

TRIANGULATION ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF GIRL-CHILD EMPOWERMENT IN OKE-OGUN AREA, NIGERIA: A VIABLE WAY FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract

The study determined the level of girl-child empowerment. Data was collected from 182 respondents and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Triangulation method was also used to facilitate validation of data through cross verification from two sources (household heads and girl-children). Findings from the study show that of the three empowerment components, the girl-children have more access to resources than they have over decision making on these resources and the least is control over these resources. Unwanted pregnancy ($\bar{x}=1.66$), early childhood marriage ($\bar{x}=1.55$) and preference given to the boy-child than the girl-child ($\bar{x}=1.45$), were severe constraints to girl-child empowerment. School type ($\beta=-0.286$, $p\leq 0.013$), school level ($\beta= 0.429$, $p\leq 0.00$) and constraints ($\beta= 0.233$, $p\leq 0.00$) to girl-child empowerment were predictors of the level of girl-child empowerment in the study area. Hence, based on the empowerment components, the study established that the girl-children in the study area had moderate level of empowerment however from the household heads' perspective, the girl-children had a low level of empowerment. The above constraints could possibly have translated into low-moderate empowerment level of the girl-children. By implication, to realize girl-child rights and empowerment and also attainment of most of the Sustainable Development Goals, girls and by extension women must be shielded from these constraints. To achieve gender equality, improve nutrition, promote health, fight HIV/AIDS, reduce poverty and achieve higher economic productivity, sustainable cities and communities, the girl-child empowerment is crucial.

Key Words: *Girl-child, Empowerment level and Rural households*

Introduction

According to DFID (2011), empowering girls and women has a multiplier effect for economic growth and development of any nation and also for

achieving all of the MDGs (now SDGs). Consistent with this Neal *et al.* (2010) averred that girls between ages 10-14 are five times more likely than women in the age bracket of 20-24 years to die in

pregnancy or childbirth; in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive, agricultural outputs could increase by 20 percent if women's access to agricultural inputs equals that of men (World Bank, 2005); a unit increase in girls' education results in an increased wage by 10-20 percent (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002) and for women a unit increase in education results in improved maternal health, fewer and healthier children and increased economic opportunities (World Bank, 2009); violence against women increases as power decreases (Naved and Person, 2010). Despite, these inarguable facts yet girls and by extension women are still grossly disempowered and remains largely invisible in the society. In a similar vein, the 2008 World Development Report: Agriculture for Development, heightened the vital/pivotal role of agriculture in sustainable economic development and its importance in achieving the MDGs because it is a central source of employment and a catalyst in the GDP and wealth creation process in many African countries including Nigeria. Furthermore, Cross-country regression analyses have concluded that the poverty reduction from growth in agriculture is on average 2 to 4 times greater than from equivalent growth in other sectors (Bravo-Ortega and Lederman, 2005).

Nigerian women play a dominant role in agricultural production. They make up 60-80 percent of the agricultural labour force and produce the two-thirds of the food crops (World Bank, 2003). Yet, despite the facts, widespread assumptions that men-and not women-make the key farm management decisions have prevailed (World Bank, 1996; World Bank, 2003; Ogunlela and Muktar, 2009). World Bank (2007b) documented that women play active roles as traders,

processors, laborers, and entrepreneurs, despite facing many obstacles (compared to their men counterparts) in market and information access. The report also stated that many developmental policies are designed in such a way that attention is given only to men as they are regarded as farmers and rural workers. Available evidences (Doss 2005; Quisumbing *et al.*, 2004) revealed that significant gender inequalities can be found in peoples' access to other key productive assets and services: land, labour, financial services, water, rural infrastructure, technology, and other inputs. Land ownership is usually skewed towards the direction of the men, for example 70-80 percent of formal land ownership in SSA are owned by men.

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on women and gender equality (2012) observed that most rural girls face triple disadvantage of location, gender and age. They aver that social and cultural norm affecting gender roles are more prominent in the rural areas which lead to girls having heavier work burdens, fewer opportunity to complete school, early marriage with the risk of poor reproductive health, multiple child births and gender-based violence. These girls also lack access to infrastructure and services such as land, markets, finance, education, training and essential health care. In Nigeria, factors that affect health seeking behavior for the girl-child are; socio-cultural influences, income, cost of treatment, level of parents' education amongst others (HERFON, Nigerian Health Review, 2006). Azuh *et al.* (2015) reported that in Nigeria one of the factors affecting women to access healthcare services is lack of women's autonomy. They stated that the family decision making power including that of health and

treatment place, the patriarchal domination orchestrated by gender roles is manifested prominently as husband exercises an overwhelming proportion (72.7%) or control in the affairs of his household activities. He does not only decide when and where to go, but equally who does what within the household. The implication of this is that everybody depends on one person for any move including action to seek appropriate health care. The World Bank (2001) documented that ignoring gender inequalities comes at great cost to people's well-being and countries' abilities to grow sustainably and thereby reduce poverty. Hence, ignoring girls and women empowerment do not only affect their lives, but also that of their families, communities and nation. It also brings about inter-generational cycle of poverty and low economic development of the nation.

Empowerment has therefore become the key solution to many social problems. These include high population rates, environmental degradation and low status of women. Empowerment may mean different things to different people in different contexts. It is a continuum of several inter-related and mutually reinforcing component (Malhotra *et al.*, 2002). Empowerment has equally become an active, multi-dimensional process which enables individuals or a group of individuals to realise their identity and potentials in all spheres of life (Pillai, 1995). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision-making to enabling them to possess greater ability to plan their lives, or have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free them from shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Girl-child empowerment deals with the access,

decision making ability and control of resources to improve her well-being (PAHO, 2010; Ashimolowo and Akinbile, 2008). Some of these resources include access to education, health facilities, social, technological and economic resources. Empowerment as used in this study is measured across different empowerment areas and on the three (3) pillars of empowerment. It recognizes the possibility of the girl-child being empowered in an area and disempowered in others, more so, it is also hinge on the possibility that the girl-child may have access to a particular dimension/area of empowerment but may lack decision making and control over it. This study also draws strength from the power of triangulation with which a powerful and multifaceted case can be built for the girl-child empowerment. It also helps to validate data through the cross verification of 2 or more sources and is also important to ensure that cultural biases do not affect the results.

