



# **GENDER STEREOTYPES AS DETERMINANT FACTORS ON EDUCATION OF THE GIRL CHILD IN OGOJA EDUCATION ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to look at gender stereotypes as determinants factors of female child education in the Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. Three research questions were posed, which were translated into three hypotheses. A literature review was conducted depending on the variables being studied. A survey-based research design was used. A sample of female staff members from ten (10) public secondary schools in the education zone were chosen using a simple random selection technique. A 15 items structured questionnaire was designed for data collection. The reliability index of the instrument ranges from alpha coefficients of 0.64 (for societal factors), 0.73 (for socio-cultural factors); and 0.75 (for the religious factors) was calculated. The data was analysed using the Independent t-test statistical method to evaluate the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings demonstrated that socio-cultural, religious, and societal factors had a substantial impact on the education of girl children in the research area. Based on these findings, it was urged, among other things, that some societies avoid giving preferential treatment to male children; that the government educate parents on the significance of education for both boys and girls; and that a campaign be launched against early marriage.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender stereotypes, determinant factors, education of the girl child, Ogoja Education Zone.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education should be viewed as a fundamental human right, rather than a special privilege. Everyone has the right to practise it, regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, political orientation, economic disparities, nationality or geographical inequities, or health limitations (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021). Education has long been regarded as a tool of progressing humanity.

It acts as a conduit for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, skills, personality, values, and attitudes to future generations. Education exposes one to acquire knowledge about one's surroundings in order to understand the causes of variations in a person, persons, or groups, as well as for sustainable growth in a country (Eze & Eze, 2018).

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In any country, a child's educational development, whether female or male, is significant since each plays an important role in the country's advancement. Historically, women have experienced social injustice and educational inequality. Education for females has been limited by societal ideas of girls, which contend that girls ought to receive an education and be trained to fulfil their innate roles as mothers, brides, child-rearing machines, and servants to their husbands and in-laws. According to Osarenren-Osaghae, Imhangbe, and Irabor (2019), the idea that a woman's sole purpose in life is to get married and have kids has had a lot of detrimental impacts and has consequently caused society to regress. These include mothers who, because of their lack of education, don't understand the importance of education and would rather see their kids begging on the streets than enrolling them in school. Because of the above mentioned accusations, female children in Nigeria are not sent to school while boys are. In northern Nigeria, girls are more likely than boys to work around the house and market goods on the streets. As if this is the only reason God created a girl, she is raped, mistreated, and forced into an early marriage. These kinds of actions will never propel the nation ahead.

Several scholars have provided definitions of the girl-child within the Nigerian context. According to Ada's (2007) citation of the National Child Welfare Policy (1989), a girl-child is any person under the age of fourteen. Chibiko (2009) and Juliem (2018) believed that the girl-child was a biological female offspring up until the age of eighteen (18). The age range that comes before young adulthood is this one. Early childhood education (years 0-5), primary education (ages 6–12), and secondary education (ages 12–18) are all included in this time frame. Girl-child education is the process of instructing girls in the aforementioned age range, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or cultural background. Formal or Islamic education gives women opportunities that are advantageous to them and their families, such as learning about human rights. The content of girl-child education should match the society's perception of their assigned function (Alabi & Alabi, 2013).

Juma and Simatwa (2014) Observe that cultural factors affect female students' academic performance more than they do male students'. Daily household chores are a requirement for some of the girls who attend day schools. When

they visit during school breaks, those who attend boarding schools are especially impacted. In addition, Juma and Simatwa (2014) underscore that when financial resources are scarce, preference is given to male children. The female student does not go to school as frequently as she ought to as a result. In addition, girls are disproportionately affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic because they must take care of their parents and siblings who are ill, and in extreme cases of income loss, they may have to temporarily leave school in order to find work, housing, and/or food (Ibid). Students usually perform below average academically when they are readmitted to school (ibid).

In addition, girls are disproportionately affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic because they must take care of their parents and siblings who are ill, and in extreme cases of income loss, they may have to temporarily leave school in order to find work, housing, and/or food (Ibid). Academic achievement is usually below average for students who are readmitted to school (ibid). Why has the situation not improved even after years of efforts to increase female education by governments, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? It appears that the true issues have not received enough attention. It seems that there isn't enough research on gender stereotypes. Numerous studies have shown that gender stereotypes are pervasive in all facets of Nigerian culture and work in tandem with other problems to obstruct women's access to education.

