

Cultural and Socio-economic Status Factors Affecting Female Education in Sokoto State, Northern Nigeria: Implication for Counselling

Zainab Lawal Ibrahim^{1,2,*}, Aqeel Khan¹, Jamaluddin bin Ramli¹

¹School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

²Federal Government College Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

Received September 30, 2020; Revised November 1, 2020; Accepted November 7, 2020

Cite This Paper in the following Citation Styles

(a): [1] Zainab Lawal Ibrahim, Aqeel Khan, Jamaluddin bin Ramli, "Cultural and Socio-economic Status Factors Affecting Female Education in Sokoto State, Northern Nigeria: Implication for Counselling," *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 8, No. 11C, pp. 124 - 128, 2020. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.082314.

(b): Zainab Lawal Ibrahim, Aqeel Khan, Jamaluddin bin Ramli (2020). *Cultural and Socio-economic Status Factors Affecting Female Education in Sokoto State, Northern Nigeria: Implication for Counselling*. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(11C), 124 - 128. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.082314.

Copyright©2020 by authors, all rights reserved. Authors agree that this article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License

Abstract Despite Nigerian government's initiatives such as Northern Education Initiative (NEI), Girl Education Project (GEP) and Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in bridging the massive educational gap between males and females in Sokoto state it remains one of the states with high illiteracy level due to cultural and socio-economic status factors affecting female education. The study investigated the attitudes of parents towards female education and cultural and socio-economic factors responsible for low enrolment and recurrent withdrawal from school. Simple survey design was used, population of 800 students from Women centre for continuing education (WCCE). A sample of 260 students was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan table. Attitudes of parents towards female education questionnaire (APTFEQ) with a reliability of 0.76 and effect of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors on female education questionnaire (ESCSEFFEQ) with 0.84 reliability were the instruments used in collection of data. The study found out that parents have negative attitude towards female education and poverty is the major reason for low enrolment of female students and recurrent withdrawal. Early marriage, gender inequality, religion, child labour and uneducated parents also contributed to such situations. Recommendations were that government should provide free education to females, provision of job opportunities to reduce poverty rate and public awareness campaign on the importance of female

education. Female counsellors are required to counsel female students to be successful Academicians in their society. Counsellors should organize conferences and use such forums in conversing with parents about the importance of female education as the major implications for counselling.

Keywords Parent's Attitudes, Female Education, Culture, Socio-economic Status, Counselling

1. Introduction

Education is the process of impacting knowledge through teaching and learning. It is every child's right to be educated whether male or female. With these the significance of education is paramount; this is the reason why¹ necessitates that every Nigerian child is entitled to equal right of been educated irrespective of gender. Nigeria is operating on 9-3-4 system of education²⁻³. That is 6 years in primary school and 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years of senior secondary school and 4 years in the university⁴. Nigeria has 30 million students however, this does not tally with the attitudes of parents in northern Nigeria especially in Sokoto state, towards the enrolment of their female child into schools. Nevertheless, People

usually accept that it is dreadful to foresee the future with precision³¹. Thus, it is certainly possible to predict possible results given past and current situations which are significant to build on the achievements and avoid the hindrances recognized in the past to advance the future³².

Cultural and socio-economic factors were found to be the major factors affecting female education¹¹. Cultural factors are; cultural practices such as (early marriage, child labour, gender inequality) religion and fragility¹²⁻¹³. Based on previous study¹⁰ child brides are much more likely to drop out of school and complete fewer years of education than their peers who marry later. This affects the education and health of their children and their ability to earn a living. Female children especially in the rural areas are sent to the cities to work as house maids or hawk goods on the streets¹⁵. These keep them away from school either not enrolled or withdrawn to do such labour^{5,14}. Researcher⁷ added that some females are allowed to start school but will later be withdrawn due to socio-economic or socio-cultural factors. Researcher⁹ reported that there are nearly double as several males graduating from schools as related to females. The major and critical problem of the state for decades is poor female enrolment and recurrent withdrawal⁷. Female child is seen to belong to another family, because of marriage. Some parents send the female child on early marriage so that they can use the dowry to train the boy. Misinterpretation of religious belief is used to deny the right of female children to get education. The general slogan is that "women's education ends in the kitchen"¹⁰. Gender inequality; females are not given equal rights with the male children, because they are seen as inferior to them^{11,16}. That is why there are overburdened with house chores to give the males the opportunity to go to school¹⁷. Their religious belief is that the females shouldn't be taught by a male and be a classmate of male¹⁸. There are against the dressing due to absence of hijab in uniform structure¹⁹.