While several studies have analysed women empowerment from diverse perspectives (Kishor, 2000, Kabeer, 2005; Fapohunda, 2011; Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index Brochure, 2013), however there is a paucity of information on the level of girl-child empowerment with the view of understanding her empowerment status and then deduce the areas that are still lacking. The girl-child empowerment is a catalyst to changes in the attitude of women generally to education and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Particularly, outdated attitudes they inculcated from gender-biased social values of female inferiority to men. The implication of this is that, it would facilitate the creation of optimum optimism in the girl-child, by

enabling her to visualise her biological makeup as a potential blessing not a curse, and an advantage which is generally vital to human progress (Atim, 2015). The girl-child empowerment therefore provides ingredients for positive transitions to adulthood which ultimately lead to not just economic development but an overall national development (Warner *et al.*, 2012). Based on the foregoing this study used the triangulation analysis to examine girl-child empowerment needs among rural households in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo state Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

1. describe the socio-economic characteristics of rural households and girl-children in the study area
2. ascertain the level of the girl-child empowerment in the study area
3. identify the constraints to the girl-child empowerment in the study area
4. assess the difference in the access, decision making, control and empowerment scores between the girl-children and household heads.
5. ascertain the contribution of the independent variables (socio-economic characteristics) to the level empowerment of girl-children

Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in Oyo state which is located in southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Its geographical coordinates are 7° 50' 34.6488" N and 3° 56' 12.6384" E. Oyo state consists of 33 Local Government Areas. The State covers a total of 27,249 square kilometres of land mass and it is bounded in the south by Ogun state, in the north by Kwara state, in the west by Ogun state and partly by the Republic of Benin, while in the East by Osun state. The topography of the State is

of gentle rolling low land in the south, rising to a plateau of about 40metres. The State is well drained with rivers flowing from the upland in the north-south direction. Oyo state has an equatorial climate with dry and wet seasons and relatively high humidity. The dry season lasts from November to March while the wet season starts from April and ends in October. Average daily temperature ranges between 25°C (77°F) and 35°C (95°F), almost throughout the year. The vegetation pattern of Oyo state is that of rain forest in the south and guinea savannah in the north. Thick forest in the south gives way to grassland interspersed with trees in the north. The climate in the state favours the cultivation of crops such as maize, yam, cassava, millet, rice, plantain, cocoa tree, palm tree and cashew (Government of Oyo State, 2015).

Data Collection

Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. Oyo state is delineated into three zones, namely; Oyo North, Oyo South and Oyo Central. The first stage of the procedure was the random selection of Oyo North zone (this covers Oke-Ogun area). This was followed by the random selection of 20 percent of the 10 Local Government Areas that make up Oke-Ogun area. At this stage Iseyin and Saki west were selected. This was followed by random selection of twenty percent (20%) i.e., two (2) of the ten (10) wards from each LGA, to give a total of four (4) wards. The third stage also involved a random selection of two (2) communities from an average of 10 communities in each of the wards, giving a total of eight (8) communities. Samples were then drawn proportionately to size in each of the selected communities in the two LGAs. This gave a total of 112 households. For the purpose of

triangulation, the girl-children were also sampled. Samples were then drawn proportionately to size in each of the selected communities in the two LGAs. This gave a total of 70 girl-children. This gave a total sample size of 182 respondents and information was obtained through a structured interview schedule and 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

Data analysis was done using mean, frequencies, percentages, Chi-square, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and linear regression.

The dependent variable is the level of girl-child empowerment. This was measured on five (5) areas of girl-child empowerment (Ashimolowo, 2002) by asking the respondents to indicate their opinion on the level of access of the girl-child to various institutions. What is their access to, decision making and control over these resources? The maximum score obtainable for each of the component was seventy-two (72) while the minimum score obtainable was zero (0). Scores obtained were collated and the mean and standard deviation were calculated. Mean \pm 1SD was used as a criterion to categorize the girl-children into high, moderate and low level of empowerment.

Respondents were asked to indicate the possible constraints to the girl-child empowerment needs using options of serious constraint, mild constraint and not a constraint. These were scored as serious constraint =2, mild constraint =1 and not a constraint =0. Weighted mean scores were used to rank constraints in their order of severity.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic Characteristics of Household Heads

The result of the descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 1a reveals that the mean age of the household heads is 44 years. This implies that respondents are matured and are in their active age and so can take up the responsibilities of catering for a family. This result is in tandem with the findings of Fakayode *et al.* (2011), who reported a mean age of farmers in Kwara State as 44 years. The result for educational qualification from Table 1a shows that more than two-fifth (42.9%) of the respondents had primary education, with mean educational qualification of 5 years. This indicates that on the average respondents in the study area did not complete their primary education since in the Nigerian educational system an individual has to spend 6 years in the primary to obtain the “first leaving school certificate”. Furthermore, the result also reveals that more than one third (33.9%) of the respondents had no form of formal education. This implies that some of the respondents may not be favourably disposed to empowering the girl-child. Cumulatively, this may have a negative effect on the girl-child. This assertion is concomitant with Ersado (2005); Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) who stated that household head level of education is associated with increased access to girl-

child education which affords them increased economic status and household decision making power.

