



The Attitude of Parents towards Girl-Child Education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State

Sunday Nsirimobi Orduⁱ

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the attitude of parents towards girl-child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted survey design and uses the stratified random sampling technique to select 200 parents to constitute the sample. Questionnaire designed by the researcher was used while mean scores and chi-square statistics were used to answer the research question and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that there is no significant difference between male and female parents attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. There is no significant difference between educated and non-educated parents attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Parents socio-economic status (i.e. low and high) does not significantly influence their attitude towards girl-child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Keywords: Attitude, Parents, Girl-Child, Education, Etche, Rivers State, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the totality of all processes by which a person develops abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior that is of positive value in the society in which he/she lives. All children deserve good and quality education because it is of positive value to the society so, both male and female should have equal right to education for their development and for the betterment of the society.

Education originated from two Latin words, educere and educare. Educere means to draw out or to lead out while educare means to nourish, bring up or to raise. Education is the leading or drawing out of an individual's innate powers and potentialities which will enable him to

understand, acquire relevant acceptable skill and of her competencies necessary for himself and the society he belongs. Education therefore is the process of awakening them for personal social competence (Ololube, 2006, 2009).

Agina-Obu (2002) in Akie (2002), the bible makes it clear in the book of “Genesis 1 vs. 27” so God created man in his image, in the image of God created him. Male and female created he them”. Proverbs 22 vs. 6 says ‘train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it’. Biblically, man refers to both sex, it means male and female. Based on the above scriptures, I must say that male and female children should both have equal rights to education so that there will be decency in the society and development.

If a girl child is not well trained or have education, she can unknowingly create problems in the society. Health wise, in terms of sex, she would not know what protection is all about so she can have an unprotected sex and contact HIV/AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases and spread it around. Education enhances lives and makes life meaningful, it is a vital aspect of human life, and it serves as a spring board for the nation. Education is like a good mother that wishes her sons and daughters to grow in to full status of man and woman, sound in minds and bodies that can do things according to their knowledge and their skills of acquisition so that they will be able to live useful lives that is up to standard and expectation where they could be trusted by themselves and the society they live.

Fafunwa (1974) said that education is the aggregate of all the processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society.

Siegel et al. (2018) defines education as the process by which society through schools and colleges, university and other institutions deliberately transmit their cultural heritage. It is however, necessary to stress at this point that throughout the globe, more emphasis are placed on education but it is indeed sad enough that despite the mass campaign against illiteracy, we are still recording educational backwardness among the people, especially among third world countries.

Indebt research had proved that most communities in Etche Local Government Area in Rivers State is included. There is high rate of educational stagnation especially, that of the girl child. Community development is incomplete without the education of a girl child, if you educate a man, you educate an individual, if you educate a woman, and you educate a nation, so there is need to educate the girl child, they have seen another source of income in the home and the entire family (Omolulu, 1972).

Some of the reasons why parents refuse to send their female children to school are as follows:

They see them as a symbol of wealth because once a child is born the father is more interested in the sex. Once it is a girl, his first reaction is that of disappointment but his is quickly replaced with a smile of joy when he realize that an extra source of income has arrived to be used in training his male child (Osaat, 2002).

They also believed that a girl’s place is nowhere else than in a man’s house. This is why from birth; she is taught and prepared to be a wife and mother. As a result, even when she appears more intelligent than her brothers, she is made to remain at home while her brothers are sent to school and her own talents and potential wasted. If at all she is allowed to go to school, the level at which she must stop is already decided. In some cases, she can only go to a commercial school rather than the secondary school, she must not exceed school certificate level even if she go very good grades. If by recommendation and pressure, she must stop at first

degree otherwise, she cannot find a husband because she can no longer be controlled by a man (husband).

Parents in this area believe that once a girl is educated, she will carry all her knowledge, money, degree and so on and become useful to another family where she get married. In order to save themselves of these trouble or spending scares resources preparing a Goldmine for another family, they would rather prefer she did not receive any education at all or in fact, withdraw her from school to marry to save funds for the family.

As a result of the above reasons, girls are married out and their bride prices are used to fund the formal education of the boys. This had been the attitude of parents in same communities in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State towards the girl's child education. The researcher's grandmother was a victim. She was very brilliant but her father never allowed her to be educated, or trained to the level of her intelligence instead she was asked to go and learn how to be a good house wife in chief's house in Bonny, it was the Chief's wife that later taught her how to make clothes.

Research Question

- What is the attitude of parents towards the education of the girl-child in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers state?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant difference between male and female parents' attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between educated and non-educated parents attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- Parental socio-economic status (i.e. low and high) does not significantly influence their attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the research. methodology; it was done under the following sub-headings, design of the study, population of the study, sampling techniques, sample, instrument, and validation of result instrument and method of data analysis.

