

# INFLUENCE OF PARENTS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ON GIRL- CHILD EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The study is aim at investigating influence of parents cultural and religious beliefs on Girl-Child Beliefs on Girl-Child Education in Government Secondary School in Egor Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria. The population of the study is 7, 500 respondents, while the sample size was 500. The Krejcie and Morgan sample table was used to determine the sample size of the study. The research instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency count, mean and standard deviation. Based on the analysis of the data, the following findings were made that parents' religious convictions have some degree of effect on how well the girl child is educated. Parents' cultural ideas have impact on the education of girl-child. Addition, is making education compulsory for the girl-child to acquire learning, permitting more females to hold chose office, and sloping up mindfulness programmes are strategies to improve the cultural and religious beliefs on girl child education in Egor local government area of Edo State. The study recommends that girls should be encouraged to get at least a basic education by their parents so that they can become independent and have a better future.

**Keywords:** Cultural, Education, Girl-Child, Parents, Religious Beliefs

## Introduction

Education whether formal and informal develop empowerment, boosts productivity and health, and reduces societal issues like child labour. All societies' socioeconomic development and education are inextricably linked, and governments around the world are aware of this and committed to ensuring that citizens have access to education (Omorogiuwa, 2020; Aliyu, 2017). Educational institution provides both formal and informal educational programmes and incorporates variety of instructional strategies that lead to long-term literacy development (Akinkahunsi, 2019). Education in Nigerian societies help to develops empowerment, productivity and reduces societal issues like child labor. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to education. In affirmation, Aliyu (2017) noted that to ensure that everyone benefits from the educational opportunities given to meet their basic learning requirements attitude is important for proper realization of the aims of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and plays a significant role in parents' efforts toward the educational development of their children. According to Abraham and Ozioko's (2016) attitude entails how you feel and perceive something or someone, as well as how you behave towards them. When it comes to any particular topic, attitudes are defined as "inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, and convictions" (Taiwo, 2018, p. 67). Allport (2015, p.7) argued that attitude "is a mental and neutral readiness to directly or dynamically impact an individual's behaviour towards an item or situation that is organised and connected by experience." It is a representation of psychological tendencies by evaluating a certain thing with some favour and some against (Eagly & Chaiken, 2017).

The cultural and religious beliefs of parents towards girl child education is viewed as a reflection of their individual thoughts and beliefs regarding the significance, value, and use of female education in

society. Again Research hold that parental attitude towards girl child education influences the development of girl child education (Finlay & Finlay, 2016; Pors, 2015; Genoni, Titi, Balo, Joseph & Fredel, 2016; Adekunle, Kainuwa, Ahmad, Yusuf & Najeemah 2017; Spacey, Goulding, Murray, Usman & Yaro, 2019; Ramzan, 2019; Janes, 2020; Yaacob, 2020) in separate studies. According to Muhammad, Muhammed and Hamza (2017), girl child education is a sort of education that gives women all the tools they need to properly carry out their unique roles in service to their country and fosters personal development. It is also a means to get people ready to learn things that will help them in their lives while they are here on earth. Girl child education make women to be aware of their surroundings and enable them function optimally in the society. Illiterate girls are not given the chance to reach their full potential and participate equally and productively in their homes, communities, nations, and the global community.

Parents that are supportive and upbeat about education are involved in the current and future academic endeavours of their children. Parental involvement can be measured or indicated by parental attitude. The involvement of the family in schooling has been found to benefit girls' learning. It is a crucial component of early childhood programmes and the national education strategy. To Aliyu (2017), religious and cultural beliefs of parents has strong indication of influencing their attitudes towards girl child education. These beliefs can either be favourable or negative. Girls' education may be hampered by their parents' disapproval of learning and formal education. When parents have a good attitude toward the girl child, it often shows in how well they do in school, which sparks the children' enthusiasm for learning and getting good grades. A positive parenting style demanded that attention be placed on the education of the girl child and her desire to learn new things, which could be due to the girl child's mindset, which empowers her to serve both herself and her society (Omorogiuwa, 2020; Shuabu, 2015). Thus, Okobia and Ekejiuba (2018) study on parental views about girl-child education in Edo State, affirm that parents have a favourable attitude toward it. The results also showed that Christian parents had a more positive attitude regarding their daughters' education. However, preliminary investigation revealed some girls are seen selling on the street, some have dropped out of school, others are engaged in prostitution, and some have not received formal education in the local government, despite reports that parents have a positive attitude toward girls' education. As a result, this study will examine Influence of parents Cultural and Religious Beliefs on Girl-Child Education in Government Secondary School in Egor Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of Problem**

It is common knowledge that education is the cornerstone of all societies and that it must be provided to everyone, regardless of gender. Because of this, Akinkahunsi (2019) stated that the issues with girl education are a worldwide matter rather than a regional, state, national, or continental one. The most effective tool for man to control his surroundings and map out his future is education. Although there has been significant improvement in the education of girls in Africa over the past few decades. However, this development is still unequal and sluggish in comparison. On the one hand, disparities in geography, social class, language, and ethnicity continue to greatly affect the level of development of women's education between nations and those in this area (Akinkahunsi, 2019). On the other hand, in terms of women's education, Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, continues to lag behind the rest of the globe.

