

## Household characteristics and investment in girl child education

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### **Abstract**

*The research was carried out to ascertain how different household characteristics like marital status of parents, parents age, economic background, religion, type of family, occupation among others can affect investments in girl-child education. The design for the study was the descriptive survey research design. Four research objectives and a research hypothesis guided the study. The study population included all the parents of pupils in public primary schools in Delta Central senatorial district of Delta State which is about 1.2 million parents. 1,116 parents were sampled from six selected local Government Areas in Delta central senatorial district representing about 10% of the population. A 4-sectioned self-structured questionnaire titled: Household Characteristics and Investment in Girl Child Education Questionnaire (HC1GCEQ) was designed by the researchers for the study. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. A mean score of 2.50 and above indicated an effect on girl child education while, a mean score less than 2.50 indicated no effect on girl child education. The research hypothesis was answered using Pearson product moment correlation statistic. The study revealed that Household characteristics affected girl child education in terms of type of school the girl child will attend, it affected the payment of extra levies, and it affected books and other supplies for the girl child. The recommendations based on the findings include continuous sensitization by government, workers, voluntary groups and organizations and child right and or girl child activists on the importance of girl child education especially among the rural areas and also financially empowering parents through gainful employment.*

**Key words:** 1. Household 2. Characteristics 3. Investment 4. Girl 5. Child 6. Education

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### **Introduction**

In English law, a person below the age of 14 is a child. The Webster dictionary (1990) defines a child as a young person especially between infancy and youth. Obinaju (2000) stated that several limitations are specified which consider an individual below the age of 18 a child in Nigeria. Article 1 of the convention on the right of the child 1989 states that a person below 18 is a child. Specifically, the law of the country determines a child and usually the legally specified age of the country defines the limits of the child. A girl child therefore, is a female child.

Education according to Akpan (2000) is not different from life and society. It is the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community. Education is the process by which persons intentionally guide the development of a person. It is the deliberate effort to accelerate the pace of development and general improvement of the human race.

Childhood education according to Okon (2004) is education and training given to the child from the moment of birth to the period of adolescence. Edwin (2000) reiterated by way of definition that, educational opportunities are the available chances created by the parents and government of any country for its children to be educated. Section 18 of the 1978 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Educational objectives stated that: "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities for all.

In recent years a number of studies have tended to look at gender disparity, as it affects educational activities, individual behaviors, roles, functions at home, school and society in general. These have no doubt left serious question marks on the extent to which gender parity in education as a primary objective of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for all the Dakar Framework for Action as well as the UN Millennium Development Goals endorsed in 2000 and the now sustainable development goals have been able to achieve gender parity. Considering the importance of girl-child education in a developing country like Nigeria, it becomes imperative to examine the extent to which Household characteristics affect investment in girl-child education.

### **Household Characteristics**

Ezewu (1983) pointed out the fact that individuals as well as families in society are differentiated and that the determining factors of such differentiation are the educational level, occupation and income of the family. He further reiterated the fact that, the status of a family affects its attitudes and values in life.

In the same vein, Uweru and Monye in Peretomode (2001) pointed out that a characteristic common to almost all societies is the way in which they may be partitioned into layers or strata and it does not take us long to discover that as we grow up in society people are not all treated alike money, prestige, privilege and all the things which seem most desirable are shared out very unequally. These can be termed as household characteristics and can according to Akpotu (2013) affect the education of a child in many ways such as early attendance at school, provision of a good model of English language, development of interest in school activities, provision of books and other educational materials among others.

### **The Girl- Child**

Girl child education is a process of educating the female gender in order to make them efficient and effective members of the society at home in their daily life duties and responsibilities (Ilio, Lawal, Ezekiel and Loko, 2014).

Gender according to Madumere – Obike and Nwabueze (2016) can be seen as "a social concept describing men and women (boys and girls) in a given society as well as public and private lives". Woolfolk (2007) stated that gender has to do with traits and behaviors that a particular culture affirms appropriate for female and males. In the same vein, Richard (2016) affirmed that certain disciplines/tasks are meant for certain sex and vice versa.

The girl-child education has right from historical times been discriminated against for instance, the saying that the place of the woman is in the kitchen. So, most times it is believed that girls and women are made to take care of the household chores and also serve

as tools for reproduction. There is therefore disparity in the educational opportunities of the Nigerian child and the girl-child in particular. This kind of disparity in education is further compounded by household characteristics/socio-economic status that is prevalent in our nation today.

