

Influence of Girl Child Education on Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among Secondary School Students in Anambra State

O.C.N. Okonkwor (Ph.d), and Oranus Racheal Oluchi
obyokonkwor@gmail.com

-Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to determine the influence of girl child education on achievement of sustainable development goals among secondary school students in Awka South LGA based on location. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The sample size for this study comprised 416 students from public secondary schools in the study area. Non-proportionate stratified random sampling procedure was used to draw four schools from each of the nine villages in the zone. This is to accommodate town with few schools. The instrument for data collection was a developed questionnaire on effect of girl-child education (EGCE). The face and content validity of the instruments was determined by three experts from the Faculty of Education. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained with Cronbach Alpha statistics and it determined the internal consistency of the instruments and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.776. Data was collected through direct delivery approach to the respondents with the help of some research assistants who were briefed and guided on the modalities for the administration and collection of the questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The result female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students, while female secondary school students in rural areas rated undecided/neutral on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South LGA. Conclusions were made and it was recommended among others that In order to achieve SDGs goals among secondary school students, gender balanced curriculum and education policies should be established by the Federal Ministry of Education. Hence, such curriculum must consider the interest of the girl-child so that she is motivated to learn.

Introduction

United Nations (UN) created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Worldwide Goals, in 2015 as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, protect the

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environment, and guarantee that everyone enjoys freedom and harmony by 2030 (De Villiers et al., 2021). The 17 SDGs are interlinked; they determine the impact of initiatives in one domain and progress in social, economic, and environmental sustainability. These SDGs require everybody's creativity, understanding, technology, and financial resources in every environment. Approximately 262 million children and teenagers are out of school today (Matthew & Kazaure, 2020). It will result in possibly adding impoverishment and marginalization for 750 million individuals (UNESCO, 2021). UNESCO develops educational resources to assist individuals in living as global citizens free of hatred and bigotry (Ty, 2021). It aims to ensure that every child and citizen has access to a good education by fostering national connections and also cultural heritage and the equality of all civilizations (Addey, 2021). The National Child Welfare Policy (1989) in Ada (2007) defined girl-child as a person below 14 years of age. Citing Offorma (2009) Omede (2016) defined girl-child as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This period is made up of infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stage of development. The girl child is seen as a young female person, who would eventually grow into a woman and marry; she is conditioned to look after the young ones, the home and take care of the kitchen (Omede, 2016, Ojo, 2012, Okonkwor, 2012). According to Okonkwor (2019), the girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen years of age. This is the age before one becomes young adult. This period covers the crèche, nursery or early childhood (0 – 5 years), primary (6 – 12 years) and secondary school (12 – 18 years). During this period, the young child is totally under the care of the adult who may be her parents or guardians and older siblings. Omolewa, (2018) reported that during the adolescence period, the girl-child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. The girl child is very dependent on the significant others, those on whom she models her behaviour, through observation, repetition and imitation. Her physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional developments start and progress to get to the peak at the young adult stage. Education has a profound effect on women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society. According to Ondere (2012), girls' child enrolment is beneficial as it contributes to economic productivity, social development, intergenerational education, social equity and sustainability of development efforts. Research evidence shows that education of the female child is paramount to the development of a nation. Education in its general sense is a form of learning, in which knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching training, research or simply through autodictatism (Mbilingi, 2021). Education for girls is one of the criteria path or ways to promote social and economic development (World Bank, 2019).

The introduction of the girl-child education and enrolment programme by the government of the Federal republic of Nigeria emerged as a result of increasing level of illiteracy among girls child in developing countries. This however made it a thing of concern to persons concerned with development in order to involve the female folk in the process of national development. Considering that, Nigeria most populated country in Africa, it (Nigeria) shares same experience

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in the high number of women illiterate particularly in the northern part of the country where socio-economic, religious, parents' level of education and cultural practices militate against women development. Successive government in Nigeria developed several policies and programmes to ensure that girls child in Nigeria are given the education every Nigerian ought to get to make them functional in the society (Munkernchern, 2019).

In the view of Asiegbu (2015), girl child's education leads to significant social development in various areas of human life such as health, social and psychological as education in any normal society is accepted as an instrument to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for men and girl child (Okonkwor, 2017). Some of the most notable health influence of girl child education according to report from Ihovbere, (2020) include decreased fertility rates and lower infant mortality rates, and lower maternal mortality rates. Closing the gender gap in education also increases gender equality, which is considered important both in itself and because it ensures equal rights and opportunities for people regardless of gender. Education of girls provides more opportunities and choices available to girls and women for development to their full potential. Educated girls as prospective future leaders was assertive, have a Voice and take critical and right decisions for the development of a just, peaceful, harmonious society and sustainable development. This study would therefore fill this gap and give suggestions on how to address this critical challenge in the government efforts to enhance access to education among girls.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of girl child education on achievement of sustainable development goals among secondary school students in Awka South LGA based on location.

Specifically, the study determined:

1. The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A.
2. The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A.
3. The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A.

4. The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?
2. What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?
3. What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?
4. What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?