Poverty, uneducated parents, low socio-economic status parents, unemployment are the socio-economic factors^{12,16}. According to²² poverty remains the most significant factor determining whether a girl can have access to education. Example, in the state, only 4% of poor young women can read, compared with 99% of rich young women in the South Eastern Nigeria²². Researcher²³ asserted that high rate of poverty has heightened the situation, because with little resources males are educated and the females are left out of school. According to researcher¹¹ about 79.9% of the parents in the state are illiterates, making them to be ignorant of the importance of female education. It is preferred that the medical personnel that attend to female patients should be females and the parents are being made aware²³. "The government is creating awareness that unless you allow a girl-child to go to school, you may not have the doctors, nurses and teachers you need to assist the community²³. Female children from high socio-economic status parents tends to be educated over there counter parts¹⁴. Researchers^{2,12} reported that every day, girls face

barriers to education because of poverty, cultural norms and practices, poor infrastructure, violence and fragility.

Educating females reduced poverty. It brings health awareness which in turn prevents HIV/AIDS, STDS, unwanted pregnancies, nation building and reduce infant mortality death,¹⁷. In general, educating female is just like educating the whole nation. Because there are the home builders where charity begins, a nation will never grow without better foundation. Government brought up necessary interventions and initiatives to tackle such menace. These include; formulation of government education policy³⁰: Northern education initiative (NEI), Girls Education Project Phase (GEP3); This gives the parents of the female child money as stipend in order to allow her to go to school), creation of WCCE that provides second chance to women who might have dropped from school, to continue from basic education up to secondary level. Provision of 3 girls only boarding schools, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Sokoto State Vision 20:20 policy; to reduce the rate of dropout/withdrawal especially for girls by 48% to 20% by 2020⁸.

Sokoto State is one of the northern states with highest illiteracy rate especially for females, with just one female professor in the whole state⁵. They are Hausa/Fulani by tribe and are predominantly Muslims with about 99.9%⁶. With primary school-age population of 1,100,000, and enrolment rate of 610,886 (400,381 Males; 210,505 Females) that is boys (69.8%) to ratio of girls (30.2%)⁷. At junior secondary males has (52,893) while females (23,135), Secondary school is (34,628) males and (12,343) females, while at university level the rate is (51,461) males and (16,793)⁸. While Withdrawal ratio is 1:4.17 One of the reasons for this is that the state feared exposure to western education especially for girls, claiming that it would interfere with the cultural and religious beliefs of the people due to the curriculum in use, even though that has not been the case^{10,20}. Researcher⁵ stated that is why Quranic schools are given preference. Mixing matured males and females in school is against the Hausa culture and religion²¹. Fear of the female child being raped or becomes pregnant; these are the reasons why the females are kept in purdah or married off early, to avoid ruining the family's image²².

2. Statement of the Problem

The wide gap between male and female enrolment rate is quite alarming. The female is seen as a burden and she belongs to another house. Some females are sent to child labour just to get money for the education of the male sibling. Some will start schooling but will later be withdrawn for some reasons, while others are given the access to Quranic schools but no formal education. These produce lesser number of female professionals. So, this

study tends to investigate the factors affecting female's enrolment rate and withdrawal and what attitude parents hold that affects female education in Sokoto state.

3. Objectives

1. To find attitudes of parents towards female's education.
2. To find the cultural and socio-economic factors causing low female enrolment into schools and recurrent withdrawal of female students from schools.

4. Questions

1. What are the attitudes of parent towards female's education?
2. What are the cultural and SES factors causing female's low enrolment rate and recurrent withdrawal from school?

5. Materials and Methods

The study applied simple survey method. According to¹¹

descriptive simple survey allows a researcher to select sample from the population for the purpose of generalization. Cluster sampling and purposive sampling were applied in selecting Sokoto state (core- northern state). The total population of the study is 800 students in WCCE. Using²⁴ table, sample size of 260 female students was drawn. Simple random and proportionate sampling were used to get the sample from each class.

Two questionnaires were adapted as the instruments namely;

- i) Attitudes of parents towards Female child education questionnaire (APTFCEQ)¹⁶: It contained 11 items based on Yes and No. The instrument opted coefficient of 0.76 as the reliability with content validity.
- ii) Socio-cultural and socio-economic factors effect on female child education questionnaire (SCSEFFCEQ)⁵: It contained 11 items. The reliability coefficient was 0.84, using Pearson moment correlation coefficient and was found to be valid.

6. Findings

Research Question 1: what is the attitude of parents towards female education.

