

Gender Issues in Basic Education: A Study on Access and Retention in the North-West Zone, Nigeria

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

This study is based on the premise that good quality education is both a right of all children and a development imperative. In Nigeria, education is a fundamental human right for every child, a principle which has been enshrined in many international commitments and conventions. A statement by Nigeria's Honourable Minister of Education in 2005 underscores this contention:

'Nigeria recognizes education as a fundamental human right and is signatory to the major conventions for the protection of the rights of children and women, especially, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)' (Obaji, 2005, p. 2).

In the quest to facilitate the realization and protection of the rights of all children the Government of Nigeria in 2003, passed into Law the Child Right Act. Nigeria's Philosophy of Education enshrined in the National Policy on Education, 2004) stipulates that education is an instrument for national development and every Nigerian child shall have the right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability. The policy further enjoined that Universal Basic Education (UBE) in a variety forms, depending on the needs and possibilities, shall be provided for all citizens. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004a) provides a clear statement on the right of the Nigerian child to compulsory, free universal basic education states that: "Every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age" (p. 2).

1.2 Background to the Study Area

To put this study in the right perspective, there is the need to touch briefly on the historical antecedents that shape the educational development in the North-West region of Nigeria. The single most powerful striking social feature of States in North-West Geo-Political zone (Northern Nigeria) is their Islamic nature. It can be projected that about 94% of the people in the North-West Geo-Political zone are predominantly Muslims. With this background, no meaningful

study of any aspect of development in the region can take place without considering that Islamic religion plays a dominant role in the way people perceive life in the area.

Islam became firmly established in the Emirates of Northern Nigeria in about 1380AD (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966), and with it, a system of education based entirely on Quran and Hadith teaching was also established in a significant part of the region. Therefore, Islamic education became the main mechanism of training and character formation for young people before and after the arrival of the colonial British in the Northern Region in 1903 (Adamu, 1988).

Thus with the subjugation of the Northern emirates in 1903 by Britain, and its attempt to introduce a western type of education through Christian missionaries, a new era of resentment towards the new culture evolved within the Muslim north. For instance, to defuse the danger of an uprising as had occurred in other parts of colonial Africa with a strong Islamic culture (Egypt and Sudan, for instance), Britain adopted a tactical policy of pledging non-intervention in religious affairs of the Northern peoples, especially the Muslims (Graham, 1966). The consequence of this colonial policy to the development of education in the Northern emirates is clearly spelt by Adamu (1988):

This pledge involved preventing Christian missionaries from establishing schools in Islamic areas of the North, although they were given free access to “pagan” areas of the North and Southern Nigeria by the colonial administration. The consequence of this was the spread of Christianity and modern education to all areas in Nigeria except the Muslim areas because up till then, the formal system of education necessary for modern development was provided by Christian missionaries who used the education as the main strategy for getting converts (p.1).

Over history, the western type of education nicknamed *Karatun-Boko* by the Muslims grew side by side with Islamic education. The former continued to be resented by a majority of the populace because of its identification with the Christian religion. Moreover, in an area where Islam had been established as a way of life for centuries, the modern system of education was not considered relevant to this way of life. Adamu (2007) further proclaims:

This identification of modern education with Christian doctrine remains the major historical reason for the non-acceptance of modern education among Muslim Northern Nigeria - and which has political (and social) consequences for the entire country after Nigerian independence from the British in 1960 (p.1)

1.3 Nigeria's Strategy for Girls' Education

In addition to enacting the UBE Law and Rights commitments to a number of international and regional rights conventions and declarations to support the attainment of the objectives of EFA and MDGs, Nigeria became committed to certain developments and strategies to provide

for gender equity educational provision. Some of these efforts include:

- Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria (SAGEN): An offshoot of the Child Friendly School Initiative supported by UNICEF.
- Girl Education Project (GEP): This is a substantial joint project undertaken by the Federal Government of Nigeria and international donor agencies, the DFID and UNICEF to boost girls' education in Northern Nigeria so as to accelerate progress towards attaining the MDGs, especially with respect to gender equity. GEP is a mighty project with ten objectives of which the following are some of them:
 - i. Raising national awareness on girl-child education and increasing political and financial capabilities through advocacy and sensitization of policy makers at all levels, parents, school authorities, other leaders and girls themselves
 - ii. Developing technical capacity of schools and teachers' pedagogical skills to create girl friendly commitment school environments that enhance the participation of girls and improve learning outcomes
 - iii. Establishing Child-Friendly School principles as minimum benchmarks for effective schools, linked to community empowerment and development
 - iv. Creating school management committees with community involvement and participation
 - v. Building institutional capacity for promoting girls' education and the capacity of stakeholders on gender sensitivity and sexuality

Some of the strategies employed by GEP to achieve its objectives include:

- i. Extend advocacy visits to six Northern States - namely: Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Katsina, Niger and Sokoto
- ii. Restructuring of the Federal Inspectorate Service through quality control capacity building efforts to address the falling standard in teaching and low learning achievements among pupils especially girls
- iii. Provide support for adult literacy through education radio programmes and supportive materials. This collaborative initiative enhances the nexus between adult literacy and girls' education.
- iv. Developed the Family Life HIV/AIDS curriculum and revived the Education Sector Response to Adolescent, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

1.4 Factors Inhibiting Gender Equity in Education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria

The recent conference on Girl-Child Education entitled: *Islam and the education of the Girl-Child* organised by the Centre of Regional Integration and Development (CRID) on October 23-24, 2010 reaffirms the need and importance of girl-child education as enjoined in Islam. The conference revealed and addressed some factors militating against the girl-child education in the Muslim communities: high cost of schooling and high rates of poverty in the

northern states leading to prevalence of hawking (*talla*), prevalence of marriage at the expense of education, corruption in the educational system and the absence of role models in the rural areas, and the moral dilemma of some parents as they associate western education to the moral decadence of their children.

However, barriers to girl-child education in the Muslim north in Nigeria can be best described within this paradigm:

Over the decade, generally, there has been a much better understanding of the factors that exclude girls from basic education and that reinforce the gender gap: cultural barriers, poor educational facilities, and scant accessibility to low-cost girl-friendly schools in remote rural areas (UNESCO, 2002).

1.5 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria like many other developing countries in the world, girls' access to schooling is far from equal to that of boys. A significant number of girls and children especially more from poor families and rural areas are not enrolled, not attending, or not completing a cycle of (even) basic education. This is in addition to many children who, despite being in school, are not fully enjoying their rights to a good quality education from an equal opportunity, a protection and/or a non-discrimination perspective. Statistics from the 2006 National Personnel Audit (Federal Ministry of Education, 2009) revealed the following data in respect to gender disparity as it affects Nigeria:

There are 54,434 public primary schools in Nigeria (while the 2006 School Census states 87,941 as the number of primary schools) with an enrolment figure of 24,422,918 of which the male accounts for 13,302,269 (or 54.5%) while the female accounts for 11,120,649 (or 45.5%) indicating a gender parity of 83.6% (p.20).

The problem is more prominent in the Northern part of the country. Statistics to support this contention are provided by the Road Map. "More males are enrolled in the primary schools than females in the North while a near parity is recorded in the South. About 65% of primary school children in the North are male while 35% are female" (Federal Ministry of Education, 2009, p 20). To give a specific example as in the case of Jigawa state, one of the states of the North-West Zone, less than 30% of school age children attend schooling, the majority of who are girls (Usman, 2010).

There are also 7,129 Public Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs) in Nigeria with a total enrolment figure of 3,266,780. Gender disparity exists in male and female enrolment figures at the JSS level nationwide. About 55% are male while 45% are female.

