

Attitudes of Parents towards Girl-Child Education in the Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) Camps in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

The study examined attitude of parents towards girl-child education in the IDPs' camps in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Two null hypotheses were tested. The non-experimental design of the descriptive survey was used. Population of the study was all the parents in the internally displaced persons' camps in Maiduguri Metropolis. The sample comprised of one hundred and twenty parents. Three IDPs camps: Bakassi, Teachers village and Gubio road IDPs camps were randomly selected while stratified random sampling technique was used to select forty parents from each of the three selected camps such that twenty of them were male and twenty were females. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Attitude of Parents towards Female Child Education Questionnaire (APFCSEQ)". Data collected were analyzed with the use of chi-square and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in attitudes of parents towards girl child education. It was further revealed that there was significant gender difference in attitude of parents towards girl child education in the study area. The study concluded that there were negative attitudes of parents towards girl child education and there was significant gender difference in attitudes of parents towards girl child education. It was recommended that government should provide free and compulsory education to girl-child. Religious and community leaders need to discuss the importance of girl child education to their subjects and counselling services needs to be provided to parents especially those whose daughters were school dropouts.

Keywords: *Education, attitude, girl-child education, internally displayed persons*

Introduction

Education and schooling are fundamental human rights of any child irrespective of gender and background. The school plays a major role in this situation as it is the place where the children utilize the socialization process and vital life principles. Children learn about life

and its purpose by exploring their intuitions, feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Children without access to education will be deprived of their human rights and prevented from improving their talents and interests in the most basic ways. Education plays a vital role in building capabilities and opening opportunities for children from all backgrounds. Education has direct influence on improving communication abilities of individuals by helping them gain literacy, emphatic understanding and broader world perspective. By means of education people will be able to use their imagination and their reasoning for solving the problems they face. In short, education enables individuals to investigate the world that surrounds them and to reach the self-actualization level. (Mercan, 2010).

Importance of education in building the society cannot be overemphasized. It was stated in the National Policy of Education (FGN, 2016) that every Nigerian child should have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability. Girls are known to be carriers and mothers of the nation; it is common knowledge that when one educates a boy, it has educated a family but to educate a woman means invariably to educate a whole nation. Both boys and girls must have equal access to education in order to become good mothers and fathers and, to produce good future generations, educating both gender is important and non-negotiable for building a viable nation (Terhemba & Umaru, 2015).

The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in north eastern part of Nigeria in 2009 till date has led to destructive effects on young girl's education. The region has faced a devastating trend of insurgency, terrorism and brutal killings of innocent citizens perpetrated by Boko Haram. The terrorists continually kidnap school girls, killing students, teachers, executing Christian and Islamic clerics who opposed their retrogressive doctrine. Massive destruction of school buildings and the use of teenage female suicide bombers are further demonstrations of Boko Haram's strong resentment against western education. This massive violence has kept a number of school age children out of schools for some years and some parents are still having fear of sending their children back to school as a result of Boko Haram insurgency.

In February 2018, over one hundred and ten school girls were abducted from Government Girls Secondary School in Dapchi Yobe state. Still this group of people went into negotiation with the federal government on the release of the abducted girls, the sects agreed to release one hundred and nine (109) abducted Dapchi girls. Out of this, one hundred and five safely returned, five reported dead as a result of stampede during the abduction, but one girl was not set free because of her religious faith (Daily Trust, 2018 pp 4). Considering the number of the abducted girls from the two secondary schools, this has affected the lives of many women and parents in northern Nigeria and it as well discouraged many parents from sending their daughters to schools.

Benefits of educating the girl child cannot be over-emphasized as educating the girl child produces mothers who are educated and who will in turn educate, care and provide for their families and children. Educating the girl child translates to better health for the future generation, reduces child morbidity and mortality and triggers a snowball effect of achieving all other sustainable development goals in a viable manner. In North Eastern Nigeria, where Borno State was located, it is one area in which the rate of girl-child's access to education has been something of great concern. This is because the ratio of boys to girl's enrolment, retention and completion of secondary education is very low, it has been stated that only 20% of women in Northern Nigeria were literate (UNICEF, 2004). Studies have revealed that many factors could be associated with the high drop-out rate of girl-child from school's early marriage, poverty, girl-child labor, opportunity, cost of education, religion misconception and inhibition, low status of women, sexual abuse and broken homes (Sara, Sani & Hashidu).

