

A Sociological Appraisal of Gender Disparity in Enrollment, Retention and Completion Rate of Junior Secondary Level in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The study is a sociological appraisal of gender disparity in enrollment, retention and completion rates of junior secondary students in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. The aim of the study was to investigate the extent to which enrollment, retention and completion rates differed among JSS three students between 2012/2013 – 2015/2016 sessions. Three research questions and one hypothesis were generated for the study. The sample for the population comprise of 600 students, out of which 336 were males while 261 were females. Two instruments were used for the study, Statistical Records on Enrollment, Retention and Completion rate of Junior Secondary Students (SRERC JSS) and questionnaire on Gender Bias in Education (QGBEES). The validity of QGBEES was established through a test retest method to ensure its stability and consistency using the Cronbach Alpha method while a reliability index of 0.98 was obtained. The result indicated that Enrollment, Retention and completion rates differ among boys and girls for all the sessions. The hypotheses revealed that no significant difference exist on gender bias and stereotyping practices among junior

secondary school students. The study recommended the need for government support to the girl child education by funding and setting up of policies to stem the tide of gender disparity in education.

Keywords: Sociological Appraisal, gender disparity, enrollment and competition rate

1. Introduction

The importance of education to the survival and development of any society cannot be overemphasized. Durkheim (1961) describes education as a subsystem of society that promotes cohesion and hegemony by socializing members into key cultural values that promotes development. In this regard education can be seen as a tool for promoting equality among members of society and eliminating all forms of societal discrimination. According to Vaughan (2016) education eliminates inequality in society among the underprivileged and marginalized groups and remains one of the social policy areas that serve as a vehicle for breaking down barriers in education and paving way for sustainable development.

It is in view of its importance that the Nigerian government reformed her basic arm of education to a nine year basic education comprising of six years of primary education and three year secondary education in order to strengthen its foundation to meet developmental challenges of global initiatives like Education For All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and presently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) (NERC, 2001). The Junior Secondary Education is the terminal level of Universal Basic Education (UBE) with its focus on both academic and prevocational subjects. (FRN, 2004). The sole aim of junior secondary education is to turn out students equipped with the skills of literacy, numeracy and prevocational skills that would develop them for useful living in society. (NPE 2001). This level of education is instrumental to the development of useful citizens with basic skills to fight society's challenging problems like hunger, poverty and address development.

To achieve these national aims and objectives of junior secondary education implies the removal of gender disparity in education and the opening of equal opportunities to promote development. According to Cheqe, Situn and Fatuma (2014), gender disparity refers to unequal opportunities, justices and treatment of social groups irrespective of gender. Gender disparity in education therefore is related to disadvantages in educational opportunities between boys and girls. Sutherland (2008) observes that in the sub-Saharan region of Africa, gender disparity is reflected in enrollment, retention and completion rates and some studies have confirmed that where gender disparity exist, the girls consistently trail behind the boys in enrollment, retention and completion rates (Sutherland 2000). Socio economic, cultural and religious factors have been identified by British council (2014) as major constraints against the girl child education. These include parental socio-economic status, cultural and religious beliefs that the girl

child should grow up to assume her responsibility in the home and this has made many parents especially in the remote rural areas to give preference to male education above that of the females. Ulic (2017) laments that even at the junior secondary level, gender inequality exist in the form of gender stereotype and bias practices among male and female students and the teachers and authority. Bakari, (2009) also discovered that some teaching materials such as textbooks try to portray gender stereotypes. These stereotype practices regarding female education emanates from the cultural set up of society and is transmitted into the school system.

Gender disparity in education is a setback to both societal and national development. Scholars contend that sustainable development cannot be achieved if all of the country's population of over 170 million which consist of women are underdeveloped (Anadi 2010). Limiting access to the girl child education increase a higher rate of literacy among the female population with attendant effect on poverty, maternal and infant morality, diseases like HIV/AIDs, all which contributes to jeopardize development in society. This study therefore is an appraisal of gender enrolment, rendition and completion rate of junior secondary school students at the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau |State.