Gender stereotypes are roles or patterns of behaviour wherein society favours one sex over another. They usually consist of false claims, illogical notions, and beliefs. It is defined as a collection of widely held beliefs about behaviours and pursuits that society deems suitable for both men and women, according to Abanyam and Ukah (2021). It is a simplistic, persistent, and inflexible taught category idea that is factually incorrect. Gender stereotypes are people's beliefs about how the sexes differ (prescriptive stereotypes) or should differ (descriptive stereotypes), according to Perry & Pauletti (2011). For the purposes of this study, societal behaviours and attitudes that generally prohibit girls from pursuing an education are referred to as gender stereotypes. This experiment was motivated by worries about how gender stereotypes can affect a female child's overall development.

In their homes, girls are usually exposed to traditional rules, attitudes, and stereotypes. However, the majority of these attitudes and actions are designed to maintain the patriarchal nature of society's gender disparity. These points of view continuously threaten women's and girls' fundamental rights, the majority of which are crucial for the social and healthy development of the female child. Rather, they impede the girl's development by making her developmental activities more challenging.

A girl growing up in African civilization is taught that women are not equal to men, that women belong in the house, and that women are only meant to be seen, not heard. As a result of internalising these misleading cues from authority figures, girls and women have developed strong prejudices against women. This causes emotional confusion in the girl-child, which can result in low self-esteem and feelings of insecurity (Ezeliora and Ezeokana, 2011; Hiuzer, 2002). Numerous research have revealed that negative stereotypes frequently elicit negative responses, which might take the shape of low self-esteem, task performance, motivation, and behaviours typical of the stereotyped individual. By restricting options and chances, negative preconceptions prevent people from reaching their full potential (Santrock, 2001).

Very little research has been done on gender and gender-stereotypical issues in the Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. In order to better understand gender norms and the elements that influence a female child's education in the Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, this study set out to investigate them.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The process of transmitting values, cultures, and other traits from one generation to the next is called education. It is thought to be an essential human right that every person, regardless of gender, ought to be granted. Education for girls is a global issue that has existed for as long as humanity. Women have thus always been severely marginalised in the field of education. Recently, the challenges have gained attention on a global scale. Over time, it has been mistakenly believed that a girl child's role in Cross River State's Ogoja Education Zone is to take care of the home and carry children. For this reason, women are urged to concentrate on home economics while men are encouraged to seek careers in science and technology.

In comparison to the male population, just a small percentage of the females in the Ogoja Education Zone are literate, despite the fact that girls make up the majority of the population. This is because the Ogoja Educational Zone's female secondary education is influenced by sociocultural influences. In addition to being denied an education, the girl child is a victim of prostitution, ritual sacrifice, and child trafficking. Therefore, significant stakeholders in the research region have voiced serious concerns over the issues—such as early marriage, religious considerations, societal factors, and socio-cultural factors—that influence girls' education. Girls eventually stop attending school as a result of this (Ndifon & Undie, 2016). The researcher is compelled to investigate "gender stereotypes and determinate factors on education of the girl child in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State" in light of this.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine gender stereotypes as determinant factors on education of the girl child in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- I. To determine the influence of socio-cultural factors on the girl child education in Ogoja Education Zone;
- II. To examine influence of religious factors on girl-child education in Ogoja Education Zone;
- III. To examine influence of societal factors on girl-child education in Ogoja Education Zone.

#### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the influence of socio-cultural factors on the girl child education in Ogoja Education Zone?
- ii. What is influence of religious factors on the girl-child education in in Ogoja Education Zone?
- iii. What is influence of societal factors on the girl-child education in in Ogoja Education Zone?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses are formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. Socio-cultural factors do no significantly influence the education of the girl child in Ogoja Education Zone;

- ii. religious factors do no significantly influence the education of the girl child in Ogoja Education Zone;
- iii. Societal factors do no significantly influence the education of the girl child in Ogoja Education Zone.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is based on the sub-variables:

#### Socio-cultural factors

Research on the impact of sociocultural elements on female students' education in secondary schools in Kebbi State, Nigeria, was carried out by Onyeansi (2019). Five research questions and hypotheses guided the investigation. An ex post facto research design was used to carry out the investigation. The survey included 810 PTA Exco members, vice principals, and principals of 90 secondary schools in the Kebbi Central Senatorial District in Kebbi State. A sample of 300 vice principals, principals, and members of the PTA Executive Committee were included in the study. The 25-item structured "Influence of Socio-cultural Factors on the Girl-child Education Questionnaire (SCOGEQ)" was created by the researcher to collect data. The t-test statistical approach was utilised to evaluate the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05, and descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were employed to address the study issues. The study discovered that a number of variables, such as parents' socioeconomic condition, political concerns, gender preference, and early marriage, significantly affect female students' secondary school education in Kebbi State's Central Senatorial District.