Mohammed (2008) opined that parents need to be enlightened through counselling on the importance of girl-child education and to be discouraged in exposing girl-child to early marriage and hawking of goods. Mohammed further stressed that teachers should handle girl-child with care in school for enrolment and retention purpose in order to achieve the sustainable development goals. Onoyase (2018) examined attitude of parents towards girl child secondary education in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Findings of the study revealed that parents in Sokoto Metropolis have unfavorable attitude towards female child secondary education. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference between parents in the urban and rural areas in their attitude towards female child secondary education. Another study by Obiageli and Paulette (2015) on parental attitude and girl child education in Edo State, Nigeria revealed that parents have positive attitude towards girl child education but parents from southern part residing in Benin Metropolis were more disposed to girl child education than those in Northern part. It was also revealed that parents who are Christians have better attitude towards girl child education.

Samal (2012) found that attitude of parents towards girl-child education was not favorable in spite of Government endeavors in providing free education to all and the attitude of male and female parents with respect to schooling of the girl child was found not to be significantly different. Akpede, Eguibe, Alpamu, Asogun and Monodu (2018) examined parental attitude towards girl child education in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State revealed that there was good attitude and practice towards girl child education. The degree of attitude was negatively influenced by factors such as lack of finances and large family sizes. Umoh and Atakapa (2014) asserted that generally, because of general discrimination and cultural barriers, the girl-child was not allowed the opportunity to go to schools in Africa. They were pampered, loved and kept back at home to cook, marry, bear children, keep the house and serve them. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the attitudes of parents towards girl child education in IDPs Camps Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State, Nigeria.

Girl-child education has attracted the attention of stakeholders such as researchers, teachers, NGOs, and civil right organizations in recent times. There is a general decline in the enrolment of female children in schools while a high proportion of those enrolled drop out of schools as a result of insurgency which was going on in Borno State from 2009 to date. Many girls were given out in early marriages, female children drop out of schools due to poverty and financial problems where some parents cannot afford to pay school fees for their children. Some of the challenges and discriminations against the education of the girl-child stem from the fact that some parents considered educating girl-child as waste of time and resources and also of the belief that she will be given out in marriage to somebody in future. The researchers observed that over the years, girl child enrolment into primary schools in the Northern Borno State was very low even prior to the beginning of the insurgency in 2009. During the researchers' preliminary visit to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Maiduguri Metropolis; it was observed that most of those who suffered from Boko Haram insurgency were women and young girls. Despite that, majority of the children who are attending schools within the IDPs Camps children schools were boys with few girls, most of the girls are staying at homes with their parents and later giving them out for early marriages. Therefore, this prompted the researchers to investigate the attitudes of parents towards girl-child education in the internally displaced persons' camps Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are put forward to find solution to the problem of this study:

1. Is there any difference in the attitudes of parents towards girl child education in the IDPs camp in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State, Nigeria?
2. Is there any difference between male and female parents' attitude towards girl child education in the IDPs camp in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State Nigeria?

Methodology

The study used non-experimental design involving the descriptive research of the survey type to examine the attitudes of parents towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis' Internally Displaced Persons' Camps, Borno State. The researchers choose the design as appropriate because survey design is capable of providing information about parent's attitude, feeling and belief about girl child education in the study area. The population of the study comprised all parents in all the IDPs camps in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State. The sample comprised one hundred and twenty parents. The researchers randomly sampled three IDPs Camps which were Bakassi IDPs camp, Teachers Village IDP camps and Gubio road IDPs Camp. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample forty parents from each of the three selected camps such that twenty of them were males and twenty were females.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Attitudes of Parents towards Female Child Secondary Education Questionnaire (APTFCSEQ)” adapted from Terhemba and Umaru (2015). The instrument consists of 15 items structured in a 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4-points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The face and content validities of the instrument were carried by giving the objectives of the study, research questions and the drafted questionnaire to psychologists and measurement and evaluation experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri for proper screening and amendments. All the identified necessary modification was carried out and test-retest method was used by testing the instrument among 20 displaced parents who were not part of the study before utilizing it for data collection. The (APTFCSEQ) had reliability coefficient of 0.81. The collected data was analyzed by using chi-square and t-test.