Results from Table 1a further shows that the mean household size of the respondents was 7 persons. This implies that respondents have large house hold size. Large household size indicates high dependency burden and a high demand of household resources which may result in a negative effect on the girl-child and her empowerment. This agrees with the findings of Eamon (2005) who posited that girl-child with fewer siblings will receive more parental attention and have more access to resources than girls from larger families. Highlights of the

estimated weekly income of respondents as shown in Table 1a reveals that the mean weekly income of respondents was ₦1180 (\$3.28 or £2.80). Given that the mean household size of the respondents was 7 persons and following the WHO/FAO report that for a household to be above the poverty line, household should have \$1.25 per person per day. Following these assertions, this implies that on the average respondents in the study area live below poverty line. This will not only have a negative impact in the empowerment of their girl-child, it will also negatively impact on the economic development of the nation.

Table 1a: Distribution of household heads’ socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage	Mean
Age (years)			
Less or equal 30	22	19.6	44
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	
Educational qualification			
No formal education	38	33.9	5
1-6	48	42.9	
7-12	23	20.5	
13-18	3	2.7	
Household size			
1-5	41	36.6	7
6-10	62	55.3	
11-15	4	3.6	
Above 15	5	4.5	
Income per week (in naira)			
Less than or equal to 1000	79	72.5	1180
1001-2000	12	11.0	
2001-3000	5	4.6	
Above 3000	13	11.9	

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Girl-children

The results of the descriptive analysis presented in Table 1b shows that two-fifth

(40.0%) of the girl-children in the study area are in the age category of 15-18 years with a mean age of 13 years. This result is a true representation of the age of the girl-

child in the study area. This result confirms the findings of Offorma (2008) who defines a girl-child as biological female offspring from birth to 18 years of age. The author also reports that this is the age preceding young adulthood. Results on Table 1b shows that most (91.4%) of the girl-children are enrolled in school while 8.6% are not. This might be due to the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) free education by the Nigerian government in 2004 to eradicate illiteracy and ignorance among Nigerian children of school-going age. It covers one of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE), six years of primary and three years of Junior Secondary Education. This was done for the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Results on Table 1b shows that majority (70.0%) of the girl-children are enrolled in a public school. This implies that most of the girl-children attended

government provided schools. The Nigerian public school is such that both human and other resources are usually not available and in situation where it is available is usually not in good state. This is in line with the report of Ibadin (2010) who averred that lack of resources (physical) in rural schools and the unwholesome situations of the rural areas make it impossible for teachers deployed to the rural areas to stay. The resultant effect is that with limited human resources, teachers may have to teach other subjects outside their area of specialisation.

Result of the school level of the girl-children in the study area as shown in Table 1b reveals that slightly above half (51.4%) of the girl-children are in secondary school, while 40% are in primary school. This result is an indication that households in the study area are eager to send their girl-children to school despite their low income and non-availability of school in some of the communities.

Table 1b: Distribution of socio-economic characteristics of the girl-children

Variables	Frequency (n=70)	Percentage	Mean
Age			
≥10	19	27.1	13
11-14	23	32.9	
15-18	28	40.0	
School enrolment			
Yes	64	91.4	
No	6	8.6	
School type			
Private	15	21.4	
Public	49	70.0	
None	6	8.6	
School level			
Primary	28	40.0	
Secondary	36	51.4	
None	6	8.6	

Level of Empowerment of the Girl-child

According to PAHO (2010), the girl-child empowerment deals with the access, decision making ability and control of resources to improve her well-being.

Girl-child's Access to Various Institutions and Resources

Results from Table 2a shows that from the girl-children's view, qualified teachers ($\bar{x}=1.41$) is the area where the girl-children have the most access. This however is at variance with that of the household heads who claimed the girl-children have access to school uniform ($\bar{x}=1.63$) the most. Additionally, both the girl-children ($\bar{x}=1.10$) and household heads ($\bar{x}=1.23$) both maintained that the least area of access is transport to and fro school. This means that on the average girl-children in the study area have little or no access to transport to and fro school. This may be related to the low-income level of household heads (Table 1a), having struggled to pay for school fees, uniform and books may not have enough to give these girls from transportation to and fro school

Results on social empowerment reveals that from the girl-children's perspective, they had the least access to delayed marriage ($\bar{x}=0.70$). This means most of the girl-children in the study area are involved in early marriage and this may have a negative effect on their ability to complete their education. This assertion is consistent with the report of Baird *et al.* (2009) who stated that school-going tends to be incompatible with marriage or pregnancy because social norms, social policy, or restrictions on time make it difficult for girls to go to school and be wives and mothers at once. The household heads stance is at variance with that of the girl-children as they reported that the girl-children have the least access to choice of

religion ($\bar{x}= 0.98$). In the cultural context in most Nigerian communities, just as a child is born into a family, the child is also born into the religion practiced by the parents and as such automatically becomes a believer of his/her "parent's religion". The child may most likely not have the opportunity to choose his/her religious association until adulthood.

Legal empowerment needs of the girl-child from the Table 2a, also reveals some level of agreement between the girl-children and the households. They both maintained that number of children to bear ($\bar{x}=0.56$ and 0.88) and decision making at the community level ($\bar{x}= 0.56$ and 0.73) are the areas where the girl-children have least access. This means that girl-children in the study area do not have a voice in the community and over her reproductive right. The implication of this is that decisions taken at community level may not be responsive to the needs of the girl-children. This finding corresponds to the report of IFAD (2012) who opined that rural women and girls' lack of voice in public affairs means that investment and policies are less sensitive to the specific priorities and constraints of half of the population and therefore largely fail to achieve intended development outcomes.

On economic empowerment, while the household heads maintained that the girl-children have least access to start-up funds ($\bar{x}=1.21$), the girl-children asserted that they have little or no access to improved tools ($\bar{x}=0.66$). In sum, majority of the girl-children in the study area have no access to the above resources. This implies a low economic empowerment for majority of the girl-children in the study area. This result is in tandem United Nations Inter-Agency Network on women and gender equality (2012) which observed that most rural girls face triple disadvantage of location, gender

and age. They also reported that these girls also lack access to infrastructure and services such as land, markets, finance and training.