To address gender disparity as a challenge, numerous efforts have been put in place by various stakeholders. First the government for instance, in the UBE Act, has enjoined every parent/guardian to ensure that his/her child or ward completes primary and junior secondary

school education by endeavouring to send him/her to the schools. The Act even prescribes a series of punishments for the parent who defies the order. The Act in section 2(4) prescribes punishment as follows:

A parent who contravenes section 2(2) of this Act commits an offence and is liable –

- a) On first conviction, to be reprimanded;*
- b) On second conviction, to a fine of =N=2,000:00 or imprisonment for a term of 1 month or both; and*
- c) On subsequent conviction, to a fine of =N=5,000:00 or imprisonment for a term of 2 months or to both.*

Secondly and more recently is the Road Map proposal. The Road Map proposes to promote gender parity through sensitization and modelling to attain 90% gender parity by 2011. Furthermore, schools are to be made gender friendly through the provision of water, sanitation, separate toilet facilities, etc for the girl-child and boy-child especially in rural schools by 2011. However despite all these efforts, little improvement is recorded with regards to the gender parity.

Therefore, the questions to be raised from this background are: What areas should the gender parity sensitization address? What priority areas are there for rural parents in the provision of education for their girl-child? Which is best, girl only schools, separate (relevant) curriculum, same sex teachers, free education, or what? Are these the likely options for parents to change their negative attitude to girls' education? Hence, there is a need for a study to address these questions.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

This study set out to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To find out the reasons preventing parents from sending their girl-child to school
- ii. To find out priority areas for parents in the provision of education for their girl-child
- iii. To explore if parent views on the priority areas are invariant across gender, kinship, occupation and locality

1.7 Research Questions

- i. What are the reasons preventing parents from sending their girl-child to school?
- ii. What are the priority areas for parents in the provision of education for their girl-child?
- iii. Are the parent views on the priority areas invariant across gender, kinship occupation and locality?

1.8 Hypotheses

To answer research question 3 the following null hypotheses were raised:

1. There is no significant gender difference in parental views in the priority areas for the provision of education for a girl-child
2. There is no significant kinship difference in parental views in the priority areas for the provision of education for a girl-child
3. There is no significant occupational background difference in parental views on the priority areas of provision for education for a girl-child
4. Parents in urban and rural areas do not differ in their views on the priority areas for provision of education for a girl-child

1.9 Rationale of the Study

This study is expected to reveal the views of parents on the priority areas for the provision of girl-child education in North-western Nigeria. What type of education in terms of contents and procedure is appropriate for their children is the relevant question. The findings of the study are vital for policy formulation with regards to girl-child education in the area of the study. The study provides information that might be useful to researchers in this area of study.

1.10 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on the parents' views on priority areas for the provision of girl-child education in Nigeria. The study covered states in the North-west zone of Nigeria. Within the zone only states with low girls' enrolment, a wide gender gap, high dropout rates, and a low Teacher-Pupil Rate (TPR) in primary schools were considered for the study. The study is not only concerned with exploring the factors inhibiting gender equity in the access and retention of education but focuses further on those factors that will facilitate access and retention.

2. Conceptual Framework

Two different yet complementary perspectives in the international debates (UNESCO, 2002) and practices in gender equality in basic education are eminent. They are the equity perspective and equality perspective. This study is constructed on the equity perspective.

The equity perspective puts emphasis on the reduction of gender discrimination and the promotion of the social and economic self-reliance of women through policies and programmes as well as ensuring access to, and quality of basic education and productive skills. Gender equity in basic education is attained without questioning and/or altering the existing structure of gender relations.

The equality perspective on the other hand goes beyond access and quality issues in basic education as well as training women for self-reliance. The perspective sees gender as a socio-cultural construct in which women are systematically subordinated hence, structural transformation is needed in order to end the discrimination practices based on gender. Equality in basic education thus entails empowering women in cognitive, psychological, economic and political dimensions

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

This study employed a survey design. This is because the study collected data from parents of the out of school girl-child. Questionnaires (in the form of structured interviews) were used. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with some groups of parents and the girl-child on reasons for not attending school and the priority areas of girl-child education were conducted.

