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GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION AS A CORRELATE OF CREATIVITY FOR SELF RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The study was a descriptive survey design that was carried out in primary schools in Abia state. The population comprised of all primary school head teachers in Abia state, numbering eight hundred and fifty- five (855). Simple random sampling technique was used to get a sample size of five hundred and fifty (550). 2 research questions and 2 null hypotheses guided the study. Mean was used in answering the research questions while z-test statistic was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.The instrument was a researcher re-constructed 21 item questionnaire named 'creativity and girl- child education'. At the end of the study, it was found out that some of the benefits of creativity in girl- child education are: helping in maintaining a healthy population, impact societal cherished norms and values on their children, boast socio economic status of a woman etc. While some factors hindering girl child education were early marriage due to high incidence of poverty, traditional belief, child labour among others. At the end recommendations were proffered based on the study.

Keywords: Girl-Child, Creativity, Self-Reliance, Sustainable Development

Introduction

In Education For All (EFA 2015) conference in Dakar, one of the goals was eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, was a focus on ensuring girls full equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality NPE (2013) and Obanya (2013).In Nigeria, for instance, female enrolment for basic and secondary education have been uneven in terms of distribution across the geo-political zones. The disparity in enrolment in favour of males in the North East and North West while in South East and South South, the disparity is in favour of females. This means that Nigeria is yet to attain gender parity, despite (EFA 2015) strategic plan.In view of the above disparity, Uwaezuoke (2016) stated that Federal Ministry of Education has not relented in seeking to address these disparities. Citizens have been reminded that formal education empowers an individual by developing his/her confidence and enabling the person to make informed decisions in life.According to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Nigerian population was estimated to be 184.6 million as at 1st January 2016 with female constituting about 49.4% of the population. The literacy rate for males in Nigeria was put at 61.1% while the literacy rate for females was put at 48.6%. Thesestatistics were not encouraging at all considering the position of females in the development of the society. Generally speaking, our society intentionally allow boy-child to engage in creative and skill development activities like fly kites, use catapults, play football, wrestle etc. Girl-child was engaged in less scientific activities like curdling their younger siblings, house chores, dancing, backing babies etc. This may be what made parents to, even with western education, still send a boy-child to school while the girl-child was still at home doing home chores. Parents do believe that the place of a girl-child is at home.

Creativity according to Ucheagwu (2016) is the tendency to generate or recognize new ideas, alternatives or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, entertaining ourselves and others.

It is the ability to make or create new things based on societal needs and aspiration.Ucheagwustated that a girl-child is a biological female offspring, from birth to 18years of age. It is a period of character development and moral upbringing. The young and tender girl-child will be undergoing many behaviour modification strategies. They see any admired adult female as their role models. Strongwist (2000)stated that girl- Child education involves equipping girls, who latter grew up to women with the knowledge, abilities and mental powers with which they will be useful to themselves, family and society at large. There is no gainsaying the fact that at this stage, girl-child needs adequate functional education that will help them develop functionally. Education at this time is the major tools for the realization of the needs and goals because it is naturally an instrument for excellence, for socio economic reformation, reconstruction and national development. It is no longer news that in most areas, girl-child is being discriminated upon in terms of educational attainment. In view of this, Kobain (2014) stated that girl-child is discriminated against in terms of education and given out to marriage early thereby denying the child-girl the required competences for development.Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008), stated that child labour, poverty, lack of sponsorship, quest for wealth, bereavement, truancy, broken homes and engagement of children as house helps, are factors inhibiting children especially girls access to education in Nigeria.Ucheagwu also narrated that many families often send their daughters out to work at a younger age to get additional income needed for them to survive and also to make up for the education of the boy-child. In a related view, Offorma (2009) added that girls who are educated finds it difficult to get a husband from her country men and may end up marrying a foreigner. To such families, early marriage is the best option. The belief that when a girl-child is educated the benefit goes to the family of procreation and not family of creation, is another possible challenge to the education of a girl child.Uwaezuoke (2016) also listed the following as constraints to educating the girl-child in Nigeria.