In Nigeria, the education of girls has been a hot button subject for many years. It is still a concern in some areas, particularly in Egor local government in Edo State. Women have had educational disadvantages in the majority of Egor Local Government districts when compared to men. The issues with girls' education in Egor Local Government Area, in particular, include poverty, tradition, and culture, in which women are typically viewed as low in status and have limited expectations of opportunities to secure good education, decently paid jobs, or hold a leadership position (Omorogiuwa, 2020). Equally, Aliyu (2017) stipulated that the incorrect attitude toward female education has led to the prostitution of many young girls, and some have been forced into family situations they were not prepared for. Since attitude affects behaviour, it has a significant impact on how well society's children are educated. Hence, this study seeks to investigate Attitudinal Behaviour of Parents towards Girl-Child Education in Some Selected Secondary Schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **Objective of The Study**

The objectives that guided this study are:

- i. To determine the influence of parental religious beliefs on the girl child education in Egor Local Government Area;
- ii. To examine parents' cultural beliefs towards girl-child education in Egor Local Government Area; and
- iii. To develop strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents towards girl-child education in Egor Local Government.

## **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the influence of religious beliefs of parents on the girl child education in Egor Local Government Area?
- ii. What are parents' cultural beliefs towards girl-child education in in Egor Local Government Area?
- iii. What are the strategies to improve the belief system of parents toward girl child education in Egor Local Government?

## **Review of Literature**

Female children have historically suffered from severe neglect. She is excluded from decision-making, employed at homes without compensation, kept as a housekeeper, and not permitted to earn a living for herself (Akpede, Asogun, Momodu & Igbenu, 2018). She is used by the male as a wife, by the male's children as a mother, by other women as a housewife, and by the male as a bedmate. She is also denied an education in favor of her brothers, given out and denied the chance to maximize their potential, and is currently forced into early marriage (Aliyu, 2017). The formal training of female children in knowledge and everyday life skills is a must for the global realization of total women's empowerment and liberation (Omorogiwa, 2021; Solomon, 2017). Okobia and Ekejiuba (2015) investigated parental attitudes and girl-child education in Nigeria's Edo State. 450 people from Benin's capital city were selected at random to participate in the survey. The tool that was used to collect the data was called Parental Attribute towards Girl-Child Education. The data were statistically analyzed using a t-test and an analysis of variance. An importance limit of 0.05 was utilized to test theories. The findings demonstrated that parents were supportive of girls' education. Parents from southern Nigeria who lived in the Benin metropolis were more likely than parents from northern Nigeria to support their daughters' education. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that, in comparison to Muslim parents, Christian parents are more supportive of their daughters' education.

Akpede et al. (2018) conducted a study on parents' attitudes and practices regarding the education of girls in the Esan West Local Government Area. The woman's child's level of education was influenced by a number of factors, including behavior (54.8%). However, it was determined that working toward female education was desirable. Girls' education is still an important part of a country's growth. Akyeampong (2021) noted the most common male parent dependency, which is a symptom of forgetting girl child education, is the denial of girl child education and training. As a result, this form of girl-child forgetting is the most retrogressive of all types. It is a term for the government's failure or refusal to provide timely, high-quality education. Akyeampong (2021) explained that the girl child experienced numerous issues because they were viewed as the weaker sex. Their participation in governmental affairs is influenced by the poor sex-role paradigm. Since they are viewed as men's property, they are not given the opportunity to receive a western education. Yusuf (2022) opined that in the Islamic religion, the majority of girls are forbidden from attending school and placed in "*purdah*," or isolation. Their chances of becoming liberated or powerful in society are jeopardized by their inability to receive an education. This lessens their likelihood of defending their fundamental rights (Omorogiwa, 2021), which makes it impossible for female

youngsters not to attend school due to powerlessness. As a result of being sent to hawk, they experience sexual harassment.