1.1 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to find out if gender disparity exist at the junior secondary three level of education in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. The specific objectives are to find out if:

- There is disparity in the enrollment rate between boys and girls at the junior secondary schools in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State
- There is disparity in retention rate between boys and girls at the junior secondary schools in the Southern Senatorial Zone Of Plateau State

- There is disparity in the completion rates between boys and girls at junior secondary schools in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions have been posed for the study

- To what extent did enrolment rate differ among boys and girls at Junior Secondary Three level?
- To what extent did retention rate differ among boys and girls at Junior Secondary Three level?
- To what extent did completion rate differ among boys and girls at Junior Secondary Three level?

1.3 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean response of gender on bias attitude and stereotype practices among junior secondary three students.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the survey research designs to enable the researcher obtain information on enrollment retention and completion rates among the sexes as well as information on biased and stereotype attitudes and practices affecting gender education at junior secondary schools. The

3. Results and Findings

Research Question One: To what extent did enrollment rate differ among boys and girls at Junior Secondary Three level in the Southern Senatorial Districts of Plateau State?

The result is presented in table 1.

population of the study comprises all the 5946 junior secondary three students in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State while the sample for the study was 660 respondents; 600 of which were students, 60 of which were parents.

The criteria for selection of the sample were based on Ferguson (1976) suggestion of 10% population as appropriate for a sample size. Out of the 600 students 336 are males while 261 are female and from the parents' population, 29 are males while 31 are females.

Two instruments were used for the study (1) Statistical records of Enrollment, Retention and Completion rate of Junior Secondary School (SRERCJSS) and Questionnaires on Gender Bias in Education (QGBEES). The SRERCJSS included statistical records on enrollment from SUBEB and records of retention and completion of ten selected secondary schools in the region from principals of the schools. The validity of QGBEES was established by experts in Sociology of Education, Measurement and Evaluation and English. The reliability of QGBEES was established through a test-retest method to ensure its stability and consistency using the Cronchbach alpha method while a reliability index of 0.98 was obtained. He results were analyzed using percentages, the mean, which had a criterion of 3 on a 5 point likert scale. The hypothesis was analysed using the t-test.

Table 1: Enrollment Data According to Gender in JS III Between 2012/13-2015/2016 Sessions in the Southern Senatorial Districts of Plateau state

SN	LGA	2012 - 2013					2013 – 2014					2014 - 2015					2015 - 2016				
		Total	Males	%	Females	%	Total	Males	%	Females	%	Total	Males	%	Females	%	Total	Males	%	Females	%
1.	Langtang North	1331	715	54	616	46	1387	720	52	667	48	142	729	51	703	49	1684	852	51	832	49
2.	Langtang South	870	469	54	401	46	902	459	51	443	49	925	462	50	463	50	1054	535	51	519	49
3.	Wase	894	594	66	300	34	974	588	60	386	40	754	516	68	238	32	860	557	65	303	35
4.	Mikang	572	318	56	254	44	595	339	57	256	43	453	256	57	197	43	571	321	56	250	44
5.	Quanpa'an	1050	612	58	438	42	1121	677	60	444	40	1145	684	60	461	40	1199	680	57	519	43
	Total	4717	2708	57%	2009	43%	4979	2783	56%	2196	44%	4699	2637	56%	2062	44%	5368	2945	55%	2423	45%

Source: SUBEB 2017

Table one shows that in the Six Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, the enrollment for students between 2012/2013 session to 2015/2016 session stood at 57% (2708 students) boys and 43% (2009 students) for girls. In 2013/2014 session, the enrolment percentages for boys and girls remain 56% (2783) and 44% (2196) respectively. Between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 sessions, the enrolment percentages for boys and girls were 56% (2637), 44% (2062). 55% (2945) and 45% (2423) respectively for the two sessions.

The differences in gender percentage ratio obtained consistently over the four sessions indicated that disparity in enrollment exist among boys and girls at the junior secondary existed in the Southern Senatorial Districts of Plateau State.

Research Question Two: To what extent did retention rate differ among boys and girls at the junior secondary level in the Southern Senatorial Districts of Plateau State? The result is presented in table two.

Table II: Enrollment Retention and Completion Data of JS III Students in some Selected Schools in the Southern Senatorial Districts .

