

Assessing Cultural Limitations and Discrimination Factors on United Nations Declaration On Girls-Child Rights on Student's Academic Achievement in Ondo West Local Government

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Girl-Child education has been a subject of serious concern in Africa. This is because this aspect of education has been bedeviled with problems especially in Nigeria. Scholars have expressed concern about it and about the various forms of discriminations and sharp practices against the girl-child right in our society. Thus, this study assesses ways of promoting peace and security through United Nations declaration on Girl-child right as an impetus for academic achievement. The study adopted survey method as qualitative and quantitative research design. The sample consisted of 100 respondents randomly selected from the ten wards that constituted Ondo West Local Government Areas. Three research questions were raised and analyzed using statistical methods i.e. frequency distribution tables, simple percentages and cumulative frequency. The results revealed that socio-economic factors, socio-cultural affect participation of girl child in secondary education. The research work also showed that government policies programme have assisted in addressing the menace militating against Girl-child education and finally the research drawn conclusion that there exists a significant improvement in Girl-child right. Based on these findings, it was recommended that girls should be given equal chance as boys in education; there should be a legal support for girl-child education and government, immediate community members, parent cum religion leaders should play their respective roles in encouraging Girl-child education in Ondo State and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Assessing, Cultural-Limitations, Discrimination, United Nation Declaration, Academic, Achievemen

Introduction

Human rights are those sets of universal standards that every individual is entitled to enjoy by the virtue of being human and governments of countries are then obliged to respect, protect and fulfil for their citizens. The notion of human rights embodied in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, religion, language, sex, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status. The inclusion of sex in the document as one of the areas of nondiscrimination made it clear that human rights are to include the right of a girl-child. Even though the universal human rights declaration apply equally to all people and sexes, the conventions that provide the most explicit protection of the rights of women and girls are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Osondu-Otti, 2015). Concerns for children, over the years, extended beyond their protection to offering them the benefit of improved education, health and nutrition due to the recognition that investing in children would be good for everybody. Consequently, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) was promulgated. CRC recognizes that “States parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status” (UN Women Watch, 2010). This implies that an investment in realizing the power of children, including the adolescent girls upholds their rights today and promises a more equitable and prosperous future.

The plight of the girl-child has, thus, gained the attention of the global community. She has claimed a place of prominence on the human development agenda as a result of her social conditions and well-being. It was the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 that identified the girl-child as the 12th critical area of concern. A more recent record was in December 19, 2011, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world. This was based on the fact that the girl child has the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life, not only during the critical formative years but also as they mature into women (United Nations, n.a).

Most importantly, however, is that quite a number of opinions suggest that household discriminatory practices still persist against the girl-child as a result of deep-rooted socio-cultural beliefs, social norms, values and practices (Igbolo and Ejue, 2016). This underscores the need to explore the extent to which the resolution by the UN regarding child's rights influenced the African culture, particularly those that appears to cause setbacks for the girl child. Is the resolution relevant in Africa and has it had any implications on some of the cultural limitations in Africa nine years since the resolution?

Statement of the problem

In the past decades, the girl-child has faced many limitations owing to prevailing traditional beliefs. It ranges from the fact that girls do not carry on the family name like boys. If at all they send their children to school, it is limited to the male children who according to such parents would occupy their place in the case of death. As such, every means is used to train the boys at the detriment of girls because of the perceived important role in protecting the 'family name'. Poverty of the citizenry also served as a barrier to girl-child as some parents preferred street hawking and early marriage than sending their wards to school. As a result, they could join gangs or go into prostitution and crime. There are also the political and institutional related factors which serve as the major impediment towards the development of the girl-child, thereby increasing the gender gap (Igbolo and Ejue, 2016).