METHODS

The design of the study was a descriptive survey research designs. The study was conducted in Awka South Local government Area. The population of the study consists of all the senior secondary class two (SS 2) students in 10 public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. These Ten schools have a population of one thousand, one hundred and one (1101) ss2 students. The sample size for the study comprised four hundred and sixteen (416) students from the public secondary schools in the study area. The schools for the study were classified along urban and rural communities in Awka South Local Government Areas. For even representation, non-proportionate stratified random sampling procedure was used to draw four schools from each of the nine villages in the zone. The research instrument for data collection used in this study was a developed questionnaire on effect of girl-child education (EGCE)" designed to ask questions on influence of girl child education towards achievement of sustainable development goals among secondary school students. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the data collected from the field for this study were analyzed and the summaries were presented in tables to highlight the findings. The presentation was sequentially done starting with the answers to the research questions and then the testing of hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students.

S/N	Item statements	Urban Area			Rural Area		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Girl Child Education will end the epidemic of AIDs, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne disease and other communicable disease.	3.95	1.02	Agreed	1.85	.91	Disagree
2	Girl child education will strengthen the prevention and treatment of substances abuse including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	2.26	.74	Disagreed	3.52	.74	Agree
3	Girl child education will achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk, protection, access to quality essential health-care services for all.	3.25	.76	Undecided	3.80	.81	Agree
4	Girl child will achieve access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	4.30	.78	Agreed	2.55	.97	Undecided
5	Girl child education will support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable disease that affect developing countries.	4.61	.73	Strongly Agreed	2.65	.72	Undecided
6.	Girl child education achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all girls and end open defecation	3.90	.88	Agreed	2.02	.64	Disagree
Grand Mean		3.71		Agreed	2.73		Undecided

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting

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well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South LGA. The analysis revealed that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students (Grand mean = 3.71). The standard deviation scores showed homogeneity in their responses (.73-1.02). On the other hand, the analysis also revealed that female secondary school students in rural areas rated undecided/neutral on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students (Grand mean = 2.73). The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the response (.64-.91).

Research Question 2

What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students.

S/N	Item statements	Urban Area			Rural Area		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Girl Child Education helps in ending all forms of malnutrition and addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls	3.25	.76	Agreed	1.05	.86	Strongly Disagreed
2	Girl Child Education increases knowledge of technology development and usage	4.52	.62	Strongly agreed	3.35	.72	Agreed
3	Girl Child Education tends to end hunger and ensure access by all girls to all kinds of food	4.10	.62	Agreed	2.26	.65	Undecided
4	Girl Child Education tends to increase the knowledge of nutritional value of different kinds of food to a girl child	4.90	.90	Strongly Agreed	3.05	.86	Undecided
5	Girl Child Education double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers	3.50	.70	Agreed	2.45	.65	Disagreed
6.	Girl Child Education pays special attention to the need of girls	3.25	.53	Agreed	3.20	.74	Undecided
Grand mean		3.92		Agreed	2.56		Undecided

Table 2 reveals the mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among

secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A. It was reported that the analysis revealed that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students (Grand mean = 3.92). The standard deviation scores showed heterogeneity in their responses (.53-.90). On the other hand, the analysis also revealed that female secondary school students in rural areas rated undecided/neutral on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students (Grand mean=2.56). The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the response (.65-.86).

Research Question 3

What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students.

S/N	Item statements	Urban Area			Rural Area		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Girl Child Education ensures that all girls complete free equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and goal-for effective learning outcomes.	4.25	.76	Agreed	4.51	.77	Strongly agreed
2	Girl Child Education ensures that all girls have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-tertiary education so that they are ready for tertiary education	3.56	.62	Agreed	2.95	.74	Agreed
3	Girl Child Education eliminates, gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all level of education and vocational training	4.55	.62	Strongly Agreed	3.49	.79	Agreed
4	Girl Child Education will ensure that all girl achieve literacy and numeracy	2.90	.90	Undecided	3.54	.66	Agreed
5	Girl Child Education will ensure that all girls acquire the knowledge and skill needed to promote sustainable lifestyle	3.51	.70	Agreed	2.95	1.02	Undecided
6.	Girl Child Education substantially increase the number of girls who have relevant skill, including vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	3.45	.53	Agreed	3.75	.94	Agreed

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Grand mean	3.70	Agreed	3.53	Agreed
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Table 3 reports the mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A. It was found that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students (Grand mean = 3.70). The standard deviation scores showed heterogeneity in their responses (.53-.90). In the same vein, the analysis also reports that female secondary school students in rural areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students (Grand mean=3.53). The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the response (.66-1.02).

Research Question 4

What is the mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students.

