# INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND SECURITY PREPAREDNESS ON THE ENROLMENT OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The study explored the 'Influence of socio-cultural factors and security preparedness on the enrolment of girl child education in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to assess the influence of socio-cultural factors and security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education among Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were raised in line with the objectives. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 5,530 respondents. This consists of 28 Principals, 5,130 Teachers and 200 School Based Management Committee (SBMC) Officials from Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. A sample of 357 respondents was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. A self-designed questionnaire was used for the study. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answered the research questions while One-Way-Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that socio cultural factors and security preparedness influences the enrollment of Girl-Child Education through their decision making, role they play, attitude and experiences in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. The study recommends that adequate security preparedness by the community and government should be improved in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State*.

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## Introduction

Education today is the determinant for growth and development of any country. It is an important factor of human resource development; and in any normal society it is accepted as an instrument to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for men and women. The development of any society would be grossly lopsided if the girl child is not given quality education. Education is a basic human right and has been recognized as such since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It is an important foundation to improve the status of women and has also been recognized as a fundamental strategy for development. No sustainable development is possible if women remain uneducated, discriminated against and disenfranchised. Despite multi sectoral efforts to achieve gender equality in education, Nigeria is still experiencing wide regional and gender disparity in secondary education enrolment, retention and completion. It is well documented that low level of girls' education enrolment, progression, retention and completion is still prevalent in Northern Nigeria (Girls Education Advocacy Research Network (GEARN) 2019).

Secondary education is the second stage of education in Nigeria, after the primary education and before the tertiary institution of learning. The level of girl child participation in secondary education is determined by the opportunity provided for the

girl-child to be educated. Girls' access to secondary education especially in North Western Nigeria has remained very low partly because states and local governments do not take cognizance of the peculiarities of the girl-child in the provision of education for her citizen. A large body of research on access to school and progression to upper classes around most African countries consistently confirm that girls considerably outnumbered boys in Early Childhood Education and lower primary with the reverse being noticed in transition to upper primary and secondary school levels where boys overtake the girls.

Girls' access to secondary education, especially in the northern states, has remained low. Bako (2016) observed that a positive correlation exists between the enrollment of girls in school and the gross national product and increase of life expectancy. Because of this correlation, enrollment in schools represents the largest component of the investment in human capital in any society. Rapid socio-economic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of women and their education in that country. Education bestows on women a disposition for a lifelong acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes, competence and skills. Women in Nigeria have had various challenges in order to obtain equal education. The Girl-Child Education is paramount to the overall development of any nation. As their role in the society, whether as producers or reproducers; they are mainly responsible for the care and well-being of the families, they play an important role as educators of future generations, they perform economic functions and social functions. As more and more women are educated, the health of the nation improves.

In Zamfara State, the security of children is paramount to parents, hence, parents do not tolerate any uncertainties about the security of their children, and in most cases would not hesitate to withdraw their children from school due to real or imagined security threats, especially when the girl child is involved. This may be one of the reasons for low enrolment and retention rate of girl child in secondary schools. At this juncture, the researcher continues to wonder whether there is adequate level of security preparedness put in place by Zamfara State Government to enhance the enrolment and retention of Girl Child in secondary schools.

Over the years, researches have been conducted in different part of the world regarding the low enrolment and retention of girl child education. Some of the identified factors may be attributed to many factors such as cultural and traditions practices of the parents towards the education of their daughters, prominent among these factors are: socio-cultural beliefs, customs, early marriage, insecurity, employment in domestic markets, parental services among others (Bako, 2016). Isiaka and Salisu (2017) revealed that there are some religious misconceptions where children are indoctrinated and made to believe that western type of education is not needed and thus advised to run their lives without it. In this case, girls are usually made to believe that their place of fulfillment is in their husbands' homes and they only need to marry and make babies, and thus they should focus just on getting the right man and making such a man happy. This level of indoctrination has made many parents and girl children to focus on marriage rather than education. It was on this basis that this study assessed the Influence of socio-cultural factors and security preparedness on the enrolment of girl child education in Zamfara State, Nigeria

**Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were raised to guide the study:

i. find out the influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State; and
ii. assess the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

i. What is the influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State?
ii. What is the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

HO1: There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.
HO2: There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

**Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population of the study was 5,530 respondents. This consists of 28 Principals, 5,130 Teachers and 200 School Based Management Committee (SBMC) Officials from Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. A sample size of 357 respondents was selected for this study. The selection of 357 respondents was based on the recommendation of Researcher Advisor's Table (2006) for selection of sample size. Simple random sampling was used for the study. A self designed questionnaire of twenty (20) items, tagged "Enrolment of Girl Child Education Questionnaire (EGCEQ)" was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was structured on a five (5) points Likert's scale options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Three (3) research experts in Educational Foundations and Curriculum were requested to vet the instrument and their observations were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument. The pilot test was conducted at Anka Local Government by administering the instrument on 36 respondents which represent 10% of the total sample for the study. These respondents are parts of the target population but not part of the sampled respondents. The data collected from the pilot test was subjected to reliability test using the split half method and the reliability coefficient stood at 0.86 using

Cronbach's Alpha Method. Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the two (2) formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. However, when the mean score of an item is greater than 3.00 set for the study, the item was regarded as agree by majority of the respondents. On the other hand, when the mean score of an item is less than 3.00, the item was considered disagree. A total of 357 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but only 336 copies were returned. The analysis of the study was therefore, based on the data gathered from the above mentioned number of returned copies of questionnaire.

**Results**

Research Question One: *What is the influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State?*

**Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on the Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on the Enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State**

| S/N | Items | Mean | SD | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Socio-cultural norms influence the education of boys' over girls in senior secondary school in Zamfara State. | 3.93 | 0.81 | Agreed |
| 2 | Traditional gender roles within families have impact on girls' education in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.10 | 0.89 | Agreed |
| 3 | Societal perception of girls' education affects enrollment rates of girls in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.13 | 0.80 | Agreed |
| 4 | Cultural practices such as early marriage pose is a barrier to girls' enrollment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.97 | 0.85 | Agreed |
| 5 | Cultural beliefs about the role of women have influence on girls' education in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.11 | 0.82 | Agreed |
| 6 | Resource disparities based on gender hinder girls' access to education in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.91 | 0.81 | Agreed |
| 7 | Societal stigma surrounding menstruation affects girls' enrolment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.89 | 0.95 | Agreed |
| 8 | Community expectations regarding domestic responsibilities play a role on girls' enrollment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.09 | 0.88 | Agreed |
| 9 | Cultural attitudes towards female empowerment influence girls' access to education in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.13 | 0.89 | Agreed |
| 10 | Cultural practices like female genital mutilation have impact on girls' enrollment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.93 | 0.73 | Agreed |
| | **Grand** | **4.02** | **0.84** | **Agreed** |

Table 1 shows that statements 1-10 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale mean of 3.00. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that socio-cultural factors influence enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

Research Question Two: *What is the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State?*

**Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on the Influence of Security Preparedness on the Enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State**

| S/N | Items | Mean | SD | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The level of community perception on security affects the enrollment of girls in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.05 | 1.05 | Agreed |
| 2 | The presence of security personnel at schools influences the enrolment of girls in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.15 | 1.06 | Agreed |
| 3 | Security concern is a significant factor in parents' decision-making regarding girl's enrolment in Zamfara State. | 4.17 | 0.87 | Agreed |
| 4 | Security measures in schools have impact on the enrollment rates of girls s in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.02 | 1.01 | Agreed |
| 5 | Security infrastructure deters parents from enrolling their daughters in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.96 | 0.96 | Agreed |
| 6 | Security protocols in schools are important in facilitating the enrollment of girl in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.10 | 0.87 | Agreed |
| 7 | Community-based security initiatives contribute to enrollment of girls in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.97 | 0.89 | Agreed |
| 8 | Government-led security initiatives influence the enrollment of girls in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.08 | 0.98 | Agreed |
| 9 | Security concerns intersect with socio-economic factors in determining girl's enrollment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 4.14 | 1.07 | Agreed |
| 10 | Many schools have security preparedness plan and map showing the location of the school in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. | 3.90 | 1.05 | Agreed |
| | Grand | 3.05 | 0.98 | Agreed |

Table 2 shows that statements 1-10 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale mean of 3.00. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that security preparedness influence enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

**Table 3: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of socio-cultural factors on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State**

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .183 | 2 | .022 | 3.210 | .140 | Retained |
| Within Groups | 36.672 | 355 | .231 | | | |
| **Total** | **36.855** | **357** | | | | |

Table 3 reveals an F-value of 3.210 with a significance (p-value) of 0.140. Since the calculated p-value of 0.140 is greater than the predetermined alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This finding suggests that socio-cultural factors significantly influence the enrollment of the girl child in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the opinions of the respondent on the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State.

