

PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GIRL-CHILD EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF OKE-OGUN AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that empowerment of the girl-child is a prerequisite to women empowerment and the backbone to national development. The study examined parents' attitude towards empowerment needs of the girl-child among rural households in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo state, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select a total of 112 household heads from Saki West and Iseyin Local Government Areas (LGAs) out of the ten LGAs in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo state. Quantitative data on awareness and parents' attitude to girl-child empowerment were obtained from 112 randomly selected households. Although, more than half (53.6%) of the respondents had a high level of awareness, about 51% had an unfavourable attitude towards empowerment of the girl child. Awareness ($r = 0.374$, $p = 0.000$) was significantly related to parents' attitude. Parents attitude to empowerment of the girl-child should be improved upon through adult literacy programmes and public enlightenment programmes.

Keywords: Girl-child; Empowerment needs; parents' attitude and rural households.

INTRODUCTION

The home is the cradle of civilization for every child. It is their first school of socialisation from birth. As observed by Ezeliora and Ezeokana (2011) the home exerts great influence on the growth and development of the child. Parents are stakeholders in the school community and they play tremendous roles in the child's educational and environmental transformation. Thus, academic, social and physiological problem of the child especially the girl-child can be traced to the home (Okonkwo, 2001). Meador (2010) reposes that "true school reform will always begin with increased parental involvement in their children's education. It has been proven time and time again that parents who invest time and place value on their children's education will have children who are more successful in school". There are always exceptions, but teaching a girl-child to value education brings a positive impact on their education. This was further re-echoed by Sapungan and Sapungan (2014) who were of the opinion that parents' involvement in the girl-child education increases her interest in schooling as well as her performance.

In rural setting, the parents' disposition towards their sons and daughters differ. They prefer to have a son rather than a daughter. In countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan where the dowry system is practiced, girls are seen as an economic burden to be rid of (Avon Global Centre for Women and Justice, 2011). Families struggle to meet dowry demands. However, countries that practice the bride price system, e.g. Nigeria, girls are usually treated as commercial objects and impoverished parents marry off their daughters at young age for huge bride price (ICRW, 2007). The girl-child is seen as a temporary member of the family while the boy-child is considered a permanent member and as such is being educated, as it is considered a sign of pride and prestige to educate the boys.

There are myopic fears that once a girl gets married, she becomes someone's responsibility and loses contact with her parents. According to Alabi, Bahah and Alabi (2014) some cultures in Nigeria believe that the role of a woman is in her husband's kitchen and bearing children. Studies from Northern part of Nigeria showed that parents are still primitive on choosing what is right for their children, despite the civilization in the world some parents still prevent their girl-child from going to school (Duzend Yar'zever, 2013 & Tahir, 2005). Okobia and Ekejiuba (2015) report a similar trend in the south. However, in Nigeria, only in the South East geo-political zone is where there were cases in which more boys than girls drop out of school (Offorma, 2008). The drop-out syndrome is a function of some factors that distract the boys from schools. These factors include: preference for a trade, quest for money, the long process of education and lack of counseling. Girls are considered a risk to educate because they are vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment. Aderinto (1999) reports that the high incidences of unwanted pregnancies resulting in early marriages, which truncate the girl-children's education often, discourage parents (who now see the girls as liabilities) from investing in the girl-child in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The preference of the boy-child by parents is one of the principal forms of discrimination and has far-reaching implications for women and girls. This practice denies the girl-child good health, education, recreation, economic opportunity and the right to choose her partner, violating her rights under

articles 2, 6, 19, 24, 27 and 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Nwabgara *et. al.*, 2012). According to Equality Now (2014) increase school dropout rate, lack of access to resources and opportunities, early marriage, domestic servitude, violence and other forms of discriminations are also effects of male preference to the girl-child with resultant disempowered girl-child and increased intergenerational poverty.