Pettman (2019) noted that cultural indoctrination is the process of inculcating ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and cognitive techniques with the assumption that such traditions would not be questioned but implemented in the future. Okobia and Ekejiuba (2015) opined that many children have been told culturally that Western education is not necessary and that they can exist without it. The girl is led to believe that her husband's home is her most fulfilling place to be and that she does not need to acquire a degree, so all she needs to do (for them) is get married and have a child. They must therefore concentrate on picking parents, accepting the right man, and making him happy. To Okobia and Ekejiuba (2015) girls now prioritize marriage over education due to the level of indoctrination they have received. Therefore, even the few who were fortunate and had the chance to go to school cannot wait for the perfect time, so when the man who wants to marry them shows up, they discontinue their studies. In a similar vein, Ishaku (2021) stated that traditional cultural traditions in Nigeria have a significant effect in a girl's decision to enroll in school. The patriarchal system governs the hierarchy of duties for men and women in rural communities. One of the fundamental causes of gender inequality is a system that views women as inherently inferior to males. According to Ishaku (2021), a widely held opinion is that girls should stay at home to learn and do domestic duties. As a result, many parents have a bad opinion of girls attending school.

In Nigeria, where over 70% of people live in poverty, girls are frequently dispatched to sell goods on the streets. Poverty, early marriage, misunderstandings of culture and religion, and adolescent pregnancies have all been noted as obstacles to girls' education in Nigeria, particularly in the north (Olomukoro & Omiunu, 2021). This has an impact on the low enrollment of girls in schools and institutions. For state government officials, nongovernmental groups, and other players in the educational system, this has grown to be a significant cause of worry. In addition, Yusuf (2022) stated that parents' financial struggles are identified as a key contributing reason to the under education of girls. The greatest challenge facing the world today is poverty, and the effects of an insufficient global response are most felt by children, particularly girls. Despite the fact that poverty plays a part in impeding girls' education and that their causes and effects are connected in a cycle, verifying this fact, Shuiabu (2015) asserts that if a person or group of people lacks resources for any reason, they are called poor. Whatever one may understand poverty to be, it can be linked to a lack of wisdom, knowledge, and strength. Some people may associate poverty with pain, while others may associate it with having little or no access to resources and money.

Along these lines, Rodriguez (2019) brought up that, as indicated by the World Bank, neediness is the essential component that impacts whether a young lady can get to school. It can be difficult to keep up with the cost of transportation, textbooks, and uniforms even in places where parents are not required to pay school fees. According to Rodriguez (2019), families are more likely to send boys than girls to school if they are unable to cover the costs. Sending a girl to school means that she will spend less time helping around the house because girls' income is typically the primary source of support for a parent. When parents are forced to choose between purchasing necessities like food and sanitary napkins, girls are forced to abandon school because they are unable to control their periods. A family may also allow their daughters to marry young if they are unable to support them any longer.

Onoyase (2018) explain that when parents have a poor perception of Western education, they are less likely to support their children's education, particularly the education of girls. This might lead to a problem with the nation's development and growth. Equally Garba (2019) noted that parent who lives their lives in a remote area especially those in the northern parts of Nigeria and have not access education are ignorance of the importance of education to the development of the society. There no access to education that influence their believe that there is no need for girl to have education since their importance responsibility is to do house chores and learn how to take care of their husband. Garba explain that this ignorance of the importance of education affect the education of the girl child. According to Ada-Obi (2020), education is a

key factor in the empowerment of men and women in the village, which has a positive impact on both local and national economic prosperity. Additionally, religious influences also have a significant impact on the education of girls. Ada-Obi (2020) noted that it help to develop and change peoples' attitudes. However, when parent do not have opportunity of having education, he will be ignorance and because he is ignorance, he will not encourage his children to have education. He will want them to continue with what they are doing. This situation is what most girl child are facing in Nigeria.

Similarly, Yusuf (2022) noted that this wrong mindset of the importance of education of female on the family, communities is currently pervasive in many cities and villages in northern Nigeria. Yusuf (2022) further noted that many parents in northern Nigeria believes that when they send their daughters and wives to schools, they will be exhibiting wrong character that will bring disgrace to the family. Because of this, they tend to reject any form of education that does not uphold these principles. Shuaibu (2015) bemoaned the fact that some people are forced into prostitution and compelled to work as housemaids or babysitters while they should be in school. Their labor is exploited without allowing them to take part in economic control, and they are stricken to better the family's financial status. They are now emotional wrecks as a result of violence, divorce, and beatings on their wives. Shuaibu (2015, p.112) further noted that although the Nigerian government expressly states in section 6.1.3 of the 1999 constitution that "for (the) Nigerian women to enjoy the full benefits of contemporary living, they require basic education to contribute to the development of the country."