This study adopted the survey design. This is so because an instrument was designed and used in obtaining data from the sample which was in turn generalized to the wider population. Population of the study comprised all parents in communities in Etche Local government Area of Rivers State. A stratified random sampling technique was used for this study. It was used for the selection of two hundred subjects for the study. The sample of this study comprised of two hundred (200) parents made up of educated, uneducated as well as low and high socio-economic status used for the study.

The basic instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researcher titled 'Attitude of Parents Towards Girl-Child Education (APTGCE)' designed to draw facts or elicit response on the attitude of parents towards the girl child education in Etche

Local Government Area of Rivers State. The questionnaire is made up of two sections; Section A and B. Section A is designed to capture the bio-data of the respondent, while Section B is made up of numbers of structural questions, meant to capture the attitude of parent towards the girl child education. Response for Yes or No will be used to get information from the people.

The questionnaire items used for this research were subjected to scrutiny of the researcher's supervisor for necessary criticism, modification and corrections after which the instrument was viewed as valid. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents. The researcher explained to the parents, the importance of the exercise and why they should attempt the questions adequately. The questions were translated to other respondents in Etche by the researcher for easy understanding of the questions and subsequent response. Simple percentages, means scores and frequency counts were used to answer the research questions while chi-square was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the attitude of parents towards the education of the girl-child in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers state? This research question was presented with percentage scores in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Percentage scores of the attitude of profit towards girl child education

S/N	STATEMENT/ITEM	RESPONSES			
		Agree		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%
1	Education of the girl child should be encouraged	190	95	10	5
2	I admire educated women	160	80	40	20
3	Education of the girl child is a good thing	155	78	45	22
4	An educated girl child is an asset to the family	140		60	30
5	Girl children should be given equal opportunities with male children	135	68	65	32
6	It is important that women contributes to the building of the nation	150	75	50	25
7	Educated women are usually respectful	120	60	80	40
8	It is not moral to hinder the education of the girl child	110	55	90	45
9	The education of the girl child is not a waste	180	90	20	10
10	Parents who train their girl children are doing the right thing	183	92	17	8
11	I will encourage other parents to train their girl children	165	83	35	7
12	More parents are encouraging the education of the girl child	148	74	52	26
13	Education of the girl child is not expensive	60	30	140	70
14	The education of the girl child is not burdensome	58	29	142	71
15	I will readily train a girl child	145	73	55	27
16	The girl child has the right to education	160	80	40	20
17	The education of the girl child will boost productivity	120	60	80	40
18	Laws against girl child education should be revoked	125	63	75	37
19	Laws encouraging girl child education should be enacted	125	63	75	37
20	I will readily contribute to the training of the girl child	115	58	85	42
21	I will support NGO sponsoring the girl child	90	45	110	55
TOTAL		135	67	65	33

Table 1 show that 135 parents representing 67 percent of the sample have positive attitude towards girl-child education while 67 parents representing 33 percent of the sample have negative attitude towards girl child education. The result is that majority of the parents have positive attitude towards girl child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant gender difference in the attitude of parents towards the girl-child education. This hypothesis one was compared with chi-square statistical in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Chi-square statistical of Gender and their attitude towards academic

Gender of Parents	Attitude		Total
	Positive	Negative	
Male	56(58)	44(42)	100
Female	60(58)	40(42)	100
Total	116	84	200

Calculated x^2 value = 0.32
 Critical x^2 value = 3.84
 Level of significant = 0.05
 Degree of freedom = N-1

Table 2 shows that the calculated x^2 value is 0.32 while the critical x^2 value is 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated x^2 value of 0.32 is less than the critical x^2 value of 3.94 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses “there is no significant gender difference in the attitude of parents towards girl-child education” is accepted. The alternative hypothesis is rejected. The result is that both male and female parents indicate positive attitude towards girl-child education.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents towards girl-child education based on their educational level. This hypothesis was answered with chi-square x^2 satisfies on Table 3 below.

Table 3: Chi-square of parents’ educational level and their attitude toward girl-child education

Parents’ Educational Level	Attitude		Total
	Positive	Negative	
Educated	75(70)	6(11)	81
Uneducated	98(103)	21(16)	119
Total	173	27	200

Calculated x^2 value = 4.43
 Critical x^2 value = 3.84
 Level of significant = 0.05
 Degree of freedom = 1

Table 3 shows that the calculated x^2 value is 4.43 while the critical x^2 value is 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated x^2 value of 4.43 is less than the critical x^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses “there is no significant gender difference in the

attitude of parents towards girl-child education based on their educational level” is rejected. The result shows that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents towards the education of the girl-child based on their socio-economic status (low and high). This hypothesis was formulated to guide the study.