Name of School	LGA	Enrollment in JSS I			Drop Out before JS2	No of students in JSS II Total	Boys	Girls	Transferred into JSS II	Drop out before JSS III	No. in JSS III			Drop Out Before JSSCE	No Retained to Completion		
		Total	Boys	Girls							Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls
J.SS. A	Langtang North	180	110	70	110	70	36	34	39	10	99	55	44	4	95	55	40
J.SS. B	Langtang North	211	100	111	128	83	45	38	26	9	100	55	45	7	93	50	43
J.SS. A	Langtang South	255	111	114	30	195	103	92	6	68	133	68	65	6	127	65	62
J.SS. B	Langtang South	88	48	40	25	63	43	20	5	19	49	27	22	5	44	24	20
J.SS. A	Mikang	113	63	50	20	93	54	39	4	4	89	49	40	4	85	47	38
J.SS. B	Mikang	42	121	21	10	32	15	17	7	10	29	15	14	7	22	11	11
J.SS. A	Quanpaan	187	87	100	10	177	96	81	10	11	176	103	73	10	166	97	69
J.SS. B	Quanpaan	138	79	59	43	95	50	45	27	4	118	63	55	4	114	61	53
J.SS. A	Wase	111	57	54	11	100	78	22	3	60	43	22	21	3	40	20	20
J.SS. B	Wase	50	30	20	10	40	24	16	2	-	42	22	20	2	40	20	20
	Total	1345	706	639	397	948	544	404	128	195	878	479	399	52	826	450	376
	Percentage	100	52%	48%	30%	70%	40%	30%	9%	14%	65%	35%	30%	6%	61%	33%	28%

Field Study

Table two shows the retention rate of boys and girls in ten selected schools in the region. Based on records of transition and drop-out rates obtained from ten selected schools, enrollment shows that more boys 52% (706) got enrolled than girls with 48% (639). Before transition to JSII, there was a dropout incidence of 30% (397). Transition into JS two showed that out of the remaining 70% (948) left to transit 40% (544) were boys while 30% were girls. Before transition to JS III, there was a transfer rate of 9% (128) students and another drop-out rate of 14% (195 students). Both the new transfer and old students that were retained to JS3 constituted 65% (878 students) of the initial number of students who got enrolled from JS one with the boys forming the majority (35%) against the girls (30%). This shows evidence of gender disparity in enrollment.

Research Question Three: To what extent did completion rate differ among boys and girls at the junior secondary level at the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. The result is presented in table three.

Table 3: Enrollment Retention and Completion Data of JSS III Students in Some Selected Schools in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State In 2014/2015 Session

Name of School	LGA	Enrollment in JSS I			Drop Out before JS2	No of students in JSS II			Transferred into JSS II	Drop out before JSS III	No. in JSS III			Drop Out Before JSSCE	No Retained to Completion		
		Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls			Total	Boys	Girls				
J.SS. A	Langtang North	180	110	70	110	70	36	34	39	10	99	55	44	4	95	55	40
J.SS. B	Langtang North	211	100	111	128	83	45	38	26	9	100	55	45	7	93	50	43
J.SS. A	Langtang South	255	111	114	30	195	103	92	6	68	133	68	65	6	127	65	62
J.SS. B	Langtang South	88	48	40	25	63	43	20	5	19	49	27	22	5	44	24	20
J.SS. A	Mikang	113	63	50	20	93	54	39	4	4	89	49	40	4	85	47	38
J.SS. B	Mikang	42	121	21	10	32	15	17	7	10	29	15	14	7	22	11	11
J.SS. A	Quanpaan	187	87	100	10	177	96	81	10	11	176	103	73	10	166	97	69
J.SS. B	Quanpaan	138	79	59	43	95	50	45	27	4	118	63	55	4	114	61	53
J.SS. A	Wase	111	57	54	11	100	78	22	3	60	43	22	21	3	40	20	20
J.SS. B	Wase	50	30	20	10	40	24	16	2	-	42	22	20	2	40	20	20
	Total	1345	706	639	397	948	544	404	128	195	878	479	399	52	826	450	376
	Percentage	100	52%	48%	30%	70%	40%	30%	9%	14%	65%	35%	30%	6%	61%	33%	28%

Field Study

Table three analysis from enrollment to completion rate among JS three students. Result indicate that transition from JS two to JS three constituted 65% (878 students of the initial number of students who enrolled from JS1 majority of which are boys with 35% while the girls remained at 30% as already noted . Also table three indicates that retention of the number of students was disrupted before the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE). There was a drop out rate of 6% (52 students). The completion rate to JS three, that is on the completion of the JSSCE, was 61% (826 students) with more boys reaching the completion stage with 33% (450) than girls with 28% (376) of the initial number of enrolment from JSS one. The result indicated a difference in the completion rate among gender.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of gender on bias attitude and stereotyping practices among junior secondary three students.