Again, Aliyu (2017) believed that they are financially handicapped and that social inequality and gender discrimination have eaten deeply into the minds of most Nigerians and people worldwide. In this sense, the government must boost women and girls' participation in education, regardless of their geography or personal circumstances (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2017). The views were supported by Shuiabu (2015), who argued that it is crucial to recognize that women have a crucial role to play in nation-building and that education is the best legacy any parent can leave behind for their daughter. Based on the discussion above, women in Nigeria and Edo State have a favorable attitude toward the education of girls. This is founded on the fact that women's education is necessary. The societal advantages that would result from educating girls cannot be overstated because they will be a valuable asset to their families, states, and countries. Everyone must support and promote the education of girls as soon as possible. The Edo State Government must develop programs for the overall enhancement of girl-child education in order to help restore all girl-child schools in the State.

## **Methods**

A descriptive survey design was used for this study. The population of the study is estimated to be 7, 500. The population comprises of SS 1 to SS3 female students, the father and the mother of the students. The number of parents is 5000 respondents which consist of the father, mother or guardian; while the other 2500 respondents constitutes female students in the selected secondary schools in the local government, (Edo State Ministry of Education, 2022). The sample size of the study is 500 respondents in the selected government owned secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The selected schools are Iyoba Grammar School, Egor. Eweka Grammar School, Egor. Egor Grammar School, Egor. Benin Technical College, Uselu and Uwelu Grammar School, Uwelu. Random sampling techniques was used to drawn the sampling from the population of the study. The researcher got the sample size base on the description in the sample table that stated if the population is 7500 the sample size for that population is 500. Equally, Krejcie and Morgan as cited by Kenpro (2012) noted if the population of the study is 7500, the sample size will be 500 respondents. The researcher went to the selected secondary schools and pick the females that are in the classrooms in the senior secondary section. Five hundred (500) respondents were randomly selected by counting of numbers with one person per interval so that the researcher would not be bias in this process. The components of the sample size consist of 225 parents and 275 senior secondary school female students in the five selected secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area. The research instrument for the study was the questionnaire, and is designed to collect data and responses from both the

students and the parents in selected secondary schools in Egor. A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and retrieved from the respondents. Frequencies count, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data in tables.

## Results

**Research Question One:** What is the influence of religious beliefs of parents on the girl child education in Egor Local Government Area?

Table 1 contains responses from the respondents as regards the influence of religious beliefs of parents on the girl child education. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question one (1).

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics as Regards the Influence of Religious Beliefs of Parents on the Girl Child Education

S/N	Items	N	Mean	St.d	Remark
1	Religious beliefs of parents affect girl-child education	500	3.44	.837	Agree
2	Girls need to get marriage to curb sexual immorality influence girl-child education.	500	3.46	.862	Agree
3	Western education is not essential in religious holy books influence girl-child education.	500	3.36	.964	Agree
4	Women should not speak in religious settings influence girl-child education.	500	3.46	.838	Agree
5	Religious propaganda in past decades influenced parents' belief in girl-child education.	500	3.56	.733	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>			<b>3.46</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2023

In response to research question one, Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed to item one to five with a mean rating ranging from 3.36 to 3.56 while the standard deviation also ranges from 0.733 to 0.964. The cluster mean showed a mean of 3.46 with standard deviation of 0.85. With these results, the above mean score showed that there is a level of influence of religious beliefs of parents on the girl-child education.

**Research Question Two:** What is the influence of cultural beliefs of parents towards girl child education in Egor Local Government?

Table 2 contains responses from the respondents as regards the influence of parents' cultural beliefs towards girl child education. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question two (2).

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics as Regards the Influence of Parents' Cultural Beliefs towards Girl Child Education

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	St.d	Remark
1	The beliefs of parents on human sexuality negatively affects the education of the girl-child	500	3.51	.739	Agree
2	Cultural beliefs of some parents of the preference of a male child over female children affect girl child education	500	3.46	.838	Agree
3	Attitude of parents that domestic responsibilities are best for females affect girl-child education.	500	3.38	.830	Agree
4	The attitude of parents that educating females will make them rebellious and not submissive to their husbands discourages girl child education	500	3.24	.916	Agree

5	The attitude of parents excluding women from decision-making, community participation and control over their own lives affect girl child education	500	3.46	.862	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>			<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2023

Research question two revealed that majority of the respondents agreed to items one to five with mean ratings ranging from 3.24 to 3.51. The standard deviation also ranges from 0.739 to 0.916. The cluster mean indicated a mean of 3.41 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.84. With these results, the mean score showed that the respondents agreed that there is an influence of parents' cultural beliefs towards girl child education.

**Research Question Three:** What are the strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents toward girl child education in Egor Local Government?