Results on Table 2a on health empowerment, also shows an agreement as to the areas where the girl-child have the least access. Both from the girl-children and household heads perspective respectively reproductive right (\bar{x} =0.87 and 1.18) and protection from female genital mutilation (\bar{x} =0.37 and 0.26) are the areas of girl-children's least access. In a community where the incidences of early child marriage and FGM practice thrives,

sexual abuse and girl-child (gender) violence may likely thrive also. This therefore means that sexual abuse and violence of some of the girl-children in the study area may be as a result of early marriage and FGM practice. This agrees with the findings of UN Human Rights Council (2008) who stated that FGM practice violates numerous child rights; the right to health, right to protection from all forms of violence and right to protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Equality Now (2014) also observed that early child marriage is inextricably linked to abuses that affect women and girls throughout their lives.

Table 2a: Percentage distribution of respondents (household heads and the girl-children) based on the girl-child access to various institutions and resources

Factors	Girl-children (n=70)				Household heads (n=112)				Total mean
	HA	MA	NA	Mean	HA	MA	NA	Mean	
Education;									
School choice	40.0	44.3	15.7	1.24	53.6	41.1	5.4	1.48	1.39
School fees	37.1	42.9	20.0	1.17	60.7	39.3	0.0	1.61	1.44
School uniform	37.1	45.7	17.1	1.20	63.4	36.6	0.0	1.63	1.47
Transport to and fro school	35.7	38.6	25.7	1.10	41.1	41.1	17.9	1.23	1.18
Books	40.0	50.0	10.0	1.30	54.5	44.6	0.9	1.54	1.45
Qualified teachers	48.6	44.3	7.1	1.41	34.8	59.8	5.4	1.29	1.34
Social;									
Shelter	48.6	42.9	8.6	1.40	67.0	27.7	5.4	1.62	1.53
Social association	18.6	45.7	35.7	0.82	40.2	33.9	25.9	1.14	1.02
Choice of religious association	25.7	38.6	35.7	0.90	38.4	21.4	40.2	0.98	0.95
Use of information	17.1	64.3	18.6	0.96	41.1	50.9	8.0	1.33	1.20
Delayed marriage	10.0	50.0	40.0	0.70	42.0	32.1	25.9	1.16	0.98
Migration	18.6	42.9	38.6	0.80	38.4	42.9	18.8	1.20	1.04
Respectful treatment for herself	31.4	67.1	1.4	1.30	60.7	37.5	1.8	1.59	1.49
Marriage partner	18.6	52.9	28.6	0.90	37.5	47.3	15.2	1.22	1.10
Legal; equal right to;									
Healthcare	41.4	57.1	1.4	1.40	52.7	42.9	4.5	1.48	1.45
Education	40.0	47.1	12.9	1.27	60.7	34.8	4.5	1.56	1.45
Decision making at household level	12.9	61.4	25.7	0.87	25.9	49.1	25.0	1.01	0.96
Inheritance	25.7	28.6	45.7	0.80	49.1	42.9	8.0	1.41	1.18
When to marry	24.3	38.6	37.1	0.87	36.6	47.3	16.1	1.21	1.08
Who to marry	21.4	40.0	38.6	0.83	35.7	44.6	19.6	1.16	1.03
Number of children to bear	15.7	24.3	60.0	0.56	25.0	38.4	36.6	0.88	0.76
Decision making at community level	15.7	24.3	60.0	0.56	19.6	33.9	46.4	0.73	0.66
Self-esteem	18.6	80.0	1.4	1.17	46.4	50.0	3.6	1.43	1.33

Protection from exploitation (taking advantage of children)	20.0	61.4	18.6	1.01	37.5	42.9	19.6	1.18	1.12
Economic;									
Adequate food	58.6	41.4	0.0	1.59	75.0	25.0	0.0	1.75	1.69
Timely payment of labour wages	18.6	45.7	35.7	0.83	35.7	50.9	13.4	1.22	1.07
Start-up funds	17.1	20.0	62.9	0.543	38.4	44.6	17.0	1.21	0.96
Land ownership	31.4	11.4	57.2	0.74	39.3	50.0	10.7	1.29	1.08
Improved skills	27.1	24.3	48.6	0.79	42.9	50.9	6.2	1.37	1.14
Improved tools	15.7	34.3	50.0	0.66	35.7	51.8	12.5	1.23	1.01
Marketing of farm products	21.4	52.9	25.7	0.96	49.1	42.9	8.0	1.41	1.24
Health;									
Medical facilities	31.4	62.9	5.7	1.3	49.1	47.3	3.6	1.46	1.38
Protection from sexual abuse	31.4	37.2	31.4	1.00	67.0	32.1	0.9	1.66	1.41
Freedom from violence	31.4	40.0	28.6	1.03	56.3	41.1	2.7	1.54	1.34
Reproductive right	15.7	55.7	28.6	0.87	34.8	48.2	17.0	1.18	1.06
Protection from female genital mutilation	2.9	31.4	65.7	0.37	8.0	9.8	82.1	0.26	0.30

HA=Highly accessible, MA=Moderately accessible, NA=No access

Girl-child's Decision Making to Various Institutions and Resources

Results from Table 2b show a significant number of similarities between the components which the girl-children have the least access to and components with the least decision-making power. From the girl-children's perspective, components under different areas of empowerment with the least decision-making ability includes; transport to and fro ($\bar{x}=0.51$), delayed marriage ($\bar{x}=0.27$), decision making at community level ($\bar{x}=0.34$), number of children to bear ($\bar{x}=0.36$), start-up funds ($\bar{x}=0.34$), protection from female genital mutilation ($\bar{x}=0.43$) and reproductive right ($\bar{x}=0.44$). In a similar vein, from the household heads' view; qualified teachers ($\bar{x}=0.87$), choice of religious association ($\bar{x}=0.56$), decision making at community level ($\bar{x}=0.51$), number of children to bear ($\bar{x}=0.65$), land ownership ($\bar{x}=0.72$), protection from female genital mutilation ($\bar{x}=0.12$) and reproductive right ($\bar{x}=0.91$). This is closely in line with the results obtained for access to components under various areas of empowerment (Table 2a). This is an indication that one can only make decisions on what one has access to.