The survey covered the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. It comprised of seven states: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Three States: Jigawa, Kano and Katsina were selected as sample states. Their selection was based on the low girls' enrolment, wide gender gap, high dropout rates, and low TPR in Primary schools the states witness.

3.2 Subjects of the Study

3.2.1 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study comprised all parents (male and female, of various kinship) of out of school girl- children. The population cannot be estimated because of lack of reliable statistics. Therefore, a sample of 327 parents (246 male and 81 female) was obtained to collect data. 72 (34 parents and 38 girls) were obtained as subjects for the FGD. A random sampling technique was employed in drawing subjects for the study. That is parents of the identified out of school girl-child who accepted to take part in the study formed the sample.

3.3 Measuring Instrument(s):

A questionnaire was employed to collect data for the study. Items in the questionnaire reflect the priority areas of basic education for the girl-child. Respondents were to agree or disagree with the statements in the form of a Likert scale. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) schedule was also employed in the data collection. In the FGD, a list of topics and sub-topics that guide the participants in the discussion were presented.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis using frequency distribution and percentages. A t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to test the hypotheses of the study. A qualitative data analysis approach was used to analyse data obtained from Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

4. Results

For clear presentation of the results of the study, the analysis of the data is reported research question by research question.

4.1 Analysis on Research Questions

Research question one: *What are the reasons preventing parents from sending their girl-child to school?*

To answer this research question an analysis of responses to section B (*Reasons for preventing Girl-Child to attend school*) of the questionnaire was done. The twenty items were sorted in to three factors: *Socio-Cultural Factor, Economic Factors and Educational relevance*. The result of the analysis is presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.3 below.

Table 1: Socio-Cultural Factors

Item	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Traditional belief that a woman is a wife and household instrument	281	82.9	56	17.1	327
A girl-child is not a member of her own family but that of her husband	206	63.0	121	37.0	327
Care/nurture of parents is the responsibility of the male-child and not the girl-child	169	51.7	158	48.3	327
Education is a tool for social upheaval particularly for a girl-child	272	83.2	55	16.8	327
Fear of pre-marital pregnancy	279	85.3	48	14.7	327
Girl-child is inferior to a male child	108	33.0	219	67.0	327
Girl-child should be married early rather than attend school	183	56.0	144	44.0	327
Girl-child that attends school does not easily get a spouse	229	70.0	98	30.0	327

From the analysis above, it can be vividly seen that seven out of the eight items classified as socio-cultural factors were indicated by the majority parents as reasons for not sending a girl-child to school. Analyses on responses to one item indicate otherwise. Thus the presumed girl-child's inferiority to the male child is never perceived as a reason for not sending them to school. FGD with the girl-child reaffirmed preference for marriage as one socio-cultural reason preventing them to attend school.

Table 2: Economic Factor

Item	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Girl-child education is a waste of resources	210	64.2	117	35.8	327
Education benefit of the girl-child goes to husband instead of parents	190	58.1	137	41.9	327
Girl-child is more useful in hawking than schooling	191	58.4	136	41.6	327
More preference to male education since he is the bread winner	185	56.4	142	43.4	327
Girl-child not suitable for a white collar job	191	58.4	136	41.6	327
Education for a girl child is expensive	188	57.5	139	42.5	327

Six items constitute this factor. From the analyses of responses, it can be discerned that a

majority of the parents agreed to the items as reasons for not sending their girl-child to school. Hence it can be inferred that economic factors constitute part of the reason for preventing a girl-child to attend school. An extract of the FGD with both parents and the girl-child confirm economic factors as a reason deterring girl-child education