Table 3 contains responses from the respondents as regards the strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents toward girl child education in Egor Local Government. The responses from the respondents were used to answer research question three (3).

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics on the Strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents toward girl child education.

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	St.d	Remark
1	Free education should be provided to the girl child	500	3.74	.711	Agree
2	Compulsory education should be provided to the child	500	3.66	.913	Agree
3	Parent negative attitude should change toward the girl child's education	500	3.49	.809	Agree
4	More appointments should be given to women, and laws should be made to abolish early marriage	500	3.51	.599	Agree
5	There should be more enlightenment campaigns for girl child education	500	3.33	.825	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>			<b>3.55</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2023

Responses to the item statements in items one to five in table 3 revealed that mean scores to the items ranged between 3.33 and 3.74 with standard deviation ranging from 0.599 to 0.91. The cluster mean for all five items was computed as 3.55 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.77. With these results, the data in table 4.6 showed that all five listed items were considered as the strategies to improve parental behaviour toward girl child education. Hence, according to the respondents, the strategies include; girl child free education, girl child compulsory education, provision for more women appointments into offices as well as more enlightenment campaigns.

### Discussion of Findings

Study findings for research question one revealed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that there is a level of influence of religious beliefs of parents on the girl-child education. This is due to the high cluster mean score of 3.46 to the 5 items in table 1. In line with this finding, Finlay and Finlay (2016) as well as Yaacob (2020) studies have shown that parental religion plays a crucial influence in affecting the effectiveness of their girl child education. Results obtained from the present study as regards research question two revealed that there is an influence of parents' cultural beliefs towards girl child education. The cluster mean was 3.41 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.84. In line with this study, Okobia and Ekejiuba (2018) study revealed that the patriarchal cultural beliefs that persisted in indigenous African culture are to blame for Africa's poor education of the girl child.

The findings for research question three revealed strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents towards girl-child education in Egor Local Government as highlighted by majority of the respondents. The cluster mean for all five items was computed as 3.55 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.77. Hence, according to the respondents, the strategies include; free education for girl child, girl child compulsory education, provision for more women appointments into offices as well as more enlightenment campaigns. In line with the study findings Shuaibu (2015), Aliyu (2017) and Omorogiuwa (2020) in their separate studies advocated strategies such as free education for the girl child and more enlightenment campaigns across the society as effective strategies for improving parental behaviour toward girl child education. Other strategies includes: Automatic scholarships for female students at all levels should be provided through collaborative efforts between the government and other important people. It's important to develop opportunities for women to get involved in politics, so that they will be able to contend for both state and federal legislative seats. More women should be appointed to government positions. Sensitization programs have been stepped up to educate people about the risks of not pushing girls to go to school and finish their education, especially in primary school.

## **Conclusion**

Education is the right of each and every girl child all over because it is the key to changing her life and the situation of her local area. Without education, the females are denied the amazing chance to create their maximum capacity and to assume a useful and equivalent part in their families, their social orders, their nation and their reality. Last but not least, the fact that schools in Nigeria are frequently substandard, particularly in rural and remote areas, means that even the few girls who are able to receive an education frequently receive one that is of poor quality and only lasts for a short period of time. Numerous schools in Nigeria are almost dejected, with classes being held in swarmed, inadequately developed structures, in which there is exceptionally restricted admittance to paper and pencils, and indeed, even less admittance to course books and PCs. There is still a great deal of work to be done to improve the quality and availability of girls' education in Nigeria. The prevalent social thought that discourages or minimizes the importance of girls' education is the greatest obstacle that must be overcome before all girls can receive the education they deserve. Countries in Africa could pass laws prohibiting practices of early marriage that prevent girls from attending school to stop this. Finally, Nigerian governments must enact legislation requiring girls to attend primary school and rigorously enforce these laws in rural communities.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings tied to the objectives of the study:

1. Given the need to reduce the influence of parental religious belief on the girl-child education. Government should team up with community and religious leaders to organized regular programmes for parents on the need to encourage their female to have good and sound education. Such programmes will help to create more awareness on the benefits of female education to families and communities, which will help to change their mindset that resources spent on female education is a waste of money.
2. Policies for gender-balanced education and curriculum should take into account the influence of parental culture on interests of girls for education, so that they are motivated to learn, and the welfare of teachers should be taken into account. In addition and to ensure cultural and gender sensitivity, the school curriculum should also be reviewed.
3. One of such strategies to improve the beliefs system of parents toward girl child education, could include that Government should make education of the girl child free and compulsory in Edo State. They should provide quality education in the state by employing qualified and equipped school with state of the art facilities to foster teaching and learning process.



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