Despite the United Nations declaration on girl-child rights and availability of legal documents regarding the rights of the girl-child which many African countries have acceded to, the wide gap between the rights accorded to the boy and the girl-child in many parts of Africa has not been bridged. By ratifying the Child's Rights Convention and the African Children's Charter, for example, the Nigerian government has the overall responsibility for ensuring these are implemented in a uniform and coherent manner. The government also took on the responsibility of discouraging religious, cultural, customary, or traditional practices that are inconsistent with the Charter. Yet, at the most basic level, the government is failing to live up to this obligation. Children, a most vulnerable group on account of physical and mental immaturity, bear the brunt of this inaction. They are being denied the full protection of the law. And the consequences for many female children, besides child marriage and its health and other consequences, include negative impacts on their education and overall development.

Given the realities that confront the girl child across Africa, several clamours to recognize, promote, and protect the rights and development of the girl child came up. Various gatherings and discussions have taken place on the need to fight discrimination against the girl child and to ensure that the girl child enjoys her fundamental rights as much as the boy child does. In the light of the above, this study therefore enquired in promoting peace and security through United Nation declaration on girl Child Right as an impetus for Academic Achievement in Ondo West Local Government

Research objectives

This study aims to examine the United Nations declaration on girl child rights and its implications on girl child academic achievements. To achieve this aim, the following secondary objectives will be examined:

- 4 Examine how the United Nations Declaration on girl child rights has been in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.
- 5 Examine some of the current cultural limitations that affect girl-child academic achievements in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.

- 6 Determine the implications of the United Nations Declaration on girl child rights in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.
- 7 Make recommendations on how the girl-child could enjoy her basic human rights in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.

Research questions

- 1.0 How has the United Nations declaration on girl child rights in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.
- 2.0 How has the current cultural limitations affected girl-child education in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.
- 3.0 Where has the United Nations declaration in the Nigeria context influenced the girl child rights in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State?

Scope of the study

The scope of the study is the United Nations declaration on the girl-child rights and the African girl-child. The girl-child is defined in this study as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. In examining how the rights of the girl-child have been affected by cultural limitations, different cases across Nigeria covering a period of 11 years (2011 till date). While most of the prevailing legal instruments predate 2011, only cultural limitations occurring from 2011 till date shall be emphasized.

Significance of study

A significant population of the Nigerian is adherents of various traditional practices, customs, and religions. For example, child marriage is a prevalent practice in parts of Northern Nigeria. Children about the age of 10 or 12 years get betrothed or married off. Hence, this study will expose some of these prevailing cultural gaps and limitations across the continent that affects the rights of the girl-child. The study will help the government know the wrongs that would and has befall girl-child after married out at an age they should be learning. The study would help the society modify the wrong cultures that can keep children away from good life. While the UN declaration on the rights of the girl-child and many legal instruments prohibit abuse on the girl-child, more investigations like this study have become necessary to determine whether or not these instruments have prevailed over the cultural limitations.

Research Design

This study adopted survey research design, which was used to determine the United Nations declaration on girl-child rights and its implication on academics achievements in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of eighty (80) secondary school students and twenty (20) teachers from four secondary Schools in Ondo West Local Government Area were randomly selected.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this research was questionnaire. 4 Likert type of questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Questionnaire was used since the study was mainly concerned with variables that could not be directly observed or manipulated. A questionnaire was also preferred because it takes care of confidentiality. The questionnaire consists of series of questions designed and expected to be answered by the respondents on the column provided appropriately.

Method of Data Collection

To enable the researcher distribute the instruments to the respondents, the researcher sought permission from Principals of four secondary schools under study to carry out the study. The instrument (i.e, Questionnaire) was administered to the respondents. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire was done by the researcher with the help of some class teachers.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected via questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple percentage and tabulation. T-test was used in testing the null hypotheses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

S/No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
		Students	
1	Female	52	52
2	Male	48	48
	Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1: Above shows that 52 representing 52% of the respondents were Female, while the remaining 48 representing 48% of the respondents were Male students. The implication of the above analysis is that both male and female secondary school teachers and students participated in the study.

Table2: Age of the respondents

S/No	Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	11-15 years	50	50
2	16-20 years	35	35
3	21 years and above	15	15
	Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 revealed that 50 representing 50% of the respondents were of between age 11-15 years, 35 representing 35% of them were between age 6-10 years, while the remaining 15 representing 15% of the respondents were of age 11 years and above.