Table 1. Showing the Attitudes of parents towards female education in Sokoto state

S/N	Items	Yes	No	% of Yes	% of No	Decision
1	Female education ends-up in the kitchen	190	70	73	27	Agreed
2	Female should not be educated; it would stop her from marrying early	155	105	59.6	40.4	Agreed
3	Educated females are not responsible.	100	160	38.5	61.5	Disagreed
4	Based on religious beliefs, female-child does not need formal education.	200	60	76.9	23.1	Agreed
5	The female-child only needs Quranic education as a future mother	229	31	88.1	11.9	Agreed
6	Female marriage dowry should be used to educate male-child	235	25	90.4	9.6	Agreed
7	Educated females are disobedient	99	161	38.1	61.9	Disagreed
8	Educated female controls her husband	160	100	61.5	38.5	Agreed
9	Female education is good if only it is free	120	140	46.2	53.8	Disagreed
10	High rate of pregnancy during female-child formal education depresses the parents	210	50	80.8	19.2	Agreed
11	Females contributes less towards nation building	175	85	67.3	32.7	Agreed

Research Question 2: What are the factors causing female low school enrolment rate and recurrent female student’s withdrawal from school.

To know the factors responsible for recurrent female students’ withdrawal, first is to know the recurrent withdrawals at each level of education (primary-senior secondary school)

Table 2. Recurrent female student’s withdrawal from each school level

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Primary School	21	8.1%
After Primary School	65	25%
Junior Secondary School	80	30.8%
Senior Secondary School	94	36.1%
Total	260	100%

Table 3. Factors Responsible for female Student’s low Enrolment and Recurrent Withdrawal

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
Early marriage	50	19.2%
poverty	60	23.1%
Religion	49	18.8%
Gender inequality	42	16.2%
Uneducated parents	39	15%
Gender role	20	7.7%
Total		100%

7. Discussion

Table 1 findings indicated that parents in Sokoto state have negative attitude towards female child education, because the agreed has the highest percentage. This finding was supported by previous researchers^{19,25,16} which reported that parents have negative attitudes towards their female children’s education in Sokoto. Researcher²⁶ had dissimilarity with present finding, where they found positive attitude of parents towards female-child education in Edo state.

Table 2 shows that 8.1% of the respondents are dropouts at primary level, 25% dropout after primary(not furthering to secondary school level), also 30.8% are withdrawn at junior secondary and 36.1% at senior secondary school; all these dropouts are due to either early marriage, unwanted pregnancies, misinterpretation of religion, poverty and, uneducated parents, gender inequality or child labour.

Table 3 revealed that 19.2% early marriage is the because of low female enrolment rate, 23.1% was poverty, 18.8% reported religion, gender inequality had 16.2%, 15% from uneducated parents and 7.7% from child labour.

Findings were supported by previous researchers^{21,24,20,27,28} who stated that early marriage,

gender inequality, religion and poverty are the leading factors in denying females of basic formal education in Sokoto State, but it is a misinterpretation of Islamic beliefs. while^{29,30} reported bad governance, poor infrastructure and funding of the educational sector as the factors responsible.

8. Conclusion

Conclusion was reached based on the findings, that parents have negative attitudes towards female education in Sokoto State. Cultural and socio-economic status such as early marriage, poverty, religion, uneducated parents, gender inequality and child labour are the causes of low enrolment and recurrent withdrawal of females, with poverty as the major factor.

Based on the findings and conclusion; the following recommendations were reached that parents should adopt positive attitudes towards female education, and government should provide job opportunities so as to reduce poverty rate, provide free education for females and improve public awareness campaign on the importance of female education to parents and parents should not show male child preference over the female child.

9. Counselling Implication

There are following counselling implications:

1. Female counsellors are required in schools so as to counsel female students in order to be a successful academicians in their society by beating all the societal odds and having better self-concept and self-esteem.
2. School and multi-cultural counsellors should organize conferences and use such forums in conversing with parents and community members on the importance of female education and effect of gender equality.
3. Counsellors should counsel female students on consequences of unwanted pregnancies and STDs.

REFERENCES

- [1] Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). National Policy on Education (NPE). Annual National Report. Lagos 2016.
- [2] National Education Data Survey (NEDS). National Report. Abuja 2015
- [3] Onwuameze, N. C. Educational opportunity and inequality in Nigeria: assessing social background, gender and regional effects (Univeresity of Iowa). 2013, Retrieved from <https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/2598>.
- [4] Federal Ministry of Education (FME). Nigeria Education Indicators, 2016.
- [5] Kainuwa, A., Binji, N., & Yusuf, M. Cultural Traditions and Practices of the Parents as Barriers to Girl-child Education in