Furthermore, examining the means of the above components show that though there exists some level of agreement in the components to which the girl-children have the least decision-making ability, some discrepancies still exist as to the extent to which this decision is exercised. From the above means, the girl-children maintained they have no access to decision making to the above components under various areas of empowerment, however, the household heads maintained that these girls have approximately moderate access to decision making. This implies that household heads are not giving the girl- children as much autonomy as they thought. This may be link to the apartheid nature which is a dominant feature in most of Nigerian's rural communities. Confirming this finding is the report of Azuh *et al.* (2015) who reported that in Nigeria one of the factors affecting women and girls' access healthcare services is lack of women's autonomy. They stated that the family decision making power including that of health and treatment place, the patriarchal domination orchestrated by gender roles is manifested prominently as husband exercises an overwhelming proportion (72.7%) or control in the affairs

of his household activities. IFAD (2012) also reported that cultural norms and practices, lack of education and self-confidence, and a shortage of time were some factors that hinder women and girls to contribute to decision making at all levels.

Table 2b: Percentage distribution of respondents (household heads and the girl-children) based on the girl-child decision making to various institutions and resources

Factors	Girl-children (n=70)				Household heads (n=112)				Total mean
	HA	MA	NA	Mean	HA	MA	NA	Mean	
Education;									
School choice	7.1	47.1	45.8	0.61	8.0	84.0	8.0	1.00	0.85
School fees	4.3	40.0	55.7	0.49	11.6	81.3	7.1	1.04	0.83
School uniform	4.2	42.9	52.9	0.51	9.8	86.6	3.6	1.06	0.85
Transport to and fro school	1.4	44.3	54.3	0.47	8.0	72.4	8.0	0.88	0.73
Books	2.9	50.0	47.1	0.56	9.8	86.6	3.6	1.06	0.87
Qualified teachers	4.3	50.0	45.7	0.59	5.4	75.8	18.8	0.87	0.76
Social;									
Shelter	7.1	48.6	44.3	0.63	10.7	68.8	20.5	0.90	0.80
Social association	4.3	44.3	51.4	0.53	6.3	64.2	29.5	0.77	0.68
Choice of religious association	7.1	45.7	47.2	0.60	7.1	42.0	50.9	0.56	0.59
Use of information	1.4	48.6	50.0	0.51	3.6	85.7	10.7	0.93	0.77
Delayed marriage	0.0	27.1	72.9	0.27	33.1	59.0	8.0	0.75	0.57
Migration	4.3	37.1	58.6	0.46	2.7	69.6	27.7	0.75	0.64
Respectful treatment for herself	7.1	57.1	35.7	0.71	15.2	79.5	5.3	1.10	0.95
Marriage partner	2.8	44.3	52.9	0.50	14.3	65.2	20.5	0.94	0.77
Legal; equal right to;									
Healthcare	5.7	48.6	45.7	0.60	8.0	84.0	8.0	1.00	0.85
Education	8.6	40.0	51.4	0.57	17.9	74.1	8.0	1.10	0.90
Decision making at household level	4.3	41.4	54.3	0.50	4.5	58.9	36.6	0.68	0.61
Inheritance	8.6	32.9	58.6	0.50	8.0	63.4	28.6	0.79	0.68
When to marry	15.7	25.7	58.6	0.57	16.1	59.8	24.1	0.92	0.79
Who to marry	12.9	32.9	54.2	0.59	13.4	57.1	29.5	0.84	0.74
Number of children to bear	7.1	21.4	71.4	0.36	8.0	49.1	42.9	0.65	0.54
Decision making at community level	2.8	28.6	68.6	0.34	3.5	43.8	52.7	0.51	0.45
Self-esteem	2.9	54.2	42.9	0.60	13.4	77.7	8.9	1.04	0.87
Protection from exploitation (taking advantage of children)	5.7	41.4	52.9	0.53	13.4	58.9	27.7	0.86	0.73
Economic;									
Adequate food	17.1	44.3	38.6	0.79	22.3	75.9	1.8	1.21	1.04
Timely payment of labour wages	2.9	30.0	67.1	0.36	2.7	76.8	20.5	0.82	0.64
Start-up funds	5.7	22.9	71.4	0.34	3.6	68.8	27.6	0.76	0.60
Land ownership	14.3	25.7	60.0	0.54	3.5	65.2	31.3	0.72	0.65
Improved skills	15.7	28.6	55.7	0.60	8.0	77.3	14.3	0.94	0.81
Improved tools	5.7	37.2	57.1	0.49	5.4	67.0	27.6	0.78	0.66
Marketing of farm products	2.9	40.0	57.1	0.46	12.5	77.7	9.8	1.03	0.81
Health;									
Medical facilities	2.9	44.3	52.8	0.50	6.3	84.8	8.9	0.97	0.79
Protection from sexual abuse	10.0	34.3	55.7	0.54	25.0	71.4	3.6	1.21	0.96
Freedom from violence	12.9	30.0	57.1	0.56	19.6	74.1	6.3	1.13	0.91
Reproductive right	7.1	30.0	62.9	0.44	12.5	66.1	21.4	0.91	0.73
Protection from female genital mutilation	0.0	4.3	95.7	0.43	0.9	9.8	89.3	0.12	0.09

HA=Highly accessible, MA=Moderately accessible, NA=No access

Girl-child's Control to Various Institutions and Resources

Table 2c gives a picture of the control over various resources by the girl-children from the girl-children and household heads perspectives. The result reveals that while there are no striking variations between the girl-children and household heads on the components with the least level of control, however, variations exist under economic empowerment. From the perspective of household heads, start-up fund ($\bar{x}= 0.56$) is the component where the girl-children had the least level of control while the girl-children maintain that they have the least control on timely payment of her wages ($\bar{x}= 0.20$). This shows that the girl-children do not have control over her finance (either in the form of wages or from parents) and this may translate to low

economic empowerment. This assertion is supported by UNIFEM (2005); Fontana and Paciello (2010), who observe that women and girls in rural areas generally have a low level of economic empowerment.