Olatide (2023) conducted research on the value of female education in our community and the nation as a whole. The study looked at girl child education among secondary school students in four local government districts and five schools in Kwara State, using 20 children as a sample of 400 students. Two hypotheses and two research questions were put forth. For the investigation, a descriptive survey design was chosen. The findings demonstrated how several societal conventions, cultural customs, and traditional beliefs have posed significant barriers to girls' education.

In order to ascertain the sociocultural factors impacting females' education in Maiduguri, Borno State, Okafor (2010) carried out a descriptive

study. Three secondary schools in Maiduguri were included in the study: Maiduguri Capital School, Shehu Garbai Secondary School, and Government Girls Secondary School Yerwa. To choose the three principals and the three schools, simple random selection was used. There were 355 teachers and 4,256 SSI students, including 96 teachers and 210 students. The investigation was guided by two null hypotheses and three research areas. The questionnaire was created by the researcher. The reliability alpha coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.86 when the Spearman Brown prophecy formula technique was applied. Simple percentages were used to evaluate the collected data in order to respond to the research questions, and ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that hurdles to girls' education in Maiduguri, Borno state, including ignorance, family history, religion, socioeconomic level, and culture.

#### Religious factors

Using Katsina State as a case study, Kangiwa (2023) investigated the effects of Islamic religious beliefs on girls' education in Nigeria. A descriptive research design is employed in this study. The participants in the study are academics from Katsina state who practise Islam. The method of selecting respondents was simple random sampling with a hat. Data were gathered using a questionnaire, and simple percentages were used for analysis. The findings indicated that both Islam and the Hausa society have a positive impact on girls' education. In a similar vein, a study conducted in the northern regions of Nigeria by Eweniyi and Usman (2013) assessed parents' perceptions of socio-cultural, religious, and economic factors influencing girls' education.

A descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. 1,200 carefully chosen parents and adults from Northern Nigerian states were included in the study. At the 0.05 threshold of significance, three study subjects and three null hypotheses were put out and examined. The t-test and ordinary percentage statistical techniques were used to evaluate the data. The results showed that factors associated to poverty and a lack of religious knowledge affect girls' schooling in the study area.

Additionally, Musongole (2010) investigated the role that Religious Education had in advancing the rights of females to an education in periurban schools in Zambia's Chingola district.

Fifteen (15) schools are included in the study, all of them are situated outside of Chingola town. Oral interviews, questionnaires, and observations were used to collect data. 260 girls in grades 5 through 9 received questionnaires. Five surveys were distributed to every school. In addition to the schoolgirls, six teachers were questioned regarding cultural norms and practices that hinder women's academic success. In addition, fifteen educators were specifically asked to list the subjects in Religious Education that they felt were important in helping women develop their sense of self-worth and confidence, as well as different teaching strategies that supported student-centeredness. The contribution of Religious Education curricula to the advancement of girls' education was assessed at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. The study discovered that religious practices and beliefs hinder girls' academic success in the area under investigation.

#### **Societal factors**

In Mogadishu, Somalia, Adam and Gichinga (2018) carried out a study to examine the factors affecting females' school engagement. The researchers employed a quantitative correlation research approach to address the hypotheses. Out of the 124 target population in Somalia, 95 respondents were selected using the descriptive survey approach. Self-administered structured questionnaires that were distributed using the drop-and-pick method were used to collect primary data. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The conventional multiple regression analysis and Pearson's product moment correlation analysis were employed to evaluate the hypotheses. Tables and figures were used to display the data and give a visual depiction of the outcomes. The study's data analysis and interpretations showed that the four variables—early marriage, early pregnancy, adolescent fertility rate, and nutrition knowledge—had a statistically significant impact on the school involvement of girls. The study found that nutritional information, teenage fertility rate, early marriage, and pregnancy all had an effect on the number of girls enrolled in school.