Table 3: Educational Relevance

Preference (Policy Issues)	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
The type of education offered in school is not relevant for a girl-child	191	58.4	136	41.6	327
School teaches immorality to a girl-child	200	61.2	127	38.8	327
A girl-child that attends school is not obedient/subservient to husband	246	75.2	81	24.8	327
Schooling prevents a girl-child from learning household chores relevant to marriage	199	60.9	128	39.1	327
School teaches girl- child western ideas that contradicts social norms /values	229	70.0	98	30.0	327
School corrupts the religious belief of a girl-child	272	83.2	55	16.8	327

From the information given in the table above, it can be gathered that educational relevance is a factor for not sending a girl-child to school. A majority of the parents agreed to all six items that indicate irrelevance of the educational system as reasons for not sending a girl-child to school.

Research question two: *What are the priority areas for parents in the provision of education for the girl-child?*

An answer to this question was sought from the analysis of responses to section C (*Preference for what should be Girl-child Education*) of the questionnaire. To realize this task, the twenty items were sorted in to four priority areas: *Objectives/Aims* (of the education), *Contents*, *Policy issues* and *School environment factor*. Tables 4 - 7 below present the results of the analyses.

Table 4: Objectives/Aims

Preference (Policy Issues)	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Focus on overall development as a house wife	215	65.75	112	34.25	327
Focus on self development/fulfilment not white collar job	232	70.95	95	29.05	327
Emphasis on skills acquisition including literacy and numeracy	249	76.15	78	23.85	327
Relevance to values and norms of the community	203	62.08	124	37.92	327

Analyses of the responses shown above reveal that a majority of the parents agreed on the four items (62.08% - 76.15%) that reflect the objectives a girl-child education should address. Inference drawn from this finding suggests that parents are not satisfied with the objectives

of formal education. An analysis of the FGD affirmed this contention. “*Education for overall development and self actualization as a woman and wife*” was the main assertion of parents in the FGD.

Table 5: Contents

Preference (Policy Issues)	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Content should be relevant to values and norms of society	241	73.70	86	26.30	327
Opportunity for more religious instruction	219	66.97	108	33.03	327
Girl-child should be taught science and technology	140	42.8	187	57.2	327
Emphasis on communicative and life skills, moral and civic values	211	64.53	116	35.47	327

From Table 5 above, it can be seen that a majority of the parents indicate their agreement on three of the four content areas. On the other hand a majority (57.2%) of the parents resented the teaching of science and technology as part of the contents for what girl-child education should focus on. Nonetheless, by inference it can be claimed that parents have certain priorities as to the contents of the education their girl-child ought to be taught if they are to attend school. Contents should be “*in line with the norms and values of the society*” as the parents emphasised in the FGD.

Table 6: Policy Issues

Preference (Policy Issues)	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Opportunity for full-time studies or combined with marriage	226	69.11	101	30.89	327
School Uniform culture fair and supplemented by Government	218	66.67	109	33.33	327
Government shoulders school expenses and provides meals	217	66.36	110	33.64	327
Government to provide books and learning materials	228	69.73	99	30.27	327
Emphasis on single sex schools at higher levels	173	52.91	154	47.09	327
Parents get involved in setting minimum standards	108	33.03	219	66.97	327
The compulsory Basic Education is adequate and OK	115	35.17	212	64.83	327

The analyses given in Table 6 above show that a majority of the parents are in agreement with five of the seven policy issues as a priority for their girl-child education. However the parents are in disagreement on two policy issues. Their participation in setting minimum standards and the adequacy of the present basic education policy are the two issues with which they disagreed. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that parents have policy issues at stake in the type of education the girl-child is to receive. An extract from the FGD supports this claim:

Government should make education free. Free uniform and feeding. Girl-child education should not prevent her from marriage (FGD).