Itedjere (2005) expresses how studies from history of education have shown how girls were not given the same education as their boy's counterpart in the ancient cities of Athens and Sparta.

With a view to making sure girls had full and equal access to an achievement in good quality basic Education (Goals) entitled Gender and Education for all the leap to equality, the international community in Dakar, committed itself to eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education in 2005, (EFA Global Monitoring Report (2004).

### **Problems of Investing in Girl Child Education**

The main aim or objective of the 1990 world declaration on Education for all, the Dakar Framework for Action and the UN Millennium Development goal in 2000 is that of achieving gender parity in Education. This has still not been achieved since according to Lifanda (2007) the female/girls make up 60 percent of all out-of-school children and 76 percent of girl's complete primary school compared to the boys who have 76 percent. Calliods and Poisson (2005) reiterated the fact that poor children are less likely to have access to school and are more likely to start school late and also become drop-outs at different levels of their academics. Hermes (2005) has also stated that "to achieve Education for All, three things are needed. Children must be brought to school, they should be taken care of at school and they must be followed up after school". Hermes (2005) noted the fact that some children from very poor homes cannot go to school because they have to assist by fending for their family, instead of going to school until when things get better or when family incomes are better, such children stop working and are sent to school. As such, for children to go to school, there has to be a reduction in poverty.

Rodriguez (2019) study revealed that certain factors that affect girl-child education include the following:

- Cost
- Child marriage
- Menstruation
- Household chores
- Gender based violence
- Conflict & crises
- Trafficking

Rodriguez (2019) further stated that there are 130 million girls who are not currently enrolled in school and investing in their education would have the potential of uplifting their families and the world. She further stated that when girls have access to quality education, they are able to experience the benefits in all aspects of their lives, are less likely to experience intimate partner violence, make higher income, have healthier children, report higher levels of psychological well-being, fight climate change, promote peace and economic growth. All these are in line with Atakpo (2020<sup>a</sup>) study which has re-emphasized the importance of an early start for children (both boys and girls) and developmental experiences as a tool for combating future security challenges. It also, affirms Atakpo (2020<sup>b</sup>) study that primary school health services serve as a sustainable solution to both national and global pandemics through the use of health education to teach the children to improve their own health and protect others health in the community.

All these can be achieved by first investing in resources and policies that encourage the girl child education.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to:

- examine the different household characteristics that affect investments in girl-child education in Delta State, Nigeria
- examine the extent to which these household characteristics affects investment in girl- child education in Delta State, Nigeria
- examine the yearly expenditure on girl-child education in Delta State, Nigeria
- examine the sources of financial support for girl- child education in Delta State, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- What household characteristics affect girl child education in Delta State Nigeria?

- To what extent do these household characteristics affect girl child education in Delta State Nigeria?
- What are the yearly expenditure on the girl child education in Delta State Nigeria?
- What are the sources of your financial support for the girl-child education in Delta State Nigeria?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was tested in the study:

1. Household characteristics does not affect investment in girl-child education in Delta State Nigeria

### **Method**

#### ***Sample and participant selection***

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design because it involved the collection of information for ascertaining household characteristics and their effect on investment in girl –child education.

The population of the study was made up of all the parents of pupils in public primary schools in Delta Central senatorial district of Delta State which comprised 1.2million parents. 1,116 parents were sampled from six selected local Government Areas in Delta central senatorial district of Delta State representing, about 10% of the population.

#### ***Assessment and measures***

A 4 sectioned self-structured questionnaire titled: Household Characteristics and Investment in Girl Child Education Questionnaire (HC1GCEQ) was designed by the researchers for the study. The administration of the research instrument was carried out by the researchers and two trained assistants who visited the selected schools on agreed dates after soliciting the assistance and support of the different school heads. The questionnaire was then distributed to the children who were to take it home for their parents to fill and return on the following day. A total of 1,116of the 1,200 distributed questionnaire were retrieved.

The data collected were collated and analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). This was used to compute frequency counts, percentages, mean standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation.