- Zamfara State. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3(11), pp.1–8, 2013.
- [6] Katami, N. A. Educational Needs of Married Women in Sokoto State Women Centre for Continuing Education. M.Ed. Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 2008.
- [7] Yakubu, U. K., Binji, M. B., & Muhammad, A. Factors Responsible For Frequent Withdrawal of Girls from Schools and Their New Enthusiasm for Re-Joining Formal Education after Years of Break : *Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 4(6), pp.18–23, 2014.
- [8] Sokoto Ministry of Education (SME). State Strategic Education Sector Plan (SESP) by (2011-2020), 2010.
- [9] Nmadu, G., Avidime, S., Oguntunde, O., Binta, V. D., & Mandara, M. Girl Child Education : Rising to the Challenge. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 2010, 14(3), pp. 107–112.
- [10] United Nations International Children Educational Fund (UNICEF). (2017). Annual Report.
- [11] Lawal, Z. I. Relationship between Self-Concept, Vocational Preference and Educational Needs of Married Women, in Women Centre for Continuing Education. M.Ed. Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto 2017.
- [12] Kamaldeen, A. S., Buhari, A. S. & Parakoyi, D. Perception attitude and practices of parents in Okene Nigeria toward Girl-Child Education. *Journal of Science and Research* , 2(8), 2012.
- [13] Olomukoro, C.O. and Omiunu, S. E. Strategies for Expanding Access to Education to the Girl-Child in Nigeria. *Journal of Adult Education and Development*, 2011, 5(1), pp. 212–222.
- [14] Khalid, M. Accessing the Educational Needs of Women in Women Centre for Continuing Education Niger State. M.Ed. Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 2012.
- [15] Terhemba, G. A., & Umaru, A. Evaluation of parents attitude toward girl-child enrolment and completion of secondary school education in Yobe State, Nigeria, Counselling implications for human development (O. and G. Adegoke, A.A., Aluede, Ed.) 2015.
- [16] Onoyase, A. Attitude of Parents toward Female-Child Secondary Education in Sokoto State, Nigeria : Implications for Counselling, *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 8(2), pp. 21–27, 2018.
- [17] Uchezuba, F. N. Effects of Marital Status and Study Habit on the Academic Performance Among Senior Secondary School Students of Women Centre for Continuing Education Sokoto State. M.Ed. Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 2014.
- [18] Ilyas, S. U. The Challenges Faced by Muslim Female Education and the Way Forward, 2014, pp. 88–91.
- [19] Lawal, Z. I. Attitudes of Parents Towards Their Girl- Child Education. M.Ed. Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, 2009.
- [20] Nwosu, N. P. Education For All Women By The Year 2015: Women Center For Continuing Education, Sokoto Nigeria As A Case Study, 2008, (234). Belgium.
- [21] Oraegbuna, R. C. Cultural Obstacles To Basic Formal Education And Training Of Women In Sokoto State , Northern Nigeria Project Paper Submitted To The Institute Of African Studies, 2012.
- [22] United Nation Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Action Plan, 2015.
- [23] Saleh, M. J., & Kwache, P. Z. An investigation into the girl-child enrolment and completion in senior secondary school in Bauchi state, Nigeria. *In International Research Journal of Library, Information and Archival Studies*, 2, 2012.
- [24] Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. Determining Sample Size For Research Activities. *Education and Psychological Measurement*, 30, pp. 607–610, 1970.
- [25] Jamil, M. Y. Education : A Solution to the Contemporary Challenges of a Common Woman in a typical Hausa-Fulani Dominated Society in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2, 2(6), pp. 1–5., 201
- [26] Okobia, E. O., & Ekejiuba, P. Parental Attitudes and Girl - Child Education in Edo State. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(3), pp. 175–180, 2015.
- [27] Mohammed, K., Nggada, D. C., & Abdullahi, Y. The State of Nigerian Female Education in the Post Colonial Era ; With Reference To Some Northern States . *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(11), pp. 14–16, 2013.
- [28] Lawal, Z.I., Khan, A., Ramli, B.J., & Miqureshi, I.M. Relationship Between Self-Concept, Vocational Preference and Educational Needs of Married Women, in Women Center for Continuing Education, SokotoState, Nigeria. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development*, 10(6), pp. 1330-1335, 2019.
- [29] Aja-Okorie, U. Women education in Nigeria: Problems and implications for family role and stability. *European Scientific Journal*, 2013, 9(28), pp. 272–282.
- [30] Lawal, Z. I., Khan, A., & bin Ramli, J. Culture, socio-economic status, and religious coping as predictors of happiness: a review. *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Health*, 23, pp. 156-169, 2020.
- [31] Alhassan, A. J. (2020). Evaluation of Ghana's 2007 Educational Policy: Effects on Education in the Upper West Region. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(9), pp. 4242-4260.
- [32] Assulaimani, T. The Future of Teaching English in Saudi Arabia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(8), pp. 1623-1634, 2019.