Recent efforts at bridging the boy/girl-child gap include Growing Girls and Women's economic status enhancement poverty reduction towards girls and women enhancement to take ownership of facilities; Women Fund for Economic Empowerment's construction and equipment of women through skill acquisition; and Olusegun Obasanjo Foundation's quality education, gender equality and social and economic empowerment of women and girls (Humbe, 2015). However, there is a dearth of information on the extent of these efforts at influencing the attitudes of parents. More so, while there are abundant literatures on parental attitude to the girl-child education (Okobia and Ekejiuba, 2015; Mamonah and Anwaar, 2013; Aliyu, 2009), little or no study has focused on parental attitude to diverse areas of girl-child empowerment viz: education, social, economic, legal and health. To achieve this, the following specific objectives were set;

1. describe the socio-economic characteristics of rural households in the study area.
2. ascertain the extent of parents awareness of the empowerment needs of the girl-child in the study area
3. determine the attitude of parents towards the girl-child empowerment needs in the study area.
4. examine selected socio-economic characteristics of respondents that significantly influence their attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs.
5. examine the relationship between respondents' awareness and their attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Oke-Ogun, Oyo State, which is situated between Oyo and the present Kwara state. The area comprises ten Local Governments Areas. Agriculture is the major industry in the area, having an annual rainfall ranging between 700-1100mm. There is a limited level of infrastructural and institutional development in the study area. Most farm families reside in the various settlements abounding in the villages and farmers still adopt traditional cultivation methods. Apart from the primary role of providing food, shelter and employment, the area remains an important source of

revenue to Oyo State (Government of Oyo State, 2015).

Multistage sampling procedure was used to select a representative sample from the target population which constituted all rural households in the study area. The first stage was the random selection of twenty percent (20%) i.e. two (Iseyin and Saki West LGAs) of the ten (10) LGAs in Oke-Ogun. This was followed by random selection of two (20%) of the ten (10) wards from each LGA, to give a total of four (4) wards. In the third stage, a random selection of two (2) communities from an average of 10 communities in each of the wards was carried out, resulting in the selection of eight (8) communities for the study. Samples of households were then drawn proportionately to size in each of the selected communities from the two LGAs. This gave a total sample size of 112 households. Questionnaire and interview schedule was used to collect data. and information was obtained through a structured interview schedule. The instrument for data collection was subjected to face validity with the help of an expert in Gender and rural development and experts from the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was determined using a split-half method after a pre-test of the instrument had been carried out. A Cronbach Alpha value of 0.97 confirmed the reliability of the instrument. Data analysis was done using mean, frequencies, percentages, Chi-square and PPMC.

Measurement of variables

The dependent variable of the study is parents' attitude. This was measured on a 5 point Likert-type scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD), with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively assigned for all positive statements and the reverse order for the negative ones. Statements were formed along the five areas of empowerment identified by Ashimolowo (2002). The mean score was computed and used as the benchmark for categorizing respondents into having favourable and unfavourable attitudes.

Respondents' awareness was measured by asking respondents to indicate if they are aware of the various empowerment needs of the girl-child and the extent of their awareness of such needs. This was measured on a 3-point scale of a large extent, to a lesser extent and not at all, with scores of 2, 1 and 0 assigned respectively. A mean score was calculated and used as the benchmark for categorizing respondents into high and low levels of awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics

The result of the descriptive analysis as shown in Table 1 reveals that the mean age of respondents was 44±14.3 years. This is an indication

that household heads in the study area are in the middle age category. The middle age category of the respondents implies respondents' readiness and maturity to provide and cater for their families including the girl-children. It also shows that almost all (96.4%) were males. This shows a predominance of male headed household in the study area. This finding is corroborated by the results of Fadipe, Adenuga and Lawal (2014); Ogunmefun and Achike (2015) who reported a high percentage of male headed household in the rural areas of Nigeria.

