

Determining Parents' Mindset on Educating the Girl - Child in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Many parents' in Nigeria have developed a negative attitude towards educating girls that it is a waste of resources because they will eventually get married to another family. In northern Nigeria, the girl – child is not encouraged to go to school and that women are culturally confined to their traditional roles with lots of sanctions on them either by customs, norms or religion. The girls are frequently seen engaging in petty trading such as hawking groundnuts, pure water, garden egg and bread among other products during school period in order to make extra income for the family. This study therefore sought to determine the influence of parental mindset on girl – child education in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study used correlational survey design. The study population comprised of parents' in 9 Local Government areas of plateau State, 3 LGA from each zone purposively selected by the researcher as follows: Bassa, Jos North, Jos South, Bokkos, Kanam, Mangu, Shendam, Qua'an Pan and Wase. The study made use of registered list of voters from Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) from the LGAs which were 1,460,970. The sample size comprised of 384 respondents. A questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. The study used descriptive in inferential statistics in data analysis. The findings revealed that most parents' have the attitude of given out the girl – child in marriage long before they became women. It was also revealed that extended family and friends do mock and laugh at parent' that send the girl – child to school. The findings revealed that most parents' have the attitude of given out the girl – child in marriage long before they became women. It was also revealed that extended family and friends do mock and laugh at parent' that send the girl – child to school. The study concluded that most parents do send the girl – child to marriage even before they become women. Extended family and friends do mock and laugh at parents' that send the girl – child to school. The study recommends among others that parents' should develop a mindset of likeness by sending the girl – child to school and desist from given them in marriage long before they become women.*

Keywords: Attitudes, education, Girl – child, mindset, and parents

1. Introduction

Education is the most viable instrument by humans to conquer their environment and their destiny. Girl – child education has been a burning and continuous issue in developing countries of the world in which Nigeria is one. There is the belief in Nigerian culture that women are second class citizens. They are traditionally believed to be weaker sex, hence desiring support from men. Many parents in Nigeria have developed an attitude that educating girls is a waste of resources because they will eventually get married into another family and it's that family that will benefit from the girl. This coupled with believe that boys will become breadwinners has prompted some parents to focus more on the male child and have considered it a risk in educating the girl child.

Education is a fundamental right for all not minding sex, yet most Nigerian society have denial the girl child right to education. According to UNESCO (2007) cited in Obiageli and Paulette (2015) women that are educated could contribute to the improvement of the standard of living not only to their immediate families, but to the society in general. Education helps the girls to be self – confident, participate effectively in the society and protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and other sexual exploitations.

Ekejuibi (2011) posited that the issue of poverty among parents has further aggravated the situation of girls' lack of access to education, since most parents when faced with scared resources choose to educate boys than girls. In Nigeria, beliefs and parental poverty has foster negative attitudes which limit parents support for girl child education.

Olumukoro and Omiunu (2011) gave some of the hindrance to girl child education to include among others: cultural inhibitions, misinterpretations of religious injunctions, traditional practices, early betrothal of girls in marriage, gender insensitivity to educational environments, societal preference for the male child and over burdening of the girl child with household chores and labour. Educating the girl child has a lot of advantages as it helps in reducing children and maternal mortality rate and improving healthcare. With these vital roles of education, Adenipukun (2009) reported that 10 million school age children are out of the formal school system with more than 60 percent being girls residing in northern part of Nigeria, Plateau State inclusive.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, especially northern part, the girl – child is not encouraged to go to school women culturally are confined to their traditional roles with lots of sanctions imposed on them either by customs, norms or religion (Aliyu, 2009). This practice has resulted in a large number of girls being out of school. The growing number of girls that are out of school in most city centres of Plateau State is a matter that desire urgent attention. The girls are frequently seen engaging in petty trading such as hawking groundnuts, pure water, and yam, garden egg locally made soap (sabulu solo) and bread among others during school period in order to make extra income for the family. Most of the girls grew up believing that life begins with hawking and ends in marriage, while boys received rigorous training both in formal and informal education. Many families especially in the rural areas of Plateau State find that investment in education is too high. Contributing, Mohammed (2008) posited that girls of school

ages hawk goods on the streets as parents' exploit them, at times girls are engaged in early marriages some attribute it to poverty and financial position of parents.