Generally, this trend is consistent with access (Table 2a) and decision-making (Table 2b) of the girl-children over resources. This suggests that the girl-children have little control over resources that will aid their empowerment; hence, they may be more vulnerable to community/societal ills. This assertion agrees with the findings of Mayoux (2009), who observed that women and girls usually have lower levels of access to and control over resources and this may lead to greater vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse at the community level, if not the household level.

Table 2c: Percentage distribution of respondents (household heads and the girl-children) based on the girl-child control to various institutions and resources

Factors	Girl-children (n=70)				Household heads (n=112)				Total mean
	HA	MA	NA	Mean	HA	MA	NA	Mean	
Education;									
School choice	4.3	28.6	67.1	0.37	1.8	75.0	23.2	0.79	0.63
School fees	4.3	21.4	74.3	0.30	2.7	77.7	19.6	0.83	0.63
School uniform	4.3	24.3	71.4	0.33	0.9	79.5	19.6	0.81	0.63
Transport to and fro school	1.4	25.7	72.9	0.29	0.9	70.5	28.6	0.72	0.55
Books	2.9	34.3	62.9	0.40	2.7	82.1	15.2	0.88	0.69
Qualified teachers	2.9	30.0	67.1	0.36	0.9	67.9	31.2	0.70	0.57
Social;									
Shelter	4.3	31.4	64.3	0.40	3.6	61.6	34.8	0.69	0.58
Social association	2.9	30.0	67.1	0.35	3.6	54.4	42.0	0.61	0.52
Choice of religious association	7.1	22.9	70.0	0.37	4.5	33.9	61.6	0.43	0.41
Use of information	1.4	38.6	60.0	0.41	1.8	69.6	28.6	0.73	0.61
Delayed marriage	0.0	17.1	82.9	0.17	5.4	43.8	50.8	0.54	0.40
Migration	0.0	30.0	70.0	0.30	1.8	49.1	49.1	0.53	0.44
Respectful treatment for herself	4.3	41.4	54.3	0.50	8.0	67.9	24.1	0.84	0.71
Marriage partner	0.0	31.4	68.6	0.31	11.6	49.1	39.3	0.72	0.57
Legal; equal right to;									
Healthcare	5.7	35.7	58.6	0.47	3.6	70.5	25.9	0.78	0.66
Education	7.1	25.7	67.1	0.40	5.4	72.3	22.3	0.83	0.66
Decision making at household level	1.4	31.4	67.2	0.34	0.9	54.5	44.6	0.56	0.48
Inheritance	5.7	28.6	65.7	0.40	1.8	58.9	39.3	0.63	0.54
When to marry	7.1	24.3	68.6	0.39	6.3	52.7	41.0	0.65	0.55
Who to marry	7.1	22.9	70.0	0.37	6.2	50.9	42.9	0.63	0.53

Number of children to bear	2.9	17.1	80.0	0.22	4.5	42.0	53.5	0.51	0.40
Decision making at community level	0.0	28.6	71.4	0.29	0.0	42.0	58.0	0.42	0.37
Self-esteem	2.9	41.4	55.7	0.47	5.4	74.1	20.5	0.85	0.70
Protection from exploitation (taking advantage of children)	4.3	31.4	64.3	0.40	3.6	58.9	37.5	0.66	0.56
Economic;									
Adequate food	12.9	30.0	57.1	0.56	8.0	74.1	17.9	0.90	0.77
Timely payment of labour wages	1.4	17.2	81.4	0.20	0.9	63.4	35.7	0.65	0.48
Start-up funds	4.3	15.7	80.0	0.24	0.0	56.3	43.7	0.56	0.44
Land ownership	11.4	21.4	67.2	0.44	1.8	55.4	42.9	0.59	0.53
Improved skills	11.4	27.1	61.5	0.50	2.7	64.3	33.0	0.70	0.62
Improved tools	1.4	35.7	62.9	0.39	1.8	58.9	39.3	0.63	0.53
Marketing of farm products	2.9	30.0	67.1	0.36	5.4	66.0	28.6	0.77	0.61
Health;									
Medical facilities	2.9	34.3	62.8	0.40	1.8	74.1	24.1	0.78	0.63
Protection from sexual abuse	10.0	25.7	64.3	0.46	9.8	71.4	18.8	0.91	0.74
Freedom from violence	10.0	25.7	64.3	0.46	8.0	71.4	20.6	0.88	0.71
Reproductive right	5.7	24.3	70.0	0.36	5.4	60.7	33.9	0.71	0.58
Protection from female genital mutilation	0.0	2.9	97.1	0.29	0.0	8.9	91.1	0.90	0.07

HA=Highly accessible, MA=Moderately accessible, NA=No access

Categorization of the Girl-children into High, Moderate and Low Level of Empowerment

The result on Table 2d reveals that majority (67.6%) of the girl-children have a moderate level of empowerment. However, a further analysis disaggregating the respondents into household heads and girl-children reveals that a high percentage, in fact more than half (51.4%) of the girl-children have low level of empowerment and only 7.2% have a high level of empowerment (from the view of the girl-children). Interestingly, from the household heads perspective, none (0.0%) of the girl-children have low level of empowerment. This disparity is a reflection of the disparity encountered between the girl-

children and household heads in access, decision making and control over resources by the girl-children. This suggests that the provisions made by the household heads for their girl-children, which they thought was enough to empower the girl-children, was most likely not sufficient to empower the girl-children in the study area. This result (from the girl-children's perspective) disagrees with the findings of Ashimolowo and Akinbile (2008) who reported that no girl in Oyo state had a low level of empowerment. It however, agrees with the perspective of the household heads. They reported that 81.1% of the girl-children in the state have a moderate level of empowerment.