Table 4: χ^2 of Parental Socio-Economic Status and their Attitude towards the Girl-Child Education

Parental Socio-Economic Status	Attitude		Total
	Positive	Negative	
High SES	38(37)	5(6)	43
Low SES	132(133)	25(24)	157
Total	170	30	200

Calculated χ^2 value = 0.29

Critical χ^2 value = 3.84

Level of significant = 0.05

Degree of freedom = 1

Table 4 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 0.29 while the critical χ^2 value of 0.29 is less than critical χ^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance, as such, the null hypothesis is accepted. The result shows that the attitude of parents towards girl-child education does not significantly differ based on their socio-economic status. The alternate hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion

The result of the research question (Table 1) shows that majority of the parents indicated positive attitude towards the girl-child education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. This result is due to the role women who are educated have continued to play in Nation building, the contributions of women profession in their families, communities and states.

Also, obnoxious laws and prohibitive customs and traditions that negatively affect women education have come under serious attack. In addition, there is a new wave of thinking that women are not in any way inferior to men. All these have contributed immensely in the positive attitude and disposition towards the girl-child education in the area. This result is in agreement with Okonta (2007) and Solomon (1996) that increasing awareness to the rights of the girl child and tremendous contributions of the educated women in the society have resulted in the positive attitude towards the girl child education in recent years.

The result of hypothesis one (Table 2) indicated that attitude towards girl child education does not significantly differ based on the gender of parents. The calculated χ^2 value (0.32) was less than the critical χ^2 value (3.84) at 0.05 level of significance. This therefore, shows that both male and female parents are increasingly aware of the enormous benefits attached to education of the girl child in our society. Such benefits can be witnessed in all facets of our daily life. Infact, in some home the educated women have taken over the responsibilities that in the past was accorded to the men folk. This result is in agreement with Bookrofe (2004), that male and female parents show positive attitude towards girl child education.

The result of hypothesis two (Table 3) shows that there is significant difference in the attitude of parents towards girl child education based on their level of education. The calculated

χ^2 value (4.43) was higher than the critical χ^2 (3.84) at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that parental education plays prominent role in their attitude towards the girl child education. Thus, the more parents were educated the more positive are their attitude towards girl child education. This result shows that ignorance and bias against women are responsible for negative attitude towards the girl-child education. Uneducated parents may believe that educated women are disrespectful, unable to fulfill their marital obligations and responsibilities or still hold on to customs and traditions that women are prohibitory towards girl-child education. This result is in agreement with Glider (1998) that parental education is significant in positive attitude towards girl child education.

The result of the hypothesis three (Table 4) shows that attitude of parents towards girl-child education does not significantly differ based on their socio-economic status. The designed by the researcher. Simple percentage was used in analyzing the research questions while chi-square was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that:

- Majority of the parents indicated positive attitude towards girl child education in the area (Table 1).
- Attitude of parents towards girl-child education does not significantly differ based on their gender (Table 2).
- Attitude of parents towards girl-child education significantly differ based on their educational level (Table 3).
- Attitude of parents towards girl-child education does not significantly differ based on their socio-economic status (Table 4).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the researcher concludes as follows:

- The attitude of parents towards the education of the girl child does not significantly differ based on their gender.
- Majority of parents have positive attitude towards girl-child education in the area.
- Parental education level significantly influence their attitude towards girl-child education.
- Socio-economic status of parents does not significantly influence their attitude towards the girl-child education.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher presented to the following recommendations:

- There should be deliberate policy to encourage the education of the girl-child by government.
- There should be more awareness and advocacy on the girl child education.
- There should be special scholarship scheme for the education of the girl-child, especially, those that excel in their academic pursuit.
- Equal educational opportunities should be given to girl children. This will enable them to acquire education.

- All form of discrimination and bias against female children should be discouraged at the family, community, state and national levels.
- Schools should be equipped to enable the girl-child gain functional education.
- Women professionals should do more to encourage the education of the girl-child.

Implications for Counseling

The fact that the attitude of parents towards girl-child education in Etche Local Government Area, Rivers State, is not encouraging, these calls for urgent counseling services. The guidance counselor and counseling psychologist as a matter of first step should carry out an intensive public enlightenment campaign on girl-child education. This can be done through seminars, or workshops, radio or television programmes, conferences and so on. Finally, counselor can as well guide parents towards girl-child education.

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ⁱ **Dr. Sunday Nsirimobi Ordu** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.