46(18.5)	24(9.7)	2.91
6.	Parents valued Qura'anic education for girls than western education	99(39.9)	87(35.1)	46(18.5)	16(.65)	3.08
7.	Western education is not religiously building on adherents of Islam	84(33.9)	92(37.1)	52(21.0)	20(8.1)	2.97
8.	Fear of religious interference	77(31.0)	111(44.8)	43(17.3)	17(6.9)	3.00
9.	Fear of exposure of girls to the public	87(35.1)	84(33.9)	46(18.5)	31(12.5)	2.92

Research Question 2: What influence do parental factors have on girl child education in secondary school in Kwara North senatorial district, Nigeria?

Results on table 2 shows that parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters with 3.40 mean score. The least response rate on the table is that it is more costly to educate girls with response rate of 2.93 mean score.

Table 2: influence of Parental Factors on Girl Child Education

S/N	Parental Factors	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	MEAN
1.	Parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters	139(56.0)	79 (31.9)	21(8.5)	9(3.6)	3.40
2.	Parents seem to be more committed to marital orientation of girls	80(32.3)	131(52.8)	28(11.3)	9(3.6)	3.14
3.	It is more costly to educate girls	88(35.5)	83(33.5)	48(19.4)	29(11.7)	2.93
4.	Sons take responsibility for their families	100(40.3)	86(34.7)	38(15.3)	24(9.7)	3.06
5.	Lack of parental guidance and counseling girl's child education	99(39.9)	87(35.1)	39(15.7)	23(9.3)	3.06

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study also revealed that lack of religious obligation to western school education influence girl child education. This finding is in accordance with Adebayo,

(2020) who revealed that Islam has been associated with low participation of female in schools. There is that wrong notion of imposition of Western formal education for the purpose of converting people to Christianity. For this reason Islamic communities opposes formal education especially for the female for fear that western education promote value contrary to cultural norms.

The study also found that parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters. This finding is similar to Chismya, (2019) who found that Parents' demand for the education of their daughters is low, reflecting both cultural norms and girls' work in and around the home. In addition, the cultural perception of girls as child minders, marriage material and a burden to the family influences their educational attainment the contemporary society. Also some parents decided in many cultures that, education is not worthwhile for their daughters who will move into their husbands' families when they marry and that the gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of the sons-in-law rather than to them. The finding is also in agreement with Aikman & unterhalter, (2019) who found that parents' preference for sons encourage more of them to invest for in their sons' well-being to take care of parents in the future. In fact, parental gender bias investment occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys

Summary of Findings

Biology teachers are of the view that;

1. Lack of religious obligation to western school influence girl child education; and
2. Parents prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughter.

Conclusions

The study concluded that biology teachers viewed some religions do not see importance of western education and for this reason they oppose formal education for their girls' child for the fear of converting to other religion.

The study also concluded that biology teachers perceived that parents prefer to send their sons to school rather than sending their daughters because they think the daughters will move into their husbands' families when they marry.

It can also be concluded that parents who are rich are more likely to send their daughters to school than those who are poor. It can also be concluded that socio-cultural factors can influence girls' child education.

It can also be concluded that religion play a major factor in influencing girls child education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1.The government should ensure that the citizens are sensitized about the importance of educating the girls' child.
2. Religious leaders should sensitize their follower about the importance of girl child education and they should try to correct the wrong notion of imposition of western formal education for the purpose of converting people to Christianity.

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