Table 4: The T-Test Analysis on the Significance Difference On Gender Bias And Stereotyping Practices Among JS III Students.

S/No	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P value	Decision
1.	Boys	336	3.33	1.43	598	0.49	0.663	Accepted
2	Girls	264	3.24	1.42				

The result on table 4 indicated that the mean score for boys ($X = 3.33, SD = 1.43$) is almost the same with that of girls ($X = 3.24, SD = 1.42$), showing no significant difference between the two groups and $t(598) = .49, P > 0.05$. Since the P. value (0.66) is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted; it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of gender bias attitude and stereotyping practices in junior secondary education in public schools of southern senatorial zone of Plateau State .

4. Discussion of Findings

The study attempted a sociological appraisal of gender disparity in enrollment, retention and completion rate among junior secondary three students of the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. The results have been presented according to research questions. The first research question sought to investigate the extent to which disparity in enrollment exist between boys and girls at the junior secondary level. Result of findings reveals that there was disparity between boys and girls in enrollment between 2012/13 to 2015/16 session across the Senatorial Zones of Plateau State. Between 2012/2013 session the enrollment of boys and girls was 57% (2708) and 43% (2009) respectively in 2013/2014 session, the enrollment for boys and girls was 56% (2783

and 44% (2196) respectively between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 sessions, the enrollment percentages and figures were 56% (2637), 44% (2062), 55% (2945) and 45% (2423) respectively for the two session. The difference in gender ratio obtained consistently over the four session indicted gender disparity rate in enrollment in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. This findings is in congruence with Sutherland (2000), Olubunmi, Omoniyi, Oluronbebe (2014) and Eloka (2014) Who observed disparities in enrollment between boys and girls at junior secondary schools.

The second research question was posed to investigate the extent of disparity in retention rates between boys and girls at junior secondary three level in the Southern Senatorial Districts. Result as shown in table 2 indicated that transition to JS two from JS one was higher for boys 40% (544) than girls, 30% (404). This findings supports Martune And Peter (2012) and British Council (2014) who observed low retention rates of girls than boys at junior secondary level.

The third research question was also asked to investigate the extent of difference in completion rates between the boys and the girls at junior secondary level in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State.

Table 3 revealed that for the remaining 61% (826 students) who retained to JS III 33% (450)

were boys while 28% (376) were girls. This findings further supports Sutherland (2000), UNESCO (2000), Olubunmi, Omoniyi and Olurontebebe (2014) that girls completion rate was lower compared to boys.

On the hypothesis which seeks to investigate if significant difference exist in the mean response of gender on bias attitude and stereotype practice among students, results revealed that the P.value (0.66) is greater than the calculated t-value (0.49) at 0.05 level of confidence. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This indicted therefore, that no significant exist in the mean response of gender on bias attitude and stereotype practices among students.

Apart from few findings like Eyer (2015) and Chapman (2015) that supports this findings, most earlier and resent researchers had indicated a noteworthy differences between gender on attitudes and stereotype practices among students (Saghir, 2003; Bakari, 2009; Sharma,2007; British Council, 2014; Ulic 2017). The insignificant difference obtained in this study on gender bias and stereotype has exposed new insight on the extent to which boys and girls including school authorities have continued overtime to socialize and imbibe new ways that work against gender equity. Eyer (2015) has confirmed that overtime, both local and international campaigns and seminars have been targeted on sensitizing community and schools on gender bias and stereotype attitudes that constrain female education.

5. Recommendations

- A strong government approach to legislation, policies, monitoring and public awareness campaign practices should be put in place to promote equality in enrollment
- Monitoring teams should be set up between the government and community to monitor and report on challenges relating to enrollment, retention and completion of girl child education.

- Seminars, at school level to teachers and students to bring awareness or the importance of girl child education should be encouraged.
- Government should give encouragement to girls education by giving financial support to low income families to encourage the girl child enrollment, retention and completion of junior secondary education.
- Schools should engage in generating more data to identify some difficult areas of girl child education.

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