#### ***Ethical consideration***

The respondents were adequately briefed on the nature and purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

### **Presentation of Results**

**Research Question 1: What household characteristics positively affect investments in girl- child education in Delta State, Nigeria?**

**Table 1. Household Characteristics**

	ITEMS	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Both parents are married.	1116	2.92	1.05	Agreed
2	Single parenting.	1116	3.01	0.99	Agreed
3	Widower/widow parents.	1116	3.08	1.06	Agreed
4	Religion of parent.	1116	3.31	0.82	Agreed
5	Urban settlement	1116	2.92	1.00	Agreed
6	Rural settlement	1116	2.26	0.66	Disagree
7	Age of parent	1116	2.04	0.83	Disagree
8	Parents that are not highly educated	1116	2.10	0.74	Disagree
9	Parents that are highly educated	1116	3.15	0.88	Agreed
10	Skilled worker parents	1116	2.89	0.93	Agreed
11	Unskilled worker parents	1116	2.14	1.03	Disagree
12	Size of family	1116	2.19	1.12	Disagree
13	Family with so many girls	1116	2.42	1.10	Disagree
14	Family with so many younger children	1116	2.50	1.00	Agree
15	Health of parents	1116	2.94	1.10	Agree
	Grand Mean	1116	2.65	1.00	

**Bench mark= 2.50**

Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed to items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14 and 15) and disagreed on items(6, 7, 8, 11, 12, and13). The items the respondent disagreed on are: rural settlement, age of parents, parents that are not highly educated, unskilled worker parent, size of family and family with so many girls. All these items had means less than 2.50 ( $\bar{x} < 2.50$ ). These household characteristics therefore, do not positively affect investments in girl-child education.

**Research Question 2. To what extent do these characteristics affect girl child education in Delta State, Nigeria?**

**Table 2. Effect of household characteristics on investment in girl-child educations**

S/N	ITEMS	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	School type (public/private).	1116	3.21	.87	Agree
2	Number of children that will go to school.	1116	2.83	1.04	Agree
3	Determines whether the girl will preferably go to school.	1116	2.83	1.06	Agree
4	Determines various expenditures that will be spent on the girl- child.	1116	2.50	1.10	Agree
	Grand Mean	1116	2.83	1.02	

Bench mark= 2.50

Table 2 shows that all the 4 items had mean scores of 2.50 and above ( $\bar{x} \geq 2.50$ ). Effects of household characteristics on investment in girl-child education are the type of school the girl child will attend (public/private), the number of children that can go to school, whether the girl-child will go to school, determine the various expenditure that will be spent on the girl-child.

**Research Question 3. What are the yearly expenditures on the girl-child education in Delta State, Nigeria?**

**Tuition,**

**Table 3. Yearly expenditures on the girl- child education**

S/N	ITEMS	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Tuition	1116	2.87	1.06	Agree
2	Purchase of additional forms	1116	1.99	1.08	Disagree
3	Development levies	1116	3.04	0.93	Agree
4	P.T.A (Parents Teachers Association) levies	1116	3.06	1.05	Agree
5	Examination fees	1116	3.14	0.87	Agree
6	Acceptance fees	1116	2.07	1.07	Agree
7	Boarding fees	1116	2.13	0.69	Disagree
8	Uniform and clothing	1116	2.61	1.23	Agree
9	Books and supply	1116	2.61	0.98	Agree
10	Transportation	1116	2.53	1.07	Agree
11	Sanitary pads	1116	2.01	0.83	Disagree
	Grand mean	1116	2.55	1.00	

Bench mark = 2.50

Table 3 shows that respondents agreed to items 1,3,4,5,6,8,9 and 10 with mean scores more than 2.50 ( $\bar{x} > 2.50$ ) and disagreed to items 2,7 and 11 with mean scores less than 2.50 ( $\bar{x} < 2.50$ ).

Tuition, development levies, P.T.A levies, examination fees, uniforms and clothings, books and supplies and transportation constituted some of the yearly expenditure on the girl- child.

**Research Question 4. What is the source of your financial support for the girl- child education in Delta State, Nigeria?**

**Table 4. Source of financial support for the girl-child education**

S/N	ITEMS	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	We parents	1116	2.76	1.14	Agreed
2	Child support herself	1116	3.06	1.04	Agreed
3	Extended family	1116	2.50	0.85	Agreed
4	Child is on scholarship	1116	2.12	0.77	Disagree
5	Loans and borrowing	1116	2.91	1.13	Agreed
6	Gifts from non-family members	1116	2.14	0.87	Disagreed
	Grand Total	1116	2.57	0.97	

**bench mark= 2.50**

Table 4 shows that the respondents disagreed to items 4 and 6 with mean scores less than 2.50 ( $\bar{x} < 2.50$ ) and agreed to items 1,2,3 and 5 with mean scores greater than 2.50 ( $\bar{x} > 2.50$ ) indicating that the sources of financial support for the girl- child education are the parents, child supporting herself, extended family and loans and borrowing.