Majority (96.4%) of the respondents were married. Since it is an agrarian society, the skewness of marital status towards those that are married could also be towards increasing availability of family labour. This result agrees with that of Fakayode, Falola, Babatunde and Adedoyin (2011) who reported a high percentage of married with a few widowed and divorced headed households in rural communities of Kwara state. On educational qualification, Table 1 shows that more than two-fifth (42.9%) of the respondents had primary education and 20.5% had secondary school certificate with an

average of 5 years of formal education. This implies that respondents have one form of formal education or the other. This finding concurs with that of Adepoju and Obayelu (2013), which reported that farmers in Ondo state had one form of formal education or the other and this may have an influence on their income level.

Table 1 also reveals that the mean household size of respondents is 7 persons. This suggests that respondents in the study area have a large household size. Large household size especially in the rural areas where farming is the main economic activity suggests increased supply of family labour and high dependency burden. This result is consistent with the findings of Adebayo (2009) that most households in the rural areas have large household sizes of between 7 and 10 members per house and this can be linked to the practice of polygamy and the need for family labour in the area. Results on main occupation show that majority (71.4%) of the respondents were into farming, 6.3% in tailoring while 4.4% were into petty trading.

Table 1: Distribution of households' socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Freq (n=112)	Percentage	Mean	Mode
Age (years)				
Less or equal 30	22	19.6	44	40
31-40	35	31.3		
41-50	22	19.6		
51-60	20	17.9		
61-70	10	8.9		
Above 70	3	2.7		
Sex				
Male	108	96.4		Male
Female	4	3.6		
Marital status				
Single	0	0.0		
Married	108	96.4		Married
Widowed	4	3.6		
Divorced	0	0.0		
Educational qualification				
No formal education	38	33.9	5	6
1-6	48	42.9		
7-12	23	20.5		
13-18	3	2.7		
Household size				
1-5	41	36.6	7	6
6-10	62	55.3		
11-15	4	3.6		
Above 15	5	4.5		
Main occupation				
Farming	80	71.4		
Petty trading	5	4.4		Farming
Artisan	2	1.8		
Hired labourer	4	3.5		
Tailoring	7	6.3		
Driving	2	1.8		
Machine operator	1	0.9		
Weaving	1	0.9		

Teaching	3	2.7		
Chemist	3	2.7		
Garri making	1	0.9		
None	3	2.7		
Farm size (acres)				
1-5	66	82.5	4	3
6-10	11	13.7		
11-15	1	1.3		
Above 15	2	2.5		
Income per week (in naira)				
Less than or equal to 1000	79	72.5	1180	1000
1001-2000	12	11.0		
2001-3000	5	4.6		
Above 3000	13	11.9		

Source: Field survey, 2016

This confirms the popular assertion from various studies that rural communities are mostly agrarian in which the major economic activity is agricultural production (Umebau, 2008; Adeola, Adewale and Abideen, 2013).

Table 1 indicates that the average farm size of respondents in the study area was 4acres, indicating that majority of the respondents in the study area have small farm size and by implication are small scale farmers. The implication of this is that food production may remain at a subsistence level and this will therefore limit their income. It also reveals that respondents' had an average income of ₦1180 per week. This shows a low level of income of respondents in the study area. The implication is that most households in the study area may find it difficult to meet the empowerment needs of the girl child. This is in line with the assertion of Alika and Egbochukwu (2009) who reported that low income determines the girl-child's household socio-economic status, which borders on whether or not they can eat adequately; acquire school materials; pay for tuition and opportunity costs in terms of time

spent in school (girl-children assisting in farm work or street hawking).

