

**PARENTAL SUPPORT AND SOCIO-CULTURAL BELIEF AS  
PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL ENROLMENT OF UPPER BASIC  
STUDENTS IN NSUKKA URBAN AREA OF  
ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the extent to which parental support and socio-cultural belief predict school enrolment of upper basic students in Nsukka urban area of Enugu State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The design was correlation survey. The population was 8,349 (3972 males and 4377 females) in upper basic class II in public schools in Nsukka urban. The instruments used for the study were two- Parental Support and Socio-cultural Belief Questionnaire (PSSCBQ) and School Enrolment Record Observation Format (SEROT) and were validated by two experts in educational psychology and one Psychometrician. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Method. The Parental Support and Socio-cultural Belief Questionnaire (PSSCBQ) has two clusters of ten (10) items each. Findings indicated that parental support and socio-cultural belief of parents significantly predict school enrolment of upper basic students. A major educational implication of the finding is that lack of adequate parental support and stereotypic beliefs hamper school enrolment and ultimately increase attrition. It was recommended that more emphasis should be given to parental support awareness and conscious effort should be made to eliminate all forms of harmful traditional and socio-cultural practices that discourage full enrolment of students in schools.*

**Keywords:** Parental Support, Socio-Cultural Beliefs, School Enrolment

**Introduction**

Education is the best legacy any nation can bequeath to her citizens. The development of any nation depends largely on the quality of education of such a nation. Education according to World Bank (2008) is the premise of progress in every individual, family, or society; hence, it is a treasure that must be cherished by all. This is because, education makes man a right thinker, it tells him how to think and

make decisions. It is only education that makes it possible for man to receive information from outside his world, acquaint himself with the past, and collect all necessary information regarding the present. Thus, the place of education in the development of human mind and that of any nation can never be over emphasized. It is in recognition of these great potentials of education in managing socio-economic problems that makes educational policy makers in Nigeria to give immense regards for education as reflected in the revised National Policy on Education (NPE), FRN (2004) that "No nation can rise above the quality of its education" Generally, it is believed that the basis of any true development must commence with the development of human resources. Access to education especially by women is considered a significant indicator for the progress of a society and sustainable development. The extent of female enrolment is ultimately determined by the level of parental support offered by the parents. According to Shalocks (2010), parental support is the technique or the personal support that changes family functioning in a family headed by a parent or guardian who has the ability. Such supports according to the author could include among others good parenting in the home, including the provision of secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, good models of constructive social and educational stimulations, relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship, contact with schools to share information, participation in school events.

In the view of Beisky (2013) opined that parenting is the regulation of behaviour and development of the children with the intention that they can leave a socially desirable life, adapt to their environment. For children to adapt to their environment they must imbibe the socio-cultural beliefs in their social environment.

Socio-cultural factors such as gender stereotype and discrimination also contribute to the level of school enrolment of the girls. Socio-cultural factors can be described as forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Such factors involve attitudes, child rearing practices, cultural identity, ethnic identity, widowhood practices, farming structure, religious beliefs, religious practices, rituals, taboos, ethnic values, patriarchal practices, discrimination, and others. Most rural communities in Nigeria have one or two socio-cultural values that constitute serious negative consequence to female child school enrolment. Consequently, girl-child education has become a major issue of concern in most developing countries of the world today, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where a large number of young girls do not attend school. According to UNICEF (2007) the global figure for out-of-school children is estimated to be 121 million, out of which 65 million (approximately 53.8%) were girls and over 80 percent of these girls live in sub-Saharan Africa. It is equally alarming to state that women account for almost two-thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate adults and there has been no change in reducing this share since 1990 (UNESCO, 2014). According to Abari and Oshun (2010) the phenomenon of a girl enrolling in school and dropping out before the set time for completing her course of study is attributable to a number of factors. At the secondary school level, girls drop out due to such factors as early and unwanted pregnancy, early marriage, sexual harassment by male teachers, lack of

encouragement by teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider society, inability of parents to provide learning materials, absence of a role model, tiredness when the child has been over-laboured, being forced to look after sick relations or siblings and having to walk long distance from home to school. This view is in consonance with that of Obanya (2004) who postulates that environmental hazards such as early marriage, unwanted pregnancies, gender insensitive education environment, teaching methods among others are responsible for drop-out among adolescent girls. UNICEF (2004) reports that the rate of female attrition is very high and the increasing number of drop-out has also complicated the problem associated with rising single parent families. Parental support has been identified as one of the critical factors that contribute significantly to the rate of enrolment of the girl child.