Table 2d: Categorization of the girl-children into high, moderate and low level of empowerment

	High % (≥ 121.28)	Moderate % (56.36-121.27)	Low % (11.0-56.35)
Girl-children (n=70)	7.2	41.4	51.4
Household heads (n=112)	16.1	83.9	0.0
Total (n= 182)	12.6	67.6	19.8

Mean= 88.81, SD= 32.46, Minimum= 11.00, Maximum= 146.00. * Figures in parentheses are the score range

Constraints to the Girl-child Empowerment Needs

Despite the numerous benefits associated with girl-child empowerment, there are still factors that prevent the girl-child from being empowered. Result from the analysis as shown in Table 3 shows that three-quarter (75.4%) of the respondents considered unwanted pregnancy as a severe constraint to the girl-child empowerment in the study area while 14.3% considered it a mild constraint. More than two-thirds (67.0%) of the considered early childhood marriage a severe constraint while 21.4% considered it a mild constraint to the girl-child empowerment, this depicts a high level of unwanted pregnancy and girl-child marriage in the study area. This finding supports the results of Council on Foreign Relations Report (2013); Ashimolowo and Akinbile (2008) who reported that when a young girl is married and gives birth, the vicious cycle of poverty, poor health, curtailed education, violence, instability, disregard for rule of law and violation of legal rights and other discrimination often continues into the next generation, especially for any daughters she may have. The effect of this is not only felt by the girl, her children or family but it affects the economic development of the nation.

A little above two-thirds (61.6%) of the respondents opined that preference given to the boy-child than the girl-child is

a severe constraint in the study area whereas 21.4% of the respondents considered it a mild constraint. This means that respondents in the study area prefer the male child to the female child and thus, the girl-children in the study area may have to internalize the notion that they are inferior. This may also affect the resources and privileges that the girl-child enjoys and this may have a negative effect on her self-esteem or psychological stability. This assertion is concomitant with that of Nwabgara *et al.* (2012) who opined that male child preference denies the girl-child good health, education, recreation, economic opportunity and the right to choose her partner, thus, violating her rights.

All the constraints listed were either severe or mild constraints and none of them fell under the “no constraint” category. This implies that there are numerous factors limiting the girl-child empowerment in the study area, however, some were more severe than the others. This finding is partially in line with the reports of InCo Report, (2012) and Ogueche (2015) who, in their report, listed some of the above constraints as harmful traditional practices that are detrimental to women and girls. They further stated that the protection of women and girls from these harmful practices is of critical relevance for the realization of the girl-child rights and empowerment and overall national development.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of households based on constraints to the girl-child empowerment needs

Constraints (n=112)	SC	MC	NC	Mean	Rank
Socio-cultural					
Early childhood marriage	67.0	21.4	11.6	1.55	2 nd
Preference given to the boy-child than the girl-child	61.6	21.4	17.0	1.45	3 rd
High bride price	63.4	14.3	22.3	1.41	4 th
Religious belief	41.1	21.4	37.5	1.04	11 th
Unwanted pregnancy	75.9	14.3	9.8	1.66	1 st
Child betrothal	52.7	17.9	29.5	1.23	7 th
Obnoxious widowhood rites	38.4	28.6	33.0	1.05	10 th
Socio-economic					
Poor parental education	49.1	23.2	27.7	1.21	8 th
Poor parental income	54.5	27.7	17.9	1.37	5 th
Parents occupation	44.6	26.8	28.6	1.16	9 th
Unfavourable parental attitude towards the girl-child	57.1	17.9	25.0	1.32	6 th

SC=Severe constraints, MC=Mild constraints, NC=Not a constraint

Test of Difference in the Access, Decision-making, Control and Empowerment Scores Between the Girl-children and Household Heads

The result reveals that there is a significant difference in the access, decision-making, control and empowerment scores between the girl-children and household heads. The result also shows that the girl-children have lower scores than household heads for

access ($\bar{x} = 35.2143 < 46.6518$), decision making ($\bar{x} = 18.2571 < 31.6071$), control ($\bar{x} = 13.0143 < 24.5000$) and empowerment ($\bar{x} = 66.4857 < 102.7589$) than the household heads. This implies that the variations reported along the various areas of empowerment between the household heads and the girl-children were statistically significant.

Table 4: Table showing the T-test analysis of the difference in the access, decision-making, control and empowerment scores between the girl-children household heads

	Groups	N	Df	Mean	MD	SD	t	P	Decision
Access scores	Girl-children	70	180	35.214	-11.438	12.355	-6.276	0.00	S
	Household heads	112		46.652					
Decision making scores	Girl-children	70	180	18.257	-13.350	14.287	-8.391	0.00	S
	Household heads	112		31.607					
Control scores	Girl-children	70	180	13.014	-11.486	14.676	-6.645	0.00	S
	Household heads	112		24.500					
Empowerment scores	Girl children	70	180	66.486	-36.273	37.012	-8.723	0.00	S
	Household heads	112		102.759					

t= t-statistic, df= degree of freedom, p= significance level, MD= mean difference SD= standard deviation

Results of Linear Regression Estimation on the Determinants of Level of Girl-Children Empowerment (Girl-children)

The ANOVA result on Table 5a shows that there is a significant difference in the level of contribution (F= 17.500, p= 0.00) of the variables included in the model. Table 5b shows the factors that determine the level of girl-child empowerment in the study area. It shows that of the forms in which the variables used to explain the empowerment level of the girl-children were entered, the model isolates school level and school type of the girl-children as the best determinants of empowerment level of the girl-children. The model reveals that two variables regressed on the level of empowerment of the girl-children gave a coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.365, showing that the variation in the level of girl-child empowerment is explained to about 37 per cent as a result of the variation in the identified variables. Thus, two variables can explain 37 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable. This implies that they determine 37 per cent of the variation that can be observed in the level of empowerment of the girl-children.