Extent of household's awareness of the empowerment needs of the girl-child

On educational area of empowerment, results reveal that respondents were most aware of provision of school uniform (\bar{x} = 1.62), purchase of books (\bar{x} = 1.59) while they were least aware of transport to/from school (\bar{x} = 1.35). The reason for respondents' high level of awareness of provision of school uniform and purchase of books may be as a result of the fact that most of the girl-children in the study area attend public schools where school fees are not paid however, provision of uniforms and books are the sole responsibility of the parents. For social empowerment, the study reveals that (Table 2) access to shelter (\bar{x} = 1.54) and respectful treatment of the girl-child (\bar{x} = 1.53) were the empowerment needs of which respondents were most aware. The reason for this result may be perhaps due to the fact that shelter is a physiological need and according to Maslow, this need must be met before other higher needs.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of households based on extent of awareness of the empowerment needs of the girl-child

Areas of empowerment	Extent of awareness			Mean	Grand mean
	Large extent	Less extent	Not at all		
Education;					
Control over school choice	55.4	35.7	8.9	1.46	
Payment of school fees	59.8	36.6	3.6	1.56	
Availability of school uniform	63.4	34.8	1.8	1.62	1.50
Transport to/fro school	50.0	33.9	16.1	1.35	
Purchase of books	61.6	35.7	2.7	1.59	
Availability of qualified teachers.	49.1	37.5	13.4	1.36	
Social ;					
Access to shelter	58.9	36.6	4.5	1.54	
Choice of social association	40.2	38.4	21.4	1.18	
Choice of religious association	51.8	25.9	22.3	1.30	1.35
Access to information	42.0	51.8	6.3	1.36	
Delayed marriage	42.9	33.9	23.2	1.20	
Ability to migrate to seek for better opportunities	50.0	44.6	5.4	1.44	
Decision on who to marry	42.9	35.7	21.4	1.21	
Respectful treatment for the girl-child	58.9	34.8	6.3	1.53	
Legal ;					
Ability to exercise her rights such as equal rights to healthcare, nutritional care	58.0	38.4	3.6	1.54	1.35
Right to decision making at household and community level	38.4	38.4	23.2	1.15	
Equal right to inheritance	54.5	38.4	7.1	1.47	
Equal right to education	62.5	36.6	0.9	1.62	
Right to decide when to marry	48.2	26.6	15.2	1.34	
Right to decide how many children to have	32.1	31.3	36.6	0.95	
Economic ;					
Land ownership	47.3	37.5	15.2	1.32	
Availability of adequate food	58.0	37.5	4.5	1.54	
Credit for farming	39.3	36.6	24.1	1.15	1.35
Income for her labour	41.1	46.4	12.5	1.29	
Involvement in the marketing of farm products	50.9	38.4	10.7	1.40	
Access to improved skills and tools	46.4	43.8	9.8	1.37	
Health ;					
Access to improve medical facilities	46.5	45.5	8.0	1.38	
Protection from sexual abuse	72.3	25.9	1.8	1.71	
Protection from genital mutilation	7.2	8.0	84.8	0.22	1.21
Protection from gender violence	65.1	30.4	4.5	1.61	
Making major decisions in their reproductive issues	41.1	30.3	28.6	1.13	

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results on Table 2 further shows that equal right to education (\bar{x} = 1.62), was the most aware legal dimension of the girl-child empowerment needs. This implies that respondents were aware that the girl-children need education. Education enables the girl-child to develop her mind, intellects and skills to be able to contribute meaningfully to her society. The assertion agrees with that of United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (2005) who clearly identifies girl's education as an urgent development

priority for the entire UN system, where he was reported to have said that:

"If we are to succeed in our efforts to build a healthier, more peaceful and equitable world, classrooms must be full of girls as well as boys. By educating girls, we will help raise economic productivity and reduce both maternal and infant mortality. By educating girls, we will improve nutrition, promote health, and fight HIV/AIDS. By

educating girls, we will trigger a transformation of society as a whole—social, economic and political” Right to decide how many children to have (\bar{x} = 0.95) was the legal factor of which respondents were least aware. Invariably, girl-children in the study area have no say when it comes to their reproductive life.