Parental support is one of the strongest predictors of child educational outcomes. This dimension associated significantly with children's motivation to learn, attention, task persistence, receptive vocabulary skills, and low conduct problems. Parental support in education has been identified as a beneficial factor in young children's learning (National Research Council [NRC], 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Mainly, family has responsibility to socialize children to make them productive members of society. The more the parents support their children's education, the more the children might excel in their academic career and become the productive and responsible members of society. According to Desimone (1999) and Van der Warf, Creamers and Guldemont (2001), parental support is not only necessary but it is also one of the most cost-effective means of improving quality in education. Higher levels of parent involvement in their children's educational experiences at home (e.g., supervision and monitoring, daily conversations about school) have been associated with children's higher achievement scores in reading and writing, as well as higher report card grades (Epstein, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Keith et al., 1998). Parental attitude and support has a great deal of influence on girls' participation and level of success attained in education. Parents and community attitudes are mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of women and girls in society. Traditionally, the only roles available to women were those of wives and mothers. Women were thus seen as nurturers and mainly as providing support for men who worked to provide for the family. Being physically weaker, women were therefore also perceived as being less capable and requiring the protection and guidance of men. These attitudes have prevailed even in current times when socio-economic changes have resulted in changes to roles women are now expected to undertake. Socio-economic changes have made education necessary, not just for the purposes of providing income earning opportunities, but also for the potential to contribute to the improvement in the standards of living of individuals, families, and communities. The attitude of the parents signifies that the supporting nature of family in their children's education. The parental attitude can be negative or positive. The negative attitude of the parents regarding education and schooling can prevent their children from getting education. Positive attitude of the parents can be beneficial to their children in many cases and can be reflected in improvement in class performance, creating interest among

children to learn, and higher achievement scores in reading and writing (Parker et al., 1997).

Parents may have poor knowledge of the benefits of educating their daughters. According to King (1991) parents who are not aware of the benefit of education are intergenerational, and in fact accumulate over time. Or families may not appreciate the benefits of education. These cultural considerations vary widely among and within countries and it differ in parental education level and hence affect females' school enrolment. Parental education and socio-cultural factors may also cause families to differ in the priority they place on schooling children and their perceptions of the appropriateness of child labour (World Bank 2004).

There are ways in which families play their own unique and significant roles in increasing the level of drop out among children and adolescents. In the view of Ngwoke (2010) the pattern of child rearing and socialization in Nigeria seem to allow young adolescent boys more privileges than the adolescent girls. While boys and girls face sexual pressure, boys' sexuality is affirmed while girls' sexuality is denied. Ngwoke (2010) remarked that both boys and girls may have to work but while boys are expected to work outside the home, the girls are expected to work inside the home thereby restricting their experiences. Similarly, King (2000) reported that Nigerians tend to favour male dominance over feminine gender, leading to gender stereotype. The society imposes gender roles and conditions- males to play and act within the confines of intellectuality and physically more challenging tasks like construction, moulding, football, palm wine tapping and climbing while females on the other hand, are restricted to the kitchen and related domestic chores, including child rearing.

In some families, investing in girls' education is regarded as investing for the benefit of the family she will eventually marry into, unlike in the case of boys. Baldscini (1996) reported that families have different educational demands for their sons and daughters after puberty; they tend to differentiate them in the sense to promote the autonomy of the males and the dependency of the females. This argument holds in particular for higher education which involves greater expenditure and is seen to be less necessary for females whose main role will be home keeping and child raising (Hodges, 2001).

In Nigeria, there is a distinctive mix of ethnic and tribal groups that plays critical role in defining gender roles and the patterns of family and individual lives. These tribal customs regard women as objects of male ownership whose purity must be cautiously guarded. Rural women are confined to family compounds and local villages. Segregation of sexes is one of the tools used to reinforce male domination and the marginalization of women. For instance, in Nigeria, at the secondary school level, evidences indicate that the enrolment of male students in the West African School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) for three consecutive years outnumber those of the females in most of the science and technology-based subjects, with the widest gap being in Auto Mechanic across the three years. It is only in Health Sciences that marginal differences are observed in favour of the females in the three years under consideration (WAEC, 2009, 2010, 2011). In Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, males outnumber the females in Science and Technology as their

enrolment is 81% and 60% respectively in these programmes (Egunjobi, 2008). According to Federal Ministry of Education (2005) in the 1999-2000 session, there were zero enrolments for females in technical courses such as mechanical engineering, plumbing, fabrication and welding in Nigerian universities, while females constituted only 27% of those in science programmes in the universities.

#### Statement of the Problem

Education is considered to be a basic human right and a basic need for all. This is because of the crucial role it plays in the human development. Girl-child education is recognized as one of the critical pathways to promote social and economic development. In spite of the fact that the girl child school enrolment has improved significantly since the past few decades in South Eastern Nigeria, girls of school age still engage in hawking and housekeeping in Nsukka Urban Area of Enugu state. The level of parental support and the socio-cultural belief of some parents seem not to be giving full support to female school enrolment.. In order to achieve the Sustainable Education Goals (SEGs), there ought to be a conscious effort to make sure that no child of school age is out of school. Based on the foregoing, it is in the interest of this study to examine the relationship between parental support, socio-cultural belief, and school enrolment of student of upper basic in Nsukka urban area of Enugu State.