In 2009, Almunajjed carried out research in Saudi Arabia to look into the impact of parents' views towards their kids. According to the study, parents' expectations for their sons and daughters

influence how they socialise their offspring. Girls are socialised into marriage and taking care of the home and children due to gender-based expectations. Boys are encouraged to work outside the home and be bold, but they are also expected to assume leadership roles. Girls with a lively and bold attitude received reprimands, while those who demonstrated excellent housekeeping attitudes received awards. Almunajjed noted that girls have to have a caring attitude in order to be accepted in Saudi Arabia. He recommended that parents work with other institutions of socialisation to impart knowledge and skills that will support a gender-balanced society.

Songa (2012) conducted research on the frequency of forced dropouts among females residing in Kahama District. He disclosed that many of the group's female members were under the age of eighteen, and that parents and other community members were known for forcing and engineering their daughters to marry after completing their elementary and secondary education. A typical Sukuma in Kahama would prefer livestock than sending their girls to school. Cattle performed better in this way than educated daughters. females are therefore viewed as commodities, and light-skinned females are more sought after as they bring in larger dowries than do girls with darker complexions. According to Songa, parents provide a significant problem and pose the biggest threat to the educational system in Kahama and Shinyanga, especially for young girls.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design used for this study was survey-based. Because it emphasises establishing the relationship between variables and communicating what is, this design was chosen appropriately. All female employees of public secondary schools in the Ogoja Education Zone in Cross River State, Nigeria, make up the study's population. One hundred (100) female staff members from ten (10) public secondary schools in the education zone were selected using a straightforward random sample process.

The "Gender Stereotypes as Determinant Factors on Education of the Girl Child Questionnaire (GSDFEGCQ)" was a structured questionnaire used to gather the data. There were two sections to the questionnaire. A cover letter and Section A were created to get respondent demographic data. With 15 items, Section B of the

'GSDFEGCQ' examined three sub-variables that were employed in the research. Five items arranged onto a redesigned four-point Likert scale were used to measure these three traits. Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree were the two possible answers.

The test was evaluated by two psychometric experts from the University of Calabar's Department of Educational Foundations in Calabar. These experts made sure that everything had obvious contents and arrangements to prevent adding extraneous details and confusing objects. The final design of the instrument was compiled for data collection, and items that were found superfluous were updated or eliminated, and enhancements were suggested. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed among 100 public secondary school students from various educational zones using the Cronbach Alpha technique. The investigation's reliability index of 0.71 showed that the questionnaire instrument was generally internally consistent. Alpha coefficients of 0.73 for socio-cultural factors, 0.75 for religious elements, and 0.64 for societal factors were determined for each of the three sub-scales. Additionally, respondents received assurances that the data collected via the instrument would be

treated with the utmost confidentiality. Completed copies of the questionnaire that respondents sent in were all scored, classified, and ready for analysis. The hypothesis were evaluated using an independent t-test statistical analysis at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Hypothesis 1**

Sociocultural influences have no substantial influence on the education of girls in the Ogoja Education Zone. This hypothesis's independent variable is "the socio-cultural factors" divided into two independent nominal levels - favourable and unfavourable, while the dependent continuous variable is the girl child's schooling. As a result, the independent t-test statistical technique was chosen as the best fit for data analysis.

Table 1 shows that public secondary school staffs with positive socio-cultural factors had a larger mean (x) = 2.37 for socio-cultural factor influence than their counterparts with negative replies, who had a mean (x) of 1.15, for a mean difference of 1.45. The p-value in Table 1 was less than the alpha level of 0.05 at 98 degrees of freedom, resulting in the rejection of the previously proposed null hypothesis. As a result, socio-cultural factors had a considerable impact on the schooling of female children in the research area.

**Table 1: Summary of independent t-test results of the influence of the socio-cultural factors on the education of the girl child (N = 100)**

Variables	Influence of socio-cultural factors	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	S.E	t-value	P
	Favourable	60	2.37	1.02	.09		
	Unfavourable	40	1.15	0.92	.07	4.40	.00

Significant at 0.05 level; D/F = 98; critical t-value of 1.987; mean difference = 1.45

**Hypothesis 2**

Religious factors have no significant influence on the education of girls in the Ogoja Education Zone. This hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance after dividing the influence of religious elements into high and low independent categories. The dependent variable was measured continuously on an interval basis. The findings of the analysis reported in Table 2 show that religious factors have a stronger influence on

the education of the female child (mean = 2.28) than those with a lower influence on the responses (mean = 1.15), with a mean difference of 1.13. At 98 degrees of freedom, the 0.05 alpha level was smaller than the p-value of .00, indicating a significant effect. This led to the discarding of the null hypothesis and the upholding of the alternate hypothesis; implying that religious factors has significant influence on the education of the girl child in the study area.