- Socio-cultural factors: Some cultures have it that sending a girl-child to school is a waste since after all; the girl-child will still end up in the management of homes.
- Tradition: There is a belief that since marriage takes the girl-child out of her parental home, which is a waste of resources to spend money on her education.
- High incidence of poverty: poverty is a strong indicator of whom to send to school among girl / boy child especially among rural dwellers. Former secretary general of the UN, Kofi Annan puts it that "when a choice has to be made between educating a boy and a girl, girls are more likely be kept at home. Especially when family income needs to be supplemented, girls are more likely to be sent to work.
- Early marriage: Since girl-child will end in her husband home, it is better to marry her out to start making babies early in her husband home.
- The school and its environment: The unconduciveness of school environments discourages parents from sending their girl-child to school rather they prefer them to stay with them at home.

UNICEF (2007) concluded that education helps girls to develop essential life skills including self-confidence, the ability to participate effectively in society and protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and other sexual exploitation.With the skills acquired the girl-child education will contribute to the sustainable development of every nation. It gives the girl-child the opportunity to use the education learnt to apply family planning which reduces the population of the nation. Higher education enables the girl-child to contribute financial support of their family members both family of creation and procreation. **Education of girl-child helps to increase the productivity and self-employment in the country.**

Ucheagwu added that if more girls are educated, they would be empowered in adulthood to participate in politics not only as a voter but as a contestant. To add to the above, Uwaezuoke (2016) stated that the benefits of educating a girl-child include:

- The educated woman is better able to create an enabling environment for the education of her children. She can do that in different ways like good environment, good hygiene, good food etc. This enabling environment will impact positively in the education of all the children and also help to lead sustainable national development.
- When a girl-child that will eventually become a woman in the society was educated, they are empowers effectively to impact societal cherished norms, values and to their child early in life because education starts from home and mothers are the first-teacher of every child.
- Women tend to build bridges rather than walls.
- Educated women tends to preach peace to the nation because of the devastating effect of conflicts to their families.
- Educating the girl-child of today creates inter-generational educational benefits. Children from educated mother will benefits from their mother's wealth of experience as well as the financial benefit that accrue from her mother's financial empowerment. They will see their mother as a role model and strive to be like her.
- Educating a girl-child has been found to be positive determinants of every desired development outcome from reduction of mortality and fertility to poverty reduction and equitable growth.
- Helps to break the cycle of poverty in the society.
- If a girl-child is adequately trained, she in return would reciprocate by impacting positively on her own children.
- Women spend more times with their children than men. It gives them the opportunity to impact positively more on their children.
- Good managers, when women are educated they will help men to manage the resources at home effectively.
- Escaping from some diseases and infant mortality. When women are educated, they will evade early and pre-mature marriage and thereby escaping from its attendant problems like ViscoVarginal Fistula (VVF), HIV/AIDS and infant mortality.

- Help to contain and maintain healthy population: when they are educated, they will know the benefit of pregnancy control measure that will make them reduce the number of children they will bear and be able to train and raise healthy children.

Statement of problem

Education is the process through which an individual is made a functional member of the society. Through education, an individual is made to acquire certain skills that will make him/her be useful to him/her and also useful to the society. Education sharpens the intellectual ability of the individual and acquires some desired skills that will make the person self-reliant and contribute meaningful to the development of the nation. Despite the benefits that will accrue from educating an individual (girl-child) yet British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (2006) reported that African society viewpoint favours boys over girls because boys maintain the family lineage. It has been observed that many families prefer sending their girl-child to hawk or work in other to meet up with the financial challenges of the family and also make money for the education of the boy-child. Boys are meant to be in schools while girls stay at home to take care of their younger ones. Since education is seen as a fundamental human right and should be given to all, the researcher wants to find out the benefits of creativity in the education of a girl- child and factors hindering it in Abia State.

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits of creativity in girl-child education in Abia State?
2. What are factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HOI: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural head teachers on the benefits of creativity in the education of girl-child in Abia State.