#### Research Question

What is the relationship between parental support & socio-cultural beliefs and school enrolment?

#### Hypothesis

Parental support and socio-cultural beliefs has no significant relationship with school enrolment

#### Method

The study employed correlation survey research design. A correlational design is used to determine whether a relationship exists between two or more variables (Morell & James 2015). The study sought to find out whether parental support and socio-cultural belief relate to school enrolment in upper basic in Nsukka urban area of Enugu State. Students in Junior Secondary school Class I (JSSI) were used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all the JSS1 students in public secondary schools in Nsukka local government area numbering 8349(3972 males 4377 females). The sample size for the study consisted 835(389 males and 466 females) junior secondary class one students which were drawn from public secondary schools in Nsukka local government area. This number was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique to ensure that at least two co-educational schools were drawn from each of the development centres in the local government. Two instruments were used in this study Parental Support and Socio-cultural Belief Questionnaire (PSSCBQ) and School Enrolment Record Observation Format (SEROT) and were validated by two experts in educational psychology and

one Psychometrician. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alfa Method. The Parental Support and Socio-cultural Belief Questionnaire (PSSCBQ) has two clusters of ten (10) items each. The first cluster investigated the level of parental support. The second cluster investigated the socio- cultural beliefs which the students imbibed from their parents. The School Enrolment Record Observation Format (SEROT) was a proforma used in ascertaining the rate of enrolment in Upper Basic using available school records and school attendance registers. Data were presented using Pearson’s r.2 (co-efficient of determination), and multiple regression. The transformed t-value was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Relationship between parental support and socio-cultural beliefs and school enrolment of students in upper basic

R	R-Squared	Adjusted R-squared
.900	.810	.809

Data in table 1 indicate a positive relationship between parental support & socio-cultural and school enrolment of upper basic students. This was shown by the calculated r of 0.90. The calculated r<sup>2</sup> of 0.81 also indicated that 81% of the variance observed in the upper basic students school enrolment was accounted for by the support of their parents. This further indicated that parental support and socio-cultural beliefs to a high extent predicts upper basic students’ school enrolment.

**Table 2:** Summary of Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the relationship between parental support & socio-cultural belief and school enrolment of upper basic students.

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Between groups	3.686	1	3.686	40.005	.000
Within groups	74.012	834	.92		
Total	78.598	835			

Data in Table 2 show that the probability associated with the calculated value of F (40.005) for the relationship between parental support & socio-cultural belief and school enrolment of upper basic students is 0.000. Since the probability value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that parental support and socio-cultural beliefs do not significantly predict school enrolment of upper basic students is rejected.

**Discussion of findings**

Results indicate a positive relationship between parental support, socio-cultural and school enrolment of upper basic students. The result also indicated that 81% of the variance observed in the upper basic students school enrolment was

accounted for by the support of their parents. This further indicated that parental support and socio-cultural beliefs to a high extent predicts upper basic students' school enrolment. The result of this study agrees with the study carried out by Sabry (2006) who reported positive and significant correlation among adolescents' perception of parent involvement and academic achievement. This translates to the fact that parents occupy a critical position in what their children become in life. School enrolment is determined by the belief and attitude of parents towards schooling. The findings of this study is also in tandem with the findings of McNeal(2001) who reported that parental support was generally a salient factor in explaining students attitude, behaviour and cognitive outcome. This means that any behaviour that is exhibited by a student is dependent upon the parental care or support given to the individual.

### **Conclusion**

Enrolment of the girl child into urban and rural public Junior Secondary Schools in South East Nigeria seems not a problem. The challenge that is being faced is retention of the girls in school so they can graduate. Therefore more needs to be done to ensure that the girl child's right to education is achieved with more vigour more so that the overriding objective of having an egalitarian society with political stability, technological advancement and economic self-sufficiency can be accomplished largely through the socializing influence of education on the girl child. It has been identified that parents have a significant role to play in children's retention in schools. This can be done through sufficient parental support. Socio-cultural factors also play a huge role in contributing to low enrolment of student mostly on the grounds of unfounded socio-cultural beliefs which affect mostly women. Also, security, peaceful co-existence, and national development can be assured and achieved in an environment where there is equality and equity.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Government at all levels should make concerted effort to alleviate poverty at the grass root, as this will undoubtedly overcome the challenge of not sending the girl-children to school by parents for reason of poverty.
- 2) Another responsibility that government should take up so as to tackle this menace is to provide free, compulsory primary and secondary education.
- 3) Parents should be enlightened to encourage the girl-child to acquire basic education, at least, that will make her self-reliant and to secure a better future for herself. Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, Religious leaders and traditional rulers have a major role to play in leading these awareness and enlightenment campaigns
- 4) It was recommended that more emphasis should be given to parental support awareness and conscious effort should be made to eliminate all forms of harmful traditional and socio-cultural practices that discourage full enrolment of students in schools.

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