- 1 Research Question 1:** How has the United Nations declaration on girl child rights been in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State?
- 2 Table 3:** Table showing how the United Nations Declaration on girl child rights has been in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.?

S/N	Items on parental education level	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	My teacher attends classes regularly and punctually.	50 (50%)	35 (35%)	15 (15%)	-	100
2	My teachers allocate equal responsibilities to both males and females when it comes to school lessons.	60 (60%)	40 (40%)	-	-	100
3	My teachers' methods and personalities have effects on my interest and participation in school subjects.	40 (40%)	35 (35%)	10 (10%)	15 (15%)	100
4	My teacher encourages girls during classes and also involves girls' participation in school activities.	50 (50%)	50 (50%)	-	-	100
5.	My teacher's demonstration during classes motivates me in getting involved in school activities.	35 (35%)	25 (25%)	15 (15%)	25 (25%)	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

Item 1 under table 4 shows that 35 representing 35% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that their teacher attends classes regularly and punctually, 25 representing 25% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 15 representing 15% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, while the remaining 25 representing 25% of the respondents also disagreed with the statement.

Item 2 under table 4 revealed that 50 representing 50% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that teachers allocate equal responsibilities to both males and females when it comes to school lessons, 35 representing 35% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the 15 representing 15% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion. The implication of this is that educated parents can afford to provide their children with most of the recommended textbooks and other learning materials.

Item 3 under table 4 shows that 60 representing 60% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that teachers' methods and personalities have effects on my interest and participation in school subjects, while the remaining 40 representing 40% of the respondents agreed with the assertion.

Item 4 under table 4 revealed that 40 representing 40% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that teacher encourages girls during classes and also involves girls' participation in school activities, 35 representing 35% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 10 representing 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, while the remaining 15 representing 15% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 5 under table 4 shows that 10 representing 50% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that teacher's demonstration during classes motivates me in getting involved in school activities, while the remaining 10 representing 50% of the respondents agreed with assertion.

5. Research Question 2:How has the current cultural limitations affected the girl-child in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.?

Table 5: Table showing how the current has cultural limitations affected the African girl-child?

S/N	Items on parental occupation	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	My parents do encourage me to get involved in school-based activities.	50 (50%)	20 (20%)	10 (10%)	20 (20%)	100
2	My parents are school oriented professionals.	60 (60%)	30 (30%)	-	10 (10%)	100

3	My parents have a separate library at home and they stock the library with books and literatures.	50 (50%)	15 (15%)	25 (25%)	10 (10%)	100
4	Socio-cultural beliefs have an effect on girl-child's interest in education.	5 (5%)	25 (25%)	-	75 (75%)	100
5.	My parents make me watch and listen to based programmes on the radio and television stations.	60 (60%)	40 (40%)	-	-	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

Item 1 under table 5 shows that 50 representing 50% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that parents do encourage me to get involved in school-based activities, 4 representing 20% of the respondents agreed with the statement. 10 representing 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, while the remaining 2 representing 20% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 2 under table 5 revealed that 60 representing 60% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that parents on poor occupations find it difficult to provide learning aids for their children, 30 representing 30% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 10 representing 10% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 3 under table 5 shows that 50 representing 50% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that their parents are school oriented professionals, 15 representing 15% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 25 representing 25% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, while the remaining 10 representing 10% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 4 under table 5 shows that 5 representing 5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that socio-cultural beliefs have an effect on girl-child's interest in education, 25 representing 25% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 75 representing 75% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 5 under table 5 shows that 60 representing 60% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that parents make me watch and listen to based programmes on the radio and television stations while the remaining 40 representing 40% of the respondents agreed with the assertion.

Research Question 3: Where has the United Nations declaration in the Nigeria context influenced the girl child rights?

Table 6: Table where has the United Nations declaration in the African context influenced the girl child rights?