**Table 2: Summary of independent t-test results of the influence of the religious factors on the education of the girl child (N = 100)**

Variables	Influence of religious factors	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	S.E	t-value	P
	High	58	2.28	0.95	.08		
	Low	42	1.15	1.00	.08	4.08	.00

Significant at 0.05 level; D/F = 98; critical t-value of 1.987; mean difference = 1.13

### Hypothesis 3

Societal variables have no substantial impact on the education of girls in the Ogoja Education Zone. The independent variable in this hypothesis is "societal factors" categorised into two independent nominal levels - favourable and unfavourable; the dependent continuous variable is the girl child's schooling. This made it appropriate to use the independent t-test statistical methodology as the best method for data analysis.

Table 3 shows that respondents with favourable social factors had a larger mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 2.31 for societal factors influence than their counterparts with negative responses, who had a mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 1.24, resulting in a mean difference of 1.07. The p-value in Table 3 was less than the alpha level of 0.05 at 98 degrees of freedom, resulting in the rejection of the previously proposed null hypothesis. As a result, sociocultural influences had a major impact on the schooling of young girls in the research area.

**Table 3: Summary of independent t-test results of the influence of use of societal factors on the education of the girl child (N = 100)**

Variables	Use of Google Forms application	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	S.E	t-value	P
	Favourable	54	2.31	1.12	.09		
	Unfavourable	46	1.24	0.89	.08	3.59	.00

Significant at 0.05 level; D/F = 98; critical t-value of 1.987; mean difference = 1.07

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the analysis of hypothesis one show that socio-cultural factors have a considerable influence on the education of girls in the research region. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with the earlier stance of Onyeansi (2019), who did a study to evaluate the impact of socio-cultural determinants on girl-child education in secondary schools in Kebbi Central Senatorial District, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The findings found that early marriage, gender preference, sociocultural variables, parents' socioeconomic status, and political considerations all have a substantial impact on girl-child education in secondary schools in Kebbi Central Senatorial District, Kebbi State. Similarly, Olatide (2023) conducted a study to investigate the value

of girl child education and its significance to our community and the nation as a whole, using Kwara State as a case study. The findings revealed that several cultural, traditional beliefs, and practices of the people have posed significant hurdles to girl child education.

The examination of hypothesis two reveals that religious variables have a considerable impact on the schooling of girl children in the research area. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with the earlier stance of Kangiwa (2023), who conducted a study to investigate the influence of Islamic religious attitudes on girl-child education in Nigeria, using Katsina State as a case.

The results showed that Islam has a favourable influence on girl-child education, as does the Hausa community.

It also agrees with the prior viewpoint of Eweniyi and Usman (2013), who performed a study to evaluate parents' perceptions of socio-cultural, religious, and economic factors influencing girl-child education in northern Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that a lack of religious knowledge, as well as poverty-related factors, influence girl-child education in the research area.

The examination of hypothesis three revealed that sociocultural influences had a substantial influence on the schooling of female children in the research area. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with the earlier stance of Adam and Gichinga (2018), who conducted a study to investigate the determinants influencing girl child involvement in education in Mogadishu, Somalia. The data demonstrated a statistically significant effect of the four variables, namely early marriage, early pregnancy, adolescent fertility rate, and nutrition information, on girl child school enrollment. It also conforms to Almunajjed (2009), who conducted a study in Saudi Arabia to investigate the effects of parents' views towards their children and discovered that parents socialise their children differently based on their expectations for their daughters and sons.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The education of the child is vital for societal development. This education should be for both male and female. In the review of literature, most society are patriarchal in nature giving preferential treatment to the male child. The study concludes that:

- 1) There was a significant influence of socio-cultural factors on the education of the girl child in the study area;
- 2) Religious factors has significant influence on the education of the girl child in the study area;
- 3) There was a significant influence of societal factors on the education of the girl child in the study area.

Based on the survey results, we recommend that the issue of giving preferential treatment to the male child by some society should be avoided; the issue of early marriage should be avoided by parents who should encourage and give orientation to their girl-child on the importance of education before marriage. Also, Government should enlighten parents on the importance of education of both boy and girl, campaign against early marriage.

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