Table 7: School Environment Factor

Preference (Policy Issues)	Responses				
	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
School should be friendly and free from any hazard/harassment	222	67.89	105	32.11	327
School should be located within the vicinity of the girl-child	239	73.09	88	26.91	327
Trained and responsible teachers	238	72.78	89	27.22	327
There should be health facilities	248	75.84	79	24.16	327
Need for Basic Infrastructural facilities	216	66.06	111	33.94	327

The analyses presented in table 7 above revealed that parents are in agreement with all five items (66.06% - 75.84%) in the school environment factor. In the FGD, parents reaffirmed the above indicators of the school environment factors as their priorities.

Proximate and conducive school. Same sex set up school. Morally sound and better educated teachers (FGD)

It can be inferred from this findings that parents have certain preferences on the school type for their girl-child to be in school.

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

4.2.1 Hypothesis One: *There is no significant gender difference in parental views in the priority areas for the provision of education for a girl-child*

This hypothesis was tested using independent t-tests on the four factored areas identified earlier. To realize this, the overall means of male and female respondents in the four preference areas. It is pertinent to note that the minimum and maximum score obtainable are 1 and 4 respectively. The outputs of the analyses are in tables 8 – 11 below.

Table 8: t-test analysis on parental gender difference in priority areas on the provision of girl-child education

Preference	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	Df	Sig.
Objectives	Male	246	3.1504	.79651	0.10124	1.075	325	0.283
	Female	81	3.2593	.77100				
Contents	Male	246	3.1392	.44586	0.05387	1.092	325	0.276
	Female	81	3.1975	.33101				
Policy Issues	Male	246	3.0935	.87796	0.1134	1.260	325	0.209
	Female	81	2.9506	.90693				
School Environment factor	Male	246	3.1545	.36214	0.0486	1.648	325	0.100
	Female	81	3.2346	.42637				

From the table, it can be discerned that the female parents have higher means (higher preferences) in objectives, contents, and on school environment factors than their male counterparts. The male parents on the other hand have a higher mean (preference) on only the Policy Issues. However, all the differences recorded were not significant at a 0.05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, male and female parents do not differ in their preferences to the priority areas for the provision of Girl-child education.

4.2.2 Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant kinship difference in parental views in the priority areas for the provision of education for a girl-child*

Parental kinship in this study involves three groups: parents (N = 215), guardians (N = 53), and grandparents (N = 59). Therefore, to test the above hypothesis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed for every preference area identified earlier. The output is presented below:

Table 9: Analysis of variance of kinship difference on parent views in the priority areas of girl-child education

Preference		SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Objectives	Between Groups	.455	2	.228	1.252	.287
	Within Groups	58.939	324	.182		
	Total	59.394	326			
Contents	Between Groups	1.376	2	.688	.813	.444
	Within Groups	274.208	324	.846		
	Total	275.584	326			
Policy Issues	Between Groups	4.219	2	2.110	1.440	.238
	Within Groups	474.704	324	1.465		
	Total	478.924	326			
School Environment Factor	Between Groups	.809	2	.404	3.208	.042
	Within Groups	40.849	324	.126		
	Total	41.657	326			

On the objectives preference, the means for the parents by kinship are 3.307, 3.359 and 3.356 for parents, guardians and grandparents respectively. The f value of 1.201 indicates that the three means are not significantly different at the 0.05 level of confidence. For the contents preference, the means are 3.795, 3.793 and 3.831 for parents, guardians and grandparents respectively. The f value of 1.873 indicates that the three means are not significantly different at the 0.05 level of confidence. The same trend of no significant difference was recorded for policy issues preference which has mean scores of 2.614, 2.698 and 2.615 for parents, guardians and grandparents respectively. However, on the school environment preference, a different finding was revealed. The means of 3.247, 3.283 and 3.839 for parents, guardians and grandparents respectively are significantly different at the 0.05 level of confidence. Grandparents indicated more preferences for school environment factors than parents and guardians.