S/N	Items on parental occupation	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	Government should take more interest in girl-child participation by allowing special scholarships for girls.	55 (55%)	30 (30%)	-	15 (15%)	100
2	The government provides a suitable condition in my school for learning science.	65 (65%)	15 (15%)	5 (5%)	15 (15%)	100
3	There is a separate facility for various subjects in my school.	55 (55%)	15 (15%)	15 (10%)	15 (15%)	100
4	The classroom, laboratories in my school is well equipped.	75 (75%)	20 (20%)	-	5 (5%)	100
5	Government provides adequate monitoring of both teachers and other non- teaching staff in my school.	75 (75%)	15 (15%)	5 (5%)	5 (5%)	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

Item 1 under table 6 show that 55 representing 55% of the respondents strongly agreed with the theirgovernment should take more interest in girl-child participation by allowing special scholarships for girls, 30 representing 30% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 15 representing 15% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion

Item 2 under table 6 show that 65 representing 65% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that government provides a suitable condition in my school for learning science, 15 representing 15% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 5and 15 representing 5% and 15% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the assertion

Item 3 under table 6 show that 55 representing 55% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that there is a separate facility for various subjects in my school, 30 representing 30% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 15 representing 15% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion.

Item 4 under table 6 show that 75 representing 75% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that classroom, laboratories in my school is well equipped, 20 representing 20% of the

respondents agreed with the assertion, while the remaining 5 representing 5% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion

Item 5 under table 6 show that 75 representing 75% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that government provides adequate monitoring of both teachers and other non- teaching staff in my school, 15 representing 30% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, while 5 representing 5% of the respondents disagreed the remaining 5 representing 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

Government.

Decision Rule:

In taking decision for “r”, the following rules shall be observed;

- If the value of “r” tabulated is greater than “r” calculated, accepted. While if “r” calculated is greater than the “r” tabulated, rejected

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Table showing the relationship United Nation Declaration on girls-child and the implication on African culture.

PM	Pearson Correlation	PM	APSSS
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.821**
	N	150	150
APSSS	Pearson Correlation	.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

Source: Survey data, 2023

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

- 1 The Pearson Correlation result in Table 7 contains the degree of implication. From the result, the Pearson correlation coefficient, r, value of 0.821 was positive and statistically significant at ($p < 0.000$). This indicates that there is a vital implication of United Nation declaration on girls-child rights in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State.?

Conclusion

The Nigerian girl-child faces several challenges that are rooted in cultural and religious norms and reinforced by the patriarchal system. The Child's Rights Act represents a quintessential codification of child's rights in Nigeria. However, the law does not enjoy nationwide acceptance as some 11 states are yet to adopt it due to their opposition to its many provisions (Ogunniyi, 2018). The result is that there is

no specific nationwide standard of rights accorded the Nigerian child. The major aspect of the child's rights that requires urgent state intervention is access to education as it is intertwined with other rights. The current estimates of out-of-school children in Nigeria are about 10.5 million, with a majority of these children being girls (BBC, 2017). Yet, primary education is officially free and compulsory. The relevance of education in driving national development and combating poverty has been emphasized.²¹ While, it is estimated that Nigeria loses US\$7.6 billion annually for not educating its girl-child (Obaje et al., 2019), it has equally been established that education will protect the girl-child from early marriage and position her for greater productivity. According to Feser, more than 80 percent of girls with no education marry before 18 years and if a girl finishes primary school, the likelihood of getting married before age 18 drops significantly (Feser, 2017).

Recommendations

- 1 The intensification of discussions to get the 11 northern states that are yet to domesticate the Child's Rights Act to do so. Additionally, stakeholders in the child's rights project should engage the northern states that have domesticated the law to ensure its implementation;
1. Sustainable incentives should be evolved to ensure the retention of students in schools. This will involve sustained advocacy and awareness-creation campaigns.
2. The relevant national and international stakeholders should be mobilized to ensure a steady flow of funds. Funding is particularly important considering that the success of United Nation Nigeria Girls' Education Project was partly due to the positive impact of the unconditional cash transfer program associated with it. State governments in northern Nigeria may also need to incorporate the girl-child education within the ambit of their poverty alleviation programs.

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