**Table 4: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of security preparedness on the enrolment of Girl Child Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State**

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .283 | 2 | .142 | 2.921 | .209 | Retained |
| Within Groups | 36.207 | 355 | .107 | | | |
| **Total** | **36.480** | **357** | | | | |

Table 4 reveals an F. value of 2.921 with a significance (p-value) of .209. Since the calculated p-value of .209 is greater than the fixed probability level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This finding suggests that security preparedness influence enrolment of girl child in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State.

**Discussion**

The finding from the first research question revealed that Socio-Cultural factors influenced the enrollment of Girl-Child Education through giving more preference to boys' education than girls, belief, norms and societal perception in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. The test of null hypothesis one confirmed the influence as perceived by the stakeholders. This finding conforms with the report of Danladi and Gladys (2018) who reported that there are wide ranges of factors identified by researchers influencing women level of representation in education. It becomes pertinent that women should realize their capabilities and map out strategies to actualize them. Deeply rooted to poverty are unequal chances of girl child getting

education. Anaekwe in Danladi and Gladys (2018) asserted that Child-rearing practices in parts of Nigeria contribute to what girls become in life. He continued: "We hear parents using some words that segregate children personality. For instance, independent, strong, courageous, capable, serious etc are commonly used to describe boys behaviour while soft, fragile, weak, lazy, dependent are used in qualifying girls behaviour. In the home, boys are also encouraged to engage in activities that kindle fondness spirit in education.

The finding of the second research question revealed that security preparedness influences the enrolment of Girl-Child Education through presence of security personnel, security protocol and community-based security initiatives in Senior Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. The test of null hypothesis five confirmed the influence as perceived by the stakeholders. This finding concord with the statement of Garba (2014), Adebajo*et al* (2023) and Temlong *et al.* (2018) who reported insecurity and sexual violence as inhibitors to girls' education in Northern Nigeria. Due to these security challenges, many children particularly girls, currently have no access to basic education (Abdullahi & Terhemba 2014; Bakwai & Sarkin-Kebbi, 2015). Temlong*et al.*(2018) revealed that insecurity such as violence and community conflict were linked to low enrolment and drop out of girls from schools, arising from forced migration to take up various forms of labour; economic and family sustenance; and fear of safety.

Similarly, Garba (2014) revealed that insecurity mitigate against enrolment, attendance and completion of girl in both primary and secondary schools. According to Biftu (2016), the reason for low enrollment of females in different levels of education may be attributed to the values and attitudes that the society attaches towards education of female students. Such perception of the society towards the education of female is usually based on the so called traditional constraints. These constraints include the following: Females have special needs for physical protection and tradition often demands special concern for females' privacy and special reputations. In those cultures where female seclusion is practiced, the impact of that tradition on females' enrollment after puberty is likely to be substantial. Moreover, traditional constraints such as college related problems which lead to safety and culture concerns may force parents not to send females to colleges. According to Kearns and Dirienzo (2024), various studies on the issue of sexual harassment have revealed that low rate of girls' school enrollment is remarkably attributed to sexual harassment.

## Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, it can be definitively concluded that socio-cultural factors and security preparedness significantly influence the enrollment of the girl child in senior secondary schools across Zamfara State. This implies a crucial relationship: as positive socio-cultural norms evolve and security measures in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State are enhanced, a continuous improvement in girl-child enrollment can be anticipated. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of educational access for girls in the region, highlighting the importance of addressing both societal perceptions and safety concerns.

**Recommendations**

Drawing from the insights garnered in this study, the following recommendations are put forth to foster increased girl-child enrollment in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State:

1. Promoting Equitable Educational Opportunities: Parents are strongly encouraged to actively champion equal educational opportunities for both male and female children. This involves cultivating and demonstrating positive beliefs, challenging restrictive norms, and shaping societal perceptions that actively support and facilitate the enrollment of the girl child in senior secondary schools throughout Zamfara State. Efforts should be made to raise awareness regarding the long-term benefits of female education for individuals, families, and the wider community.
2. Strengthening Security Preparedness: It is imperative that both community stakeholders and the government prioritize and invest in robust security preparedness measures within and around senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. Given the direct correlation observed between improved security and increased girl-child enrollment, proactive steps such as enhanced surveillance, community policing, rapid response mechanisms, and conflict resolution strategies are vital.

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