HOII: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and

rural head teachers on the factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey design that was conducted in all seventeen Local GovernmentAreas in Abia State. The population of the study comprised of all primary school administrators (head teachers) numbering eight hundred and fifty-five (855). Simple random sampling technique was used in getting a sample size of five hundred and fifty (550) head teachers; four hundred (400) from rural while one hundred and fifty (150) from urban schools. The instrument was Ucheagwu (2016) "creativity and the education of girl-child". The researcher reconstructed it to suit her environment. It has a 21-item structured on a four (4) likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The instrument was also subjected to face and content validity by given it to three experts from NnamdiAzikiwe University-Awka in the department of Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management and Policy. Their inputs were dully reflected in the items in order to ensure the validity. 40 copies of the questionnaire items were given out to Head Teachers in Anambra State, 30 in rural and 10 from urban for reliability test after two weeks interval of test retest. At the end, the reliability co-efficient of 0.81 computed using Richard Kuderson statisticindicated that the instrument is reliable.Mean was used in answering research questions,the decision rule is that any mean from 2.50 and above is accepted while below 2.50 is rejected.Z -test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

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Table 1: Results

Research Question I:

What are the benefits of creativity in girl-child education in AbiaState.

S/N	ITEMS	Urban Principals X	Dec	Rural Principals X	Dec
1.	Girl-child education helps in maintaining healthy population	3.60	Agree	3.50	Agree
2.	Girl-child education helps the woman to be a good home manager in life.	2.90	Agree	2.80	Agree
3.	It helps the woman to impact cherished societal norms and values to her children	3.82	Agree	3.75	Agree
4.	Help the woman to create an enabling environment for her children	3.90	Agree	3.80	Agree
5.	Help her to contribute financially to her family because of her exposure	3.95	Agree	3.90	Agree
6.	It exposes the woman to be useful in politics in life	3.85	Agree	3.80	Agree
7.	The desired skills acquired in school helps the woman to be useful in life	3.70	Agree	3.71	Agree
8.	Takes the advantage of population and family life	2.60	Agree	2.65	Agree

	education to contribute meaningfully in her home.				
9.	It enhances productivity and self-employment of the woman	2.90	Agree	2.80	Agree
10.	Provides them with the knowledge of health issues like HIV/AIDS, STDs etc.	3.92	Agree	3.90	Agree
11.	Boast socio-economic status development of the woman	3.90	Agree	3.85	Agree
12.	Helps them to live longer because of the ability to manage stress life	2.70	Agree	2.65	Agree
13.	Gives them the opportunity to be aware of themselves, environment and the nation at large.	2.80	Agree	2.65	Agree
		3.43		**3.37**	

In table 1, on the benefits of creativity in girl-child education in Abia state, all thirteen (13) items were accepted by both urban and rural school administrators as the benefit accrued from given a girl-child western education. They have mean scores more than the cut-off score of 2.50 and therefore were all accepted.Item 5, help the girl-child to contribute financially to her family because of her exposure to education has the highest mean score of 3.95 for urban and 3.90 for rural administrators respectively. The pooled or grand mean of 3.43 for urban and 3.37 for rural administrators all indicated that all the items were accepted as the benefits of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Research question II:

What are the factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State?

Table II: Mean rating of urban and rural administrators on factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

S/N	ITEMS	Urban Principals X	Dec	Rural Principals X	Dec
14.	High incidence of poverty in the society	3.80	Agree	3.90	Agree
15.	Child labour	2.70	Agree	2.60	Agree
16.	Quest for wealth on the part of parents	2.71	Agree	2.80	Agree
17.	Broken homes	2.90	Agree	2.80	Agree
18.	Some cultural belief	3.60	Agree	3.75	Agree
19.	Socio-economic factors	3.10	Agree	3.50	Agree
20.	Early marriage syndrome	2.90	Agree	3.22	Agree
21.	School environment	2.51	Agree	2.48	Agree
	Pooled mean	3.03		3.13	

In table II, for urban administrators, all the eight (8) items of the factors that hinders creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State score above the cut-off score of 2.50 and were accepted as the factors that hinders creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State. For urban and rural administrators, item one (1), 'high incidence of poverty' scores 3.80 and 3.90 respectively. For item twenty-one (21), 'school environment' the urban administrators score 2.51, just slightly above the cut-off score of 2.50 and of course was accepted as a hindrance while the rural administrators scored 2.48 which is below the cut-off score of 2.50 and was rejected as a factor that hinders creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State. The

pooled mean of 3.03 and 3.13 for both urban and rural administrators shows that these factors really hinder the creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Hypothesis I:

Ho I: There is no significance difference between the mean scores of urban and rural head teachers on the benefit of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Table III: Z-test analysis on the mean scores of urban and rural administrators on benefits of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
Urban	150	3.43	0.72	548	1.65	1.96	Accepted
Rural	400	3.37	0.82				

Z -cal< Z-cri = Accepted

In table III: Z- calculated value of 1.65 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the Z-critical value of 1.96 which means the null hypothesis is uphold. It therefore means that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of urban and urban primary school administrators on the benefits of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Hypothesis II:

Ho II: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural head teachers on the factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Table IV: Z-test analysis on the mean scores of urban and rural administrators on factors hindering creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
Urban	150	3.03	0.68	548	1.72	1.96	Accepted
Rural	400	3.13	0.81				

Z-cal< Z-cri =accept

In table IV: Z-calculated value of 1.72 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the Z-critical value of 1.96 which means that the hypothesis is uphold.It therefore means that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of urban and rural primary school administrators on benefits of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia State.

Discussion of Results

In the findings of research question one on the benefit of creativity in the education of a girl-child in Abia state, it was found out that all the items score above the cut-off scores of 2.50 and were accepted as the benefits of creativity in girl-child education. Things like helping in maintaining healthy population, helped a woman to be a good home manager, help her to create an enabling environment for training her children, contribute financially to family up-keep among others. All these are in line with the findings of Ucheagwu (2016) and Uwaezuoke (2016) who landed their voices in their findings that when a girl-child is educated, it will not only contribute to the socio-economic value of the home and society, but the benefit can never be over emphasized. They concluded that when a girl-child that was educated latter become a woman, they are empowered effectively to impact the societal cherished norms, and values to their children because they stayed with their children more than men. They will be good home managers, participate positively in politics and help in maintaining a healthy environment conducive for the training of their child.

The result of the finding in hypothesis I in table III also concord with the above assertion, because the z-calculated of 1.62 at 0.05 level of significant was less than the critical –zof 1.96. it means that the null hypothesis was upheld.This study was also supported by Uwaezuoke (2016), who stated that educated women tend to build bridges rather than walls. They tend to preach peace to the nation because of the devastating effect of conflicts in their families. He went further to say that educating the girl-child of today creates inter-generational education benefits. Children from educated mother will benefit from their mother's wealth of experience as well as the financial benefits that accrue from their mother's financial empowerment.

In the findings of research question II and hypothesis II in table II and IV, it was discovered that 7 out of 8 items on the challenges of creativity in education of girl-child in rural areas were accepted because they scored above the cut-off marks. Also the null hypothesis in table IV was upheld. All these findings were in collaboration with Offorma (2009), who opined that educated girl-child finds it difficult to get a husband in future in her home. Uwaezuoke (2016) also stated that some factors like tradition, high incidence of poverty, socio-cultural belief, family income, early marriage among others are factors that really impede creativity in the education of a girl-child.In a related finding, Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008) also concluded that child labour, poverty, lack of sponsorship, quest for wealth, bereavement, truancy, broken homes and engagement of girl-child as house helps are all factors limiting the education of a girl-child in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Education is a fundamental human right recognized under the universal declaration of human rights and is very important in the exercise of all other human rights.Undoubtedly, educating a girl-child will improve on the lives of our citizens. It will impact positively to the creativeness and sustainable development of the girl-child because of bonding between mothers and child through breast feeding. Give me good and educated mother, and I will give you a creative and great nation. The contribution of educated women will

surely contribute to the all-round development of our nation. Educated women like Dr. (Mrs) NgoziOkonjo-Iweala, Dr. (Mrs) Dora Akunyilietc, have really contributed to the development of our country. Educating a girl-child has undoubtedly found to be a positive determinant of every desired development outcomes from reduction of mortality and fertility to poverty reduction and equitable growth. It invariably helps to break the cycle of poverty in the society.

Recommendation

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should adher strictly to the 2015 EFA declaration on equal education for all.
2. Some cultural beliefs that discriminate girl-child access to formal education should be discourage at the rural level.
3. Sanction should be placed on parents who do not send their girl-child to school.
4. Education should be made compulsory at the primary school level
5. Scholarship should be more to girl-child
6. Orientation be given to parents on the need for girl-child education
7. Government should make school environment conducive
8. Government should also raise the standard of living of people to enable parents given their girl-child equal education opportunity.

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