S/N	Item statements	Urban Area			Rural Area		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Girl Child Education end all forms of elimination against all girl child and girls everywhere	3.20	.74	Agreed	1.52	.67	Disagreed
2	Girl Child Education eliminate all forms of violence against all girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.	3.30	.55	Agreed	2.10	.62	Disagreed
3	Girl Child Education eliminate all harmful practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	4.15	.79	Agreed	3.55	.49	Agreed
4	Girl Child Education recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work rendered by girl through promotion of shared responsibility within the household.	3.25	.76	Undecided	1.10	.76	Strongly disagreed

5	Girl Child Education ensure girl's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all level of decision making in school	4.15	.85	Agreed	1.05	.80	Strongly disagreed
6.	Girl Child Education strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all girls at all levels	3.40	.58	Agreed	1.11	.69	Strongly disagreed
Grand mean		3.57		Agreed	1.73		Strongly disagreed

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation on the response of urban and rural female secondary school students on the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students in Awka South L.G.A. The study showed that, female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students (Grand mean = 3.57). The standard deviation scores showed homogeneity in their responses (.55-.85). In the same vein, the analysis also reports that female secondary school students in rural areas rated strongly disagreed on the influence of girl child education on girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students. (Grand mean=1.73). The standard deviation scores show homogeneity in the response (.49-.80).

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed as follows

The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students

The finding of this study revealed that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students, while female secondary school students in rural areas rated undecided/neutral on the influence of girl child education on healthy lives and promoting well-being for all girls among secondary school students in Awka South LGA. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Muff *et al* (2017) who found that Several scholars have emphasized the necessity of eliminating gender disparities in education. Women are graduating at a greater rate and with higher marks. The government of India has created scholarship

programs such as UDAAN to improve the spirit of women and encourage them to pursue technical and vocational education.

This also conforms to the findings of Muff *et al* (2017) who reported that scholarships have a significant influence on students since it has been seen that students who get scholarships are more inclined to engage in academic pursuits. Furthermore, because most scholarships are merit-based, it motivates students to study properly. After reviewing all of this research, we can conclude that the significance of Sustainable Development Goals is limitless. However, it should be noted that several obstacles must be overcome to attain sustainability.

The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students

The analysis of data revealed that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students, while female secondary school students in rural areas rated undecided/neutral on the influence of girl child education on ending hungers, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture among secondary school students in Awka South LGA. This slightly conforms to the findings of Rammohan and Vu (2018) which gave quantitative evidence of the involvement of many economic and social factors in educational gender inequalities. However, the patrilocal exogamy norm, in which wives migrate to co-reside with their husband's kin, is associated with poorer outcomes for women's schooling compared to men's schooling; and, according to anthropological research, gender-differentiated inequities in education are more pronounced in Northern India.

This finding is in affirmation with the work of Pandey (2018), who found that in some countries have made significant progress toward implementing the Education for All program. As a fundamental right, numerous significant programs and policies have been implemented to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged six to twelve years. The government must look at some of the major issues affecting quality education and accessibility in India's educational system.

The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students

The result reports that female secondary school students in urban and rural areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all girls among secondary school students in Awka

South LGA. This aligns with the findings of Tabreek and Aga (2017) who's study reaffirmed the importance and vital impact of educating girls for the overall development of society and proposes various strategies to increase awareness and reduce gender disparity in education. The proposed strategies include: mentorship programs, summer projects, community service initiatives, training of educators, community engagement, and context-specific media campaign including effective use of social media.

This also aligns with Agbakwuru, (2012) who found that considerable potential for accelerated national growth that girls hold in developing countries and how education for girls is key in empowering girl child and in achieving sustainable development. In addition to showing the positive impacts educating a girl in Zambia, it presented the importance of including girls into international and domestic development programs in general.

The mean response of urban and rural female secondary school students on influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students

Data analyzed reveals that female secondary school students in urban areas agreed to the influence of girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students, while female secondary school students in rural areas rated strongly disagreed on the influence of girl child education on girl child education on gender equality and empowering all women and girls among secondary school students in Awka South LGA. These findings is in alignment with the result of Uramah (2010) who revealed that low income status of girl child compared to their counterparts is implicated in their inadequate access to elective political office in Anambra state. Secondly, the study revealed that girl child preoccupation with family building accounts for their ineffective political participation in Anambra state politics. The finding further aligns with the report of Aina (2013), which states that some factors such as restriction of girl child by their husbands, ignorance of the existence of empowerment initiatives and lack of interest among girl child have hindered girl child from taking advantage of existing empowerment initiatives. It was found that Nsukka girl child participate in some development processes especially in agricultural production activities, voting in elections and belong to girl child organizations.

This conforms to the report of Aina (2013) who found that it was also discovered following the testing of the hypotheses that the higher the incomes level of girl child, the higher their participation in development processes. The study also showed that the higher the educational level of girl child, the higher their participation in development processes. The study also revealed that lack of time due to domestic and reproductive roles of girl child, poor economic base, illiteracy, discriminatory attitude of male has restricted girl child participation in

development processes. The finding further agrees with Mamdani (2016) who reported that enrolment of Youth Service Corps development was also used as youth service is the outcome of tertiary level gender products. Reasons for this continuous gender inequality in Nigerian education were found to be traditional and cultural. The implication is revealed in poor national development as the contribution of the females is very significant. Recommendations include promulgation of laws by the Federal Government to make parents release their girl-children for education and enforcing 50:50 quota system of admission in all levels of Nigerian educational system.

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