Respondents were most aware of availability of adequate food (\bar{x} = 1.54) as an economic empowerment need for the girl-children. Adequate food is a physiological need without which one cannot function effectively. Involvement in the marketing of farm products (\bar{x} = 1.40) was the second economic empowerment need respondents were most aware of. Perhaps, this may be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were mostly involved in agricultural production as their main occupation (as seen in Table 1). On the other hand, credits for farming (\bar{x} = 1.15) was the economic empowerment need of the girl-children respondents were least aware of. This finding is in line with that of United Nations Inter-Agency Network on women and gender equality (2012) that observed most rural girls as lacking access to finance, which affects their empowerment.

Results on Table 2 reveals protection from sexual abuse (\bar{x} = 1.71) and gender violence (\bar{x} =1.61) as the modal health empowerment needs within

respondents reason. This implies that the respondents understand that the girl-child is vulnerable and should be protected from all forms of violence. However, protection from genital mutilation (\bar{x} = 0.22) had the least mean. Perhaps their belief is that FGM practice protects the girl-child from sexual abuse. This corroborates the findings of Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (2003), which reported the Southwestern region as having the highest percentage of circumcised women in the country. Using the grand mean on Table 2, the awareness level of the respondents is highest on Education (1st) followed by social, legal and economic, all of which ranked second. Health (5th) is ranked least.

Categorization of households into high and low levels of awareness of the girl-child empowerment needs

Overall, the results of the survey as shown in Table 3 indicates that a little above half (53.6%) of the respondents had a high level of awareness of the girl-child empowerment needs. The implication of this to girl-children empowerment in the study area is that since most respondents are aware of the empowerment needs of the girl-children they may make effort to provide and make available those needs.

Table 3: Categorization of households into high and low levels of awareness of the girl-child empowerment needs.

Level of awareness	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Low	22.0- 41.8	52	46.4	22.0	60.0	41.9	10.8
High	≥ 41.9	60	53.6				

Source: Field survey, 2016

Parental attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs

From the educational dimension of girl-child empowerment, the study (Table 4) reveals that a combined sum (99.9%) strongly agreed and agreed that a good education will help their girl-children to get ahead in life and also, a combined sum (94.6%) strongly agreed and agreed that their girl-children learn important life skills at school. A combined sum (75.9%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that whatever is taught in school can easily be learnt at home or religious centers so there is no need for their girl-children to go to school and a combined sum (58.0%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that

learning programmes in school will not teach their girl-children the practical skills to solve real life problems. This is an indication that while most parents favoured education for their girl, others did not. An uneducated girl-child may likely get married early and therefore may lack the training, information and skills needed to empower and support her transition into adulthood. This assertion is in consonance with the report of UNICEF (2007) which reported education as helping the girl-child to be empowered and resourceful and by extension assist her contribute meaningfully to the development of the family.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of households based on their attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs

Attitudinal statements (n = 112)	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
Education						
A good education will help my girl-child to get ahead in life.	84.8	14.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	4.84
My girl-child learns important life skills at school	47.3	47.3	2.7	1.8	0.9	4.38
Education is an obstacle in the path of income for the family	9.8	12.5	8.0	20.5	49.1	3.87
Whatever is taught in school can easily be learnt at home or religious centers so there is no need for her to go to school	13.4	8.9	1.8	24.1	51.8	3.92
Learning programmes in school will not teach my girl-child the practical skills to solve real life problems	27.7	7.1	7.1	34.8	23.2	3.19
Social						
I believe girl-child is matured enough to choose the religion she wants to belong to	29.5	15.2	5.4	22.3	27.7	2.96
I prefer my child to interact with her peers so that she would not grow up to become a shy girl	48.2	38.4	4.5	7.1	1.8	4.24
The girl-child would grow to be a home maker and hence cannot be allowed to move to a city	17.9	12.5	7.1	34.8	27.7	3.41
Girl-child betrothal is a good way of securing of a good husband and future her	10.7	21.4	6.3	18.8	42.9	3.61
My girl-child needs to be exposed to lots of information which will help her to make good life choices	45.5	42.9	3.6	5.4	2.7	4.23
Legal						
It gives me satisfaction when my girl-child contributes in household decisions	35.7	51.8	2.7	4.5	5.4	4.08
I do not think that a girl-child should make contributions in community matters	25.0	32.1	10.7	14.3	17.9	2.68
Decisions on the number of children to have depends on the men	23.2	29.5	20.5	17.0	9.8	2.61
I will divide my properties amongst all my children including my girl-children	55.4	32.1	4.5	5.4	2.7	4.32
It gives me satisfaction that my girl-child is able to avail the full benefit of schooling	47.3	39.3	3.6	7.1	2.7	4.21
Even if the family is financially distressed, my girl-child would never get married until she is ready for it.	44.6	28.6	5.4	12.5	8.9	3.88
Economic						
It bothers me that my girl-child does not have access to money to invest in her chosen venture	41.1	35.7	6.3	17.0	0.0	4.01
It is against the culture of our land for a girl to own a land	20.5	14.3	5.4	23.2	36.6	3.41
My girl-child is fully involved in marketing farm produce from the family farm	31.3	46.4	13.4	5.4	3.6	3.96
Girl-children should not be made to operate improved tools as it is a boy's work	19.6	28.6	10.7	19.6	21.4	2.95
Health						
It is a good culture for girls to undergo genital mutilation as it will prevent them from being way-ward	42.0	34.8	11.6	1.8	9.8	2.03
Choice of the type of medical facilities should be left with the girls alone	26.8	25.0	13.4	17.0	17.9	3.26
There is no need to wait for the girl-child to be well advanced physically before she starts giving birth	17.9	22.3	10.7	22.3	26.8	3.18
Girls are vulnerable and should be protected from any form of abuse	56.3	39.3	2.7	1.8	0.0	4.50
Early girl-child marriage is not a form of child abuse.	25.9	30.4	12.5	13.4	17.9	2.67

Source: Field survey, 2016

On social, the result reveals that a little more than two-third (62.5%) of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that girl-child betrothal is a good way of securing good husband and future. Also, a combined sum (61.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that the girl-child would grow to be a home maker and hence cannot be allowed to move to a city. This suggests that while two-third of the respondents give liberty to their girl-children to migrate and to marry who they wanted, one-third see the girl-child as one who should be nurtured and trained to be a good home maker and care-giver and thereafter given out in marriage. This finding corroborates that of Duze and Yar'zever (2013) which observed the girl-child as a young female, who would eventually grow into a woman and marry.

The study reveals that on the legal area of empowerment, majority of the respondents (87.5%) strongly agreed and agreed that it gives them satisfaction when their girl-child contributes in household decisions. However, on the community level, a combined sum (57.1%) strongly agreed and agreed that, they do not think that a girl-child should make contributions in community matters and more than one-third, also (34.7%) strongly agreed and agreed that, it is against their culture for a girl to own a land. This shows that resources and privileges that were available to the girl-children at household level were not largely available to her at the community level. The resultant effect of this is that some of the girl-children in the study may have low esteem and economic empowerment.

Table 4 shows that under economic empowerment needs, a combined sum (86.8%) strongly agreed and agreed that it bothered them that their girl-children do not have access to money to invest in their chosen venture and 87.4% that, their girl-children were fully involved in marketing farm produce from the family farm. This is an indication that respondents are enthusiastic about the economic empowerment of their girl-children. Perhaps, this is because if the girl-child is economically empowered, she will contribute to the family's income. A combined sum (48.2%) strongly agreed and agreed to

the fact that girl-children should not be made to operate improved tools as it is a boy's work. This suggests that within the study area, there are culturally defined roles along gender line. This result agrees with Alabiet *al.*, (2014) that some cultures in Nigeria believe that the role of a girl is in her husband's kitchen and bearing children while the boys will become the breadwinners of their families and consequently must be empowered for the task ahead.