The cultural practice in Plateau State Nigeria does not favour girl child education, as the practice is for the girl child to go for early marriage and be educated by the husband; this has made several women to be victim of out of school. In fact only a few educated parents give equal education to the boys and girls in their family. This has made Nigerians wonder whether parents still hold to their culture and social status with regards to educating their girl child even when education in Nigeria through the Universal Basic Education has been made free and compulsory to all. Girl child in Nigeria has suffered enough discrimination and there is need to eradicate inequality or unequal right to education and provide equal access to education as provided in the National Policy of Education. It is against this backdrop that this research study aimed at examining current parental attitudes toward girl child education in Nigeria.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine whether parents' mindset influence their attitudes toward educating the girl – child in Plateau State, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested at α 0.05 level of significance.
H0: Parents mindset has no influence on parent's attitudes toward educating the girl child in Plateau State, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Education and the Girl – Child

Education provides individuals with all the competencies, skills and knowledge that are necessary for self - actualization and esteem as well as societal growth and development. According to Adaobi (2007) education is the act of acquiring knowledge. By education it is an act of given him/her some desirable knowledge, understanding, skills, interest, attitudes and critical thinking which makes him/her develop some understanding about deeper things in life. The girl child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen 18 years of age. It is the age before becoming young adult. This period covers the crèche, nursery or early childhood (0 – 5 years) primary (6 – 12). During this period, the young girl is totally under the care of the adult who may be her parents or guardians and older siblings. During this period, the girl child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. The girl child simply refers to the female child that has not reached the age of adult. She is therefore, meek and innocent and needs protection of the parents and the law in order to survive and grow properly into a complete being.

Girl child education incorporates the necessary attitude, cultural and behavioural training which parents give to their daughters at home to enable them become useful, resourceful and respectful citizens of their countries. It also includes the functional teaching or training in skills

acquisition which many girls undertake in the shades of seamstress or in computer training centres, weaving/fashion designing centres as well as catering and interior decoration among others. According to Chidebelu (2009) cited in Azi (2010) denying girl children access to early childhood education makes them socially excluded, creating room for them to grow up to become illiterates women in later life and classified as disadvantaged candidates for adult education, women empowerment programmes and other women recue remedial or support programmes that smack off underdevelopment.

2.2 Parents Mindset

Most societies in Nigeria do not give chance to the girl – child to make her own choice like the male child by most Nigerian parents. Majority of the girls were given out in marriage long before they became women by their parents. They are often force to marry men they do not love and who are sometimes old enough to be their fathers. Among the Hausa people in northern Nigeria training a girl – child is not wide spread and there is a form of pressure against people who want to train their girl – child, sometimes from friends and members of the extended family, this attitude is a preponderance of unfavourable attitude among the people (Nduru, 2003). Contributing, Obiageli and Paulette (2015) posited that most parents have the mindset and believe that boys will become breadwinners of their families and consequently must be educationally empowered to prepare them for the task ahead at the expense of the girls. According to Aliyu (2009) that denial of girl –child education is the commonest habit of male parents which has manifested to neglect of girl – child education and retrogressive of child neglect. Most women are discouraged from going to school but rather put in purdah or seclusion in the Islamic religion that they are men property.

2.3 Empirical Review

Kamaldeen, Buhari and Parakoyi (2012) carried a study on assessing the perception, attitude and practices of parents in Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State toward girl – child education. The study used descriptive cross sectional study which aimed at providing baseline information for subsequent intervention. The study had a sample size of 370 parents with children of school age. A multistage sampling technique was used to sample equal number of males and females for the study. The study administered questionnaires to the respondents. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 15 and results presented in frequency tables. The study revealed that the perception and attitude of respondents towards girl – child education was good. Over 90% respondents were aware that education is a child right. Over 90% think that enrolling girl – child in primary school is important and about 90% agreed that female child should be educated up to tertiary level.

Obiageli and Paulette (2015) conducted a study to find out parental attitudes towards girl – child education in Edo State. Samples of 450 participants were randomly selected from Benin metropolis. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents from all works of life. The study used Likert scale questionnaire for data collection. The data

collected was analyzed using t – test of independent sample and one – way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses at alpha level of 0.05. The findings revealed that parents have positive attitude toward girl –child education. But parents from the southern part of Nigeria residing in Benin metropolis were more disposed to girl – child education than those from the northern parts. The result further showed that parents who are Christians have better attitude toward girl – child education. In another study, Onoyase (2018) carried a study on attitude of parents toward female – child secondary education in Sokoto State, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. The study used descriptive survey and ex-post facto design. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting a sample of 540 parents comprising of 270 from urban centres and 270 from rural areas. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The hypothesis was tested using t – test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that parents in Sokoto State have unfavourable attitude toward female child secondary education. There was no significant difference between parents in the urban and rural areas in their attitude toward female – child secondary education.