Results

The two research questions raised to guide the study were converted to hypotheses thus:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of parents towards girl child education in the IDPs camp in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State, Nigeria.

In testing the hypothesis, the data collected on responses of parent's attitudes towards girl-child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps were subjected to chi-square analysis to determine the difference in the attitudes of parents towards girl-child education and the results was presented in table 1.

Table 1:

Summary of chi-square on attitudes of parents towards girl child education in Maiduguri metropolis IDPs Borno State Nigeria

Variables	Expected N	Residual	Df	Chi-Square	P-value	Decision
Observed N						
Agreed	53	60.0	-7.0	1 1.633 ^a	0.201	
Disagreed	67	60.0	7.0			

X² =1.633^a; df = 1; P >0.05

Table 1: indicates that there is no significant difference in attitudes of parents towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps Borno State, Nigeria. The scores from the responses from the questionnaire indicated the chi-square (χ²) calculated value is 1.633, P=0.201>0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there was no significant difference in attitudes of Parents towards Girl Child Education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Borno State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female parents' attitude towards girl child education in the IDPs camp in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State Nigeria.

In testing the hypothesis, the data collected on responses of male and female parent's attitudes towards girl-child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps was subjected to t-test analysis to determine the difference in the attitudes between male and female parents towards girl-child education and the results was presented in table 2 below.

Table 2:t-test summary on male and female parent's attitude towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs camps Borno State Nigeria

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	S.E	DF	t-cal	P-value
Male	60	17.571	4.32	0.302	118	21.216-	0.0001
Female	60	25.274	5.910	0.462			

(t=21.216,df = 118; P= 0.000)

The mean of female parents is 25.274 which is greater than 17.571 the mean of male parents. The value of t calculated is 21.216 and p value is 0.0001. Since the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant difference between male and female parent's attitude towards Girl Child Education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps Borno State Nigeria. Female parents want education for their daughters than their male counter counterparts.

Discussion

The findings of this study in respect to hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant difference in attitudes of parents towards girl-child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Borno State Nigeria revealed that there was no significant difference in attitudes of parents towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Borno State. The finding supported the finding of Samal (2012) who found that attitude of parents towards girl-child education was not favorable in spite of the Government endeavors in providing free education for all. The attitude of male and female parents with respect to schooling of the girl child was found not to be significantly different. Also it supported that of Onoyase, (2018) study on attitude of parents towards girl-child education in Sokoto Metropolis revealed that parents have unfavorable attitude towards female child secondary education. The finding of the study was in support of the previous studies on parent's negative attitude toward girl-child education is as a result of cultural belief and also as a result of the state economy because many parents cannot be able to pay their

daughters school fee.

The finding of the study in respect to hypothesis two which stated that there was no significant difference between male and female parent's attitude towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps Borno State, revealed that there was a significant difference between male and female parents on their attitude towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps Borno State. Female parents were in support of their daughter's education than the male parents. This finding disagree with that of Samal (2012) attitude of male and female parents with respect to school of the girl child was found not to be significantly different. The finding of this study in respect to hypothesis two disagree with that of Samal (2012) which revealed that attitudes of both male and female parents were not significantly difference but in case of this study there was significant gender difference in attitude of male and female parents about the education of their daughters because most of the male parents prefer to send their sons to school and marry the girl- child early because of cultural belief that girl-child position should in the kitchen not to go to school or work later in future.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that parental attitudes towards girl child education in Maiduguri Metropolis IDPs Camps was virtually the same as they showed no great interest in education of girl-child, however female parents still showed more interest in the education of the girl child than their male counterpart in Maiduguri Metropolis Borno State.

Therefore, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should make education of the girl child to be free so as to encourage and motivate parents so send their daughters to schools.
2. Religious and community leaders need to educate their subjects on the importance of girl child education.
3. There is needs to provide counselling services to parents, most especially those whose daughters were school dropouts.

Counselling Implications

Counsellors should be visiting the IDPs camps to provide professional counselling to internally displaced persons (parents) in the IDPs camps regarding the importance and benefits of girl child education in order to have positive change in the behaviors of parents regarding their daughters' education and also to encourage the girl child in the IDPs camps by giving them example of successful women who have become beneficial to the society as role model. Also counsellors need to discuss benefits and importance of girl child education on radio programme so as to reach larger number of people.

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