

Difference Of Parental Economic Factors Across Gender: A Study On Dropouts And Non-Dropouts From Government Secondary Schools Of Zamfara, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This research examines the difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. The discussion in the study is based on the theoretical framework of conflict theory. This theory is appropriate for the study because it allows the reader to understand how children's education is significantly affected by the parental economic factors. A total of 620 respondents were involved in the quantitative study comprising of both dropout students and non-dropouts. Questionnaires were the instruments used to sample the opinions of 620 students comprising of both dropout students and non-dropouts. During the analysis and interpretation of the responses gathered from dropout students and non-dropouts which is the quantitative data, descriptive statistics was used to describe the demographic profiles of respondents using frequencies percentages, means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was also used which involved T-test to investigate the difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara Nigeria. In this study the data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. The findings of the study show the result of T-test which indicated that there is difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students' and non-dropout. The study will be significant to teachers, sociologist of education, educational planners, government, international agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and nongovernmental organizations by putting into practice the suggestions and recommendations of the study which will help them tackle adequately the phenomenon of student's dropout in order to improve the quality of secondary education and minimize the problem of dropout in Zamfara, Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Difference, Parental Economic Factors, Students