The Table further reveals that school level (primary, secondary) (β= 0.429, p=

0.00) is the highest predictor of the level of empowerment achieved by the girl-children. This indicates that girl-children in higher school level or with educational attainment have higher level of empowerment than those in a lower level or with lower educational attainment. This is because with increased schooling for the girl-children, they acquire information and skills, which yield literacy, numeracy, and cognitive skills. With more skills, they are better-equipped to compete in the labour market and secure higher-paying jobs, unlike their counterparts with little years of formal education. The other factor that affects the level of empowerment of the girl-children is school type (β= -0.286, p= 0.013). This indicates that girl-children attending public schools were 28.6% less likely to be empowered as compared to private school attendees. The public schools are rarely equipped with facilities; teachers and even the buildings may be dilapidated. In the long run, these might affect the quality of education received by the girl-children. These variables can therefore be exploited to improve the empowerment level of the girl-children in the study area.

Table 5a: Analysis of Variance showing significant difference in the contribution of the independent variable (girl-children) - (n= 70)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32104.379	2	16052.190	17.500	0.000
Residual	55951.855	61	917.244		
Total	88056.234	63			

df= degree of freedom, F= f-statistic

Table 5b: Table showing the determinants of empowerment level of the girl-children (girl-children) – (n=70)

Model	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)		7.605	0.000
School level	0.429	3.843	0.000
School type	-0.286	-2.560	0.013
Age	0.102	0.647	0.520
School enrolment	-0.036	-0.335	0.739

R= 0.604, R²= 0.365, adjusted R²= 0.344, β =beta value, t= t-statistic

Results of Linear Regression Estimation on the Determinants of Level of Girl-Children Empowerment (Household Heads)

The ANOVA result on Table 5c shows that there is a significant difference in the level of contribution (F= 8.401, p= 0.01) of the variables included in the model. Table 5d shows the factors that determine the level of girl-child empowerment in the study area. It shows that of the forms in which the variables used to explain the empowerment level of the girl-children were entered, the model excluded constraints as the best determinants of empowerment level of the girl-children from the household heads perspective. The model further reveals that an independent variable regressed on the level of empowerment of the girl-children gave a coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.183. This shows that the variation in the level of girl-child empowerment in the

study area is explained to about 18 per cent as a result of the variation in the identified variables. This means that the one independent variable can explain 18 per cent variation in the dependent variable. Hence, 18 per cent of the variation observed in the empowerment level of the girl-children in the study area is determined by constraint to girl-child empowerment.

The result reveals constraints (β = 0.233, p= 0.00) to empowerment level of the girl-children as the highest predictor of the empowerment level of the girl-children in the study area. This implies that a unit increase in the constraints to empowerment of the girl-children resulted in 23.3 per cent decrease in the level of girl-child empowerment. Positive exploitation of this variable will enhance the empowerment level of the girl-children in the study area.

Table 5c: Analysis of Variance showing significant difference in the contribution of the independent variable (household heads) – (n= 112)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5413.569	2	2706.785	8.401	0.001(b)
Residual	24163.610	75	322.181		
Total	29577.179	77			

df= degree of freedom, F= f-statistic

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 5d: Table showing the determinants of empowerment level of the girl-children (household heads) – (n= 112)

	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)		0.967	0.337
Constraints	0.233	2.219	0.030
Age of respondents	0.118	1.114	0.269
Educational qualification	0.044	0.418	0.677
Income	0.128	1.225	0.224

R= 0.428, R²= 0.183, adjusted R²= 0.161, β =beta value, t= t-statistic

Conclusion

In conclusion, household heads’ education, is an important socioeconomic variable that has a positive impact on the level of the girl-child empowerment. Unwanted pregnancy, early child marriage and preference given to the boy-child than the girl-child are major constraints to the level of the girl-child empowerment. More access to resources was enjoyed by the girl-child than decision and control.

From the girl-children’s perspective, the empowerment level of the girl-child in the study area is low and from the household heads it is moderate. School type and school level (from the girl-children personal characteristics) are major contributor to the level of the girl-child empowerment. Constraints (from the household heads) to girl-child empowerment was the highest predictor of the level of the girl-child empowerment.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Adult literacy programmes which should include basic literacy should be institutionalized.
2. Public enlightenment programmes should be organized so that people can be to drop traditional practices which are harmful to the girl-child, especially

- the FGM practice which is a constraint to the girl-child empowerment.
3. Efforts should be made by the government to provide good schools (both primary and secondary) with the necessary facilities and qualified teachers. Government should also bring about policy that will bring about increase girl-children school enrolment, retention and completion. This can be done by reducing fees/ no fees at all (for primary and secondary), providing scholarships and locating schools near the homes of the girl-children.
 4. The educational system should also concentrate on sex education of the girl-child. They should also be educated on the use of contraceptives, so as to curb the incidences of unwanted pregnancy.
 5. Efforts should be made by the government and NGO to organize empowerment interventions that complement their schooling, enabling them to exert more control over their own bodies, economic and family resources, and life in general.
 6. Efforts should be made by the government and other stakeholders to ensure that education and information programmes on the girl-child’s health are integrated into the curriculum and are age-appropriate, avoiding stereotypes that devalue women.

7. Skills acquisition programmes should be organized for the girl-children and start-up funds provided for participants so as to improve the economic empowerment.

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