3. Research Methodology

This study used the correlational survey design method. The researcher use purposive and stratified random sampling in selecting nine Local Government Areas from the three zones of Plateau State. However, a sample of 9 local governments, three from each zone, northern, southern and central zones respectively. A sample of 384 respondents, were selected for the study from nine Local Government Areas of Plateau State. The used of stratified sampling technique was based on the fact that the senatorial districts will serve as strata, with each local government area serving as a stratum. The study used structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This is based on the fact that the questionnaire is easy to administer than other primary sources of data collection like observation and interview among others which could be affected by the sample size. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive make used of percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using probability (p – value) at α 0.05 level of significance and decision was taken on whether to accept Ho or fail to accept Ho.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised of all parents in the three zones of Plateau State, where nine Local Government Areas (LGAs) were purposively selected by the researcher. The selected LGAs of study include: Bassa, Jos North, Jos South, Bokkos, Kanam, Mangu, Shendam, Qua’an Pan and Wase. The study made use of list of registered voters from Independent Electoral Commission due to lack of accurate data on the number of parents in the LGAs of study. The list of registered voters comprised of those from 18 years and above and it adequate enough for the study. The list of registered voters extracted by the researcher for the LGAs of study is shown on Table 1.

Table 1: List of Registered Voters (2018) in Plateau State

LGA	Registered Voters
Bassa	107,604
Jos North	390,244
Jos South	209,437
Bokkos	102,094
Kanam	124,312
Mangu	169,604
Shendam	125,717
Qua’an Pan	126,480
Wase	105,478

Source: www.viewpointnigeria (2018)

A sample was chosen from the population of the list of registered voters in the selected nine LGAs of Plateau State. From the population of 1,460,970, using the formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2} \times \frac{1 + Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}$$

Where, n = Sample size

N = Population of the study

e = Margin of error at 5% level

z = Is the level of confidence of the sample (set at 95% thus z = 1.96)

P = Population proportions (set at 0.5)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} \times \frac{1 + 1.96 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2 \times (1,460,970)}$$

$$= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} \times \frac{1 + 0.9604}{3,6252.425}$$

$$= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \times \frac{1 + 0.00002649}{1.00002649}$$

$$= \frac{384.16}{1.00002649}$$

$$= 384.1$$

$$= 384$$

The researcher designed a questionnaire and administered to respondents in the nine LGAs of Plateau State as follows: Bassa, Jos North, Jos South, Bokkos, Kanam, Mangu, Shendam, Qua’an Pan and Wase. This was complimented with other sources of data as the researcher collected data from Journals, textbooks and the internet. A four point Likert scale score was provided for the respondents as follows: Strongly agree 4, agree 3, and disagree 2 strongly disagree 1.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Result of the Study

The research study used percentages, mean and standard deviation to describe the data collected. The descriptive analysis was conducted based on the objectives of the research.

Parents’ Mindset and Girl – Child Education

The study’s first objective was to establish whether parents’ mindset influences their attitude toward girl – child

education in Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Result of Parents' Mindset on Girl – Child Education

	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	S.Dev.
Parents do not have interest in educating the girlchild because she's going to marry in another family and they will enjoy the benefits.	10.3%	15.6%	37.8%	36.3%	3.00	1.23
Resources cannot be spent on the girl - child by parents for no reasons and therefore parents prefer to spend on the male child who will inherit them.	14.2%	16.3%	29.1%	40.4%	2.97	1.11
Educating the girl - child is the most foolish decision by parents because she's just a temporary member of the family, no need to waste funds.	31.7%	33.8%	18.4%	16.1%	2.19	1.16
When parents trains the girl - child, it means they are transferring their wealth of resources to another family else, and not their own family.	15.6%	17.8%	30.9%	35.7%	2.87	1.18
The role of training thee girl - child should be left for the husband who will reap the dividend and not parents.	17.1%	19.3%	31.3%	32.3%	2.79	1.15
Source: Author's fieldwork computation, 2019						

The study sought to examine whether parents do not have interest in educating the girl – child due to fact that she's going to get married somewhere else and that where she got married they will be the ones to enjoy the benefits. The findings revealed that 36.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 37.8% agreed, while 10.3% and 15.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. The result further showed that the statement had a mean of 3.00 which confirmed that a larger number of the youths agreed and strongly agreed with the statement.