1. **Hypothesis 1.** Household characteristics does not affect investment in girl-child education in Delta State Nigeria

**Table 5. Pearson correlation on household characteristics effects on investments in girl- child education.**

Descriptive Statistics			
	$\bar{x}$	SD	N
Household Charact.	39.8172	6.42589	1116
Effects	11.3118	2.62337	1116

**Correlations**

		Household Characterist	Effects
Household Character.	Pearson Correlation	1	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1116	1116
Effects	Pearson Correlation	.616**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1116	1116

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents a Pearson product coefficient r of .616\*\*. There is a significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that household characteristics, have significant effect on investment of girl-child education.

## Discussion of Findings

Rural settlement, age of parents, parents that are not highly educated, unskilled worker parents, size of family and family with so many girls have been identified as some of the household characteristics that affects the education of the girl-child to a great extent in Delta State, Nigeria. This agrees with Rodriguez (2019) study where, she listed cost, child marriage, menstruation, household chores, gender-based violence, conflict and crises and trafficking as some of the factors that affected the education of the girl-child. The study showed that in Tanzania, almost 1 in 4 girls experienced sexual violence on their way to school or farm. Parents are therefore, less likely to allow their daughters go to school if they have to travel very far. Research has also shown that, 72% of primary school-aged girls do not attend school in conflict and crisis affected areas like in South Sudan. Similarly, in Afghanistan, 70% of the 3.5 million out-of-school children are girls. In Nigeria, menstruating women are banished to huts. In Burkina Faso, Yemen and Somalia, girls between 10-14 spend most part of the day on household chores averaging, 26 hours every week.

The world bank (2022) has stated that girls face barriers to education on a daily basis. UNESCO estimates, around the world shows that 129 million girls are out of school, including 32 million of primary school age and that globally, primary and secondary school enrollment rates are getting closer to equal for girls and boys (90% male, 89% female).

The world bank (2022) has also figured the following: gender bias, poverty, violence, children marriage and Covid 19 as some of the barriers to girl-child education.

Tuition, development levies, P.T.A levies, examination fees, uniforms and clothing's, books and supplies and transportation constituted some of the yearly expenditure on the girl-child education in Delta State, Nigeria. This is in line with Federation of American Women's Club (2017) who, following decades of research came up with how to invest money and resources to make it count most by considering these seven areas;

- Making schools affordable
- Helping girls overcome health barriers
- Reducing the time and distance to get to school.
- Making schools more girl friendly
- Improving school quality
- Increasing community engagement and

Sustaining girls' education during emergencies

The government therefore should try to make schools affordable in Delta state by making sure the children are not made to pay too many levies and also try to improve the quality of the schools by reroofing and rebuilding dilapidated schools. Children's health is also promoted by maintaining a wholesome in relation to lighting, ventilation and seating arrangement (Atakpo, 2019).

The Global partnership for Education (2021) also, gave three key lessons donors and government should keep in mind when thinking about what interventions to invest in to keep girls in-school:

Interventions that reduce the cost of education are particularly effective at increasing girls enrollment; changing girls' and parents' perceptions about the benefits of education like Atakpo (2020a) study has revealed that a functional early childhood education program is capable of inculcating in the child developmental experiences which will help the child later on in life

and improving aspirations can lead to greater investments in education and the study showed that parents invested more in their school-age girls when presented with clear evidence of future job opportunities as affirmed in Ajayi (2018) by sending them to school longer and feeding them more.

Federation of American Women's Club (2017) following decades of research came up with a top 10 list of reasons to invest in Girls' education. Education increases Economic growth.

- Leads to better ways and jobs for women
- Saves the lives of children and their mothers



- Leads smaller and more sustainable families
- Results in healthier and better educated children
- Reduces the rates of HIV/AIDS and Malaria.
- Reduces rates of child marriage
- Empowers women
- Increases women's political leadership.
- Reduces harm to families from natural disasters and climate change.

### Conclusion

The study revealed that Household characteristics affected girl-child education in Delta State, Nigeria in terms of type of school the girl-child will attend, it affected the payment of extra levies, and it affected books and other supplies for the girl-child. Global Goal 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, especially girls and women by 2030. There is the need therefore, for steps to be taking that will help to improve the situation.

### Recommendations

The recommendations based on the findings include;

- Continuous sensitization by government, workers, voluntary groups and organizations and child right and or girl-child activists on the importance of girl child education especially among the rural areas.
- Financial empowerment of parents through gainful employment among others

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