4.2.3 Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant occupational background difference in parental views on the priority areas for provision of education for a girl-child*

Occupational background here involves three groups of parents: farmers (N = 177), traders (N = 92) and artisans (N = 58). Therefore, the hypothesis was tested using ANOVA. The output is presented below:

Table 10: Analysis of variance of occupational background difference on parent views on priority areas of girl-child education

Preference		SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Objectives	Between Groups	1.131	2	.565	1.201	.302
	Within Groups	152.509	324	.471		
	Total	153.639	326			
Contents	Between Groups	.664	2	.332	1.873	.155
	Within Groups	57.416	324	.177		
	Total	58.080	326			
Policy Issues	Between Groups	4.632	2	2.316	1.582	.207
	Within Groups	474.292	324	1.464		
	Total	478.924	326			
School Environment Factor	Between Groups	1.274	2	.637	3.274	.039
	Within Groups	63.044	324	.195		
	Total	64.318	326			

For preferences on the objectives, the means of 3.751, 3.728 and 3.845 are for Farmers, traders and Artisans respectively. The *f* value of 1.201 indicates no significant difference in the observed means at 0.05 level of confidence. The same trend applies to contents preferences with means of 2.864, 2.880 and 2.948 for the Farmers, Traders, and Artisans respectively. The *f* value of 1.873 indicates no significant occupational difference among the parents as far as the contents of girl-child education is concerned. The same trend applies for preferences in policy issues of girl-child education with the means of 2.672, 2.554 and 2.914 for Farmers, Traders and Artisans respectively. However, on school environment factors, a different finding was revealed. That is the means of 3.294, 3.174 and 3.845 for Farmers, Traders, and Artisans respectively are significantly different (*f* value, 3.274) at the 0.05 level of confidence. Artisan parents indicated higher preferences for school environment factors than their counterparts.

4.2.4 Hypothesis Four: *Parents in urban and rural areas do not differ in their views on the priority areas for provision of education for a girl-child*

To test this hypothesis, a t-test independent sample was employed. The output is presented below.

Table 11: t-test analysis on parental differences on priority areas for the provision for a girl-child education by location

Preference	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	Sig.
Objectives	Urban	141	3.1206	.76974	0.0882	1.132	325	0.259
	Rural	186	3.2204	.80526				
Contents	Urban	141	3.0922	.70610	0.0789	1.693	325	0.091
	Rural	186	3.2258	.70717				
Policy Issues	Urban	141	3.9504	.24860	0.0220	1.277	325	0.201
	Rural	186	3.9785	.14545				
School Environment factor	Urban	141	3.2270	.42035	0.0495	1.497	325	0.135
	Rural	186	3.3011	.45996				

From the data presented in the table above, it can be vividly seen that the urban and rural parents though they vary in their preferences on the priority areas for girl-child education, the means did not significantly differ at the 0.05 level of confidence. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are summarised as follows:

- i. The socio-cultural factors, economic factors and educational relevance are reasons preventing parents to send their girl-child to school. However, the presumed inferiority of a girl-child to a male child is not a perceived reason for not sending the former to school.
- ii. Parents indicated as priorities certain *objectives, contents, policy issues* and *school environment factors* for the type of education their girl-child is to receive. However, a majority of parents did not endorse as a priority the *teaching of science and technology*. In the same vein, a majority of the parents did not agree on two *policy issues: 'involvement in setting minimum standards' and 'the adequacy of the compulsory basic education'*.
- iii. Parents by gender do not differ in their preferences on the four priority areas (*Objectives, Contents, Policy issues and School environment factors*) for girl-child education.
- iv. Parents (paternal and maternal), Guardians, and Grandparents do not significantly differ in their preferences on *objectives, contents and policy issues* for girl-child education. However, they significantly differ on *school environment factors* with Grandparents showing more/higher preferences than their counterparts.
- v. Farmers, Traders, and Artisans do not significantly differ in their preferences on *objectives, contents and policy issues* for girl-child education. However, they significantly differ on *school environment factors* with Artisans showing more/higher preferences than their counterparts.
- vi. Urban and rural parents do not differ in their preferences for the four priority areas:

objectives, contents, policy issues and school environment factors.