The study further enquired whether parents' have the opinion that resources cannot be spent on the girl – child as there is no gain and hence prefer to spend on the male children who will inherit them. The findings showed that 40.4% strongly agreed, 29.1% agreed, while 14.2% and 16.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. The mean of this statement was 2.97 which also confirmed that majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement. These findings implied that parents' have attitude

of not training the girl – child, but prefer to train boys who will inherit them.

On whether educating the girl – child is the most foolish decision by parents' that she is just a temporary member of the family and no need to waste resources. The findings showed that 16.1% strongly agreed, 18.4% agreed, while 31.7% and 33.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. These findings were further confirmed by the mean of 2.19 implying that the girl – child needs equal education with the male child and she is not a temporary member of the family by permanent member. In addition the study sought determine if training the girl – child translates to transfer of wealth of resources to another family else. 35.7% strongly agreed, 30.9% agreed, while 15.6% and 17.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. The statement had a mean response of 2.87 which confirmed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. This statement was argued by most Christian parents, that there is no transfer of resources as the girl – child always remembers her root.

The research further sought to determine whether the role of training the girl – child should be left for the husband who will reap the benefits. The result showed that 32.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 31.3% agreed. The mean of 2.79 further confirmed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Those who disagreed and strongly disagreed were 19.3% and 17.1% respectively. However, a large number of parents argued again that educating the girl – child should be shouldered by parents and should not be transferred to someone else.

4.2 Correlation Result

Parents Mindset and Girl – Child Education

The first objective of the study was to establish whether parent's mindset influences girl – child education in Plateau State, Nigeria. The correlation result is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Correlation Results of Parents Mindset and Girl – Child Education

		Parents' Mindset	Girl-child Education
Parents' Mindset	Pearson Correlation	1	-.307**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Girl-child Education	Pearson Correlation	-.307**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 – tailed)
Source: Author's computation using SPSS, 2019

The result of correlation analysis indicated that parents' mindset had a negative and significant correlation with girl – child education, (r = -0.307, p = 0.000). The findings imply that increase in parents' negative mindset of not sending girl-child to school results in decrease in the number of girls that attains schooling. This finding is in line with Nduru (2003) who posited that friends and the extended family do mock and laugh at parents who send the girl – child to school. Similarly, Obiageli and Paulette (2015) opined that parents have the mindset of training boys that they will

become breadwinners of their own family, so they need to be trained to prepare for the task ahead.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The study used the findings of correlation analysis in hypothesis testing.

Ho: Parents mindset do not influence parents' attitude toward educating the girl – child in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The correlation analysis result of parents mindset was ($r = -0.307$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) which showed statistically significant negative relationship between parents mindset and their attitude toward girl – child education in Plateau State, Nigeria. From the findings, increase in parents' negative mindset of not sending the girl – child to school results in decrease in the number of girls that attain school. The study therefore rejected Ho1 at $\alpha = 0.05$ and concluded that parents' mindset influences parents' attitude toward education the girl – child in Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings agree with Nduru (2003) who posited that friends and the extended family do mock and laugh at parents who send the girl – child to school. Similarly, Obiageli and Paulette (2015) opined that parents have the mindset of training boys that they will become breadwinners of their own family, so they need to be trained to prepare for the task ahead.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that parents' mindset influence parents' attitude toward educating the girl – child as majority of the girls were given out in marriage long before they became women this practice is common among the Muslim faith. The findings further revealed that parents' who send the girl – child to school are often being mocked and laughed at by friends and the extended family and such discourages many from sending the girl child to school. According to the findings boys supposed to be send to school because they will become breadwinners of their family and need to be trained for the task ahead. The findings also revealed that most Muslim parents have the habit of secluding the girl – child or put them in purdah and thus not allowed to attend any formal school.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that parents' mindset have resulted in majority of them sending the girl – child into marriage before they become women especially Muslims. Extended family and friends do mock and laugh at parents who send the girl – child to school. It was further concluded that some parents' do send the girl – child into seclusion or purdah in other to discourage them from going to school.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusion

- 1) Parents should develop a mindset of likeness of sending the girl – child to school. Parents' should desist from

sending the girl – child into marriage before they become women.

- 2) Parents' should not worry about friends and extended family that mock and laugh at them for sending their girl children to school.
- 3) Awareness should be created among Muslim parents' to stop secluding or putting the girl – child in purdah but rather they should encourage them to attend formal school along with Qua'ranic study.

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