On health, the study reveals that a combined sum (76.8%) strongly agreed and agreed that it is a good culture for girls to undergo genital mutilation as it will prevent them from being way-ward. Also, 40.2% strongly agreed and agreed that, there is no need to wait for the girl-child to be well advanced physically before she starts giving birth and 56.3% that early girl-child marriage is not a form of child abuse. This is an indication that FGM and early child marriage incidences may be high and are acceptable practices in the study area. While FGM may have some health implication on the girl-children, early child marriage is known to expose the girl-children to physical and psychological risk. Jamabo (2012) also observe a clear link between Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early child marriages, as communities where FGM is accepted are also more likely to practice early marriages.

Categorization of households into favourable and unfavourable attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs

Table 5 gives an overall picture of the attitude of the respondents to the empowerment needs of the girl-child in the study area. The result reveals that more than half (50.9%) of respondents in the study area had unfavourable attitude to the empowerment needs of the girl-child. This implies that respondents generally had an unfavourable attitude to the girl-child empowerment. This is in line with the findings of Aderinto (1999) who reported parents asseeing their daughters as liabilities due to incidences of early pregnancy and child marriage.

Table 5: Categorization of households into favourable and unfavourable attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs.

	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Unfavourable	73.0- 90.3	57	50.9	73.0	110.0	90.4	8.3
Favourable	≥ 90.4	55	49.1				

Source: Field survey, 2016

Relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics, awareness and parental attitude

The study (Table 6) reveals that education had no significant relationship with parental attitude ($\chi^2 = 4.072$ p > 0.05). Invariably, education do not automatically inform favourable attitude of

parents to the girl-child empowerment needs in the study area.

The study (Table 7) however reveals that a significant relationship exists between respondents' awareness (r = 0.374, p=0.000) and their attitude to the girl-child empowerment needs. This is an indication that formal education was not instrumental to change of

disposition, more so that awareness is high, in spite of their low level of formal education. It therefore suggests that information about girl-child empowerment did not come from such sources that require some levels of formal education to access. The fact that educational level was generally low might also be responsible for this. Respondents'

possibly were aware through nominal sources such as, radio, friends, family relatives, interventions, infiltration of western culture. This finding negates that of Alika and Egbochukwu (2009) as well as Randell and Gergel (2009) that girl-child enrolment, retention and completion can be affected by parent's educational level.

Table 6: Table showing the Chi-sq analysis of the relationship between selected socio-economic variable and parental attitude

Variable	χ^2	Df	P	Contingency coefficient	Decision
Sex	0.110	1	0.740	0.031	NS
Education	4.072	3	0.254	0.187	NS

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 7: Table showing PPMC analysis of the relationship between age of respondents, awareness and their attitude

Variables	R	P	Decision
Age	0.082	0.388	NS
Awareness	0.374**	0.000	S

Source: Field survey, 2016

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall level of awareness in the study area on the importance of girl-child education as an empowerment tool was found to be high. This implies that areas of empowerment not popular among respondents were not within their understanding domain maybe as result of information on such area not adequate. This may be responsible for high prevalence of FGM and early marriage in the study area. Respondents had low education, but high awareness level is an indication that not formal education, but access to other nominal information sources was instrumental to influencing their awareness of the various empowerment needs of the girl-child. The fact that awareness, and not formal education significantly influenced respondents' attitude is a further confirmation of this position. It is therefore recommended that public enlightenment programmes should be organized not only through the media but also personal contact and should be targeted at increasing awareness and attitudinal change. School curriculum should include sex education as an integral part of the education of the girl-child. It should not be simply to transmit knowledge, but should be a catalyst for changing attitudes that underlie discrimination against the girl-child. Religious leaders should be effectively involved in propagating the message of equality of gender, since religion and tradition is a factor that is important in attitude formation.

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