4.4 Discussion of the Results

This study is able to establish that socio-cultural factors, economic factors and educational relevance are reasons preventing parents from sending their girl-child to school. These findings reaffirmed those of UNESCO (2002), UNICEF (2007) and Abdullahi (2010) which revealed cultural, economic and school factors militate against girl-child education in the Muslim communities of Nigeria. The finding that the presumed inferiority of the girl-child to a male child is not a perceived reason for not sending the former to school did not underscore UNICEF's (2009) contention that Patriarchy and a preference for sons have become risk factors for girls' education in South Asia.

The fact that parents indicated as priorities certain *objectives, contents, policy issues and school environment factors* for the type of education their girl-child is to receive as revealed in the study implies that they are willing to educate their girl-child. The findings also suggest that the present education system is not relevant and adequate for the desired overall development of the girl-child. The findings further suggest that if the formal type of education is reviewed to the desired priorities of the parents then a shift in the negative attitude towards girl-child education might be witnessed. The fact that a majority of parents did not endorse as a priority the *teaching of science and technology* suggests ignorance as to its relevance in the modern world.

This study found that parents by gender and location (urban and rural) do not differ in their preferences on the four priority areas (*Objectives, Contents, Policy issues and School Environment factors*) for girl-child education. This finding suggests that both parents (paternal and maternal) of the girl-child contend that the four areas are vital for girls' education irrespective of their locality. The homogeneous socio-economic, religious and cultural context of parents within the study area might account for this finding.

The fact that Grandparents showed more/higher preferences in the four areas of girls' education than parents (paternal and maternal) and guardians lends support to the role the latter play in the upbringing of the children in Hausa settings. Grandparents being the older generation are the custodian of societal values, norms and traditions. The study revealed further that Artisan parents indicated more/higher preferences on the four priority areas of girl-child education. This finding accentuates the contention of a majority of the parents that the type of education offered by formal schools is of little relevance to the overall development of the girl-child. Furthermore the findings emphasise the parent's claim that objectives and contents of girl education should be relevant to the values and norms of the society.

4.5 Conclusion

From the findings of this study the following conclusions are made:

- i. Socio-cultural factor, Economic factor and Educational relevance are generic barriers to educating girls in the North-west of Nigeria. However if the formal type of education is reviewed as to the desired priorities of the parents then a shift in the

negative attitude towards girl-child education might be witnessed.

- ii. Parents in North-west Nigeria desire certain *objectives, contents, policy issues* and *school environment factors* for the type of education their girl-child is to receive. In this respect, parents do not differ by gender and locality. However, parents differ by kinship and occupation in one of the desired priority areas. In this respect, Grandparents and Artisan parents desire more/higher preferences in the priority area of school environment factors than their counterparts.

4.6 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. It is recommended that the basic national curriculum and syllabi should be reviewed to reflect the needs and priority areas parents suggested for basic education. Specific emphasis should be given to relative values and norms of particular societies.
- ii. Education policies related to full-time studies such as combining marriage with schooling, meals, free school uniform and single sex schools should be set up by state governments.
- iii. Poverty alleviation programmes intended to empower parents to be able to sustain themselves and provide for the education of their children should evolve and be sustained by the three tier governments.
- iv. Parents need to understand the importance and relevance of basic education for the overall development of their children. This should focus on the relevance of learning science and technology for the modern times.
- v. The government at all levels should co-opt parents in designing policies for girl-child education. This will pave the way for reflecting the views of parents particularly in those areas regarded as priorities.
- vi. Incentives should be given to outstanding girl-children who excel in the pursuit of education so as to serve as morale boosters and encourage other girls.
- vii. Out of school and Adult education programmes should be introduced and encouraged to cater to the already excluded girl-child. This will provide such victims with continuing education opportunities and further change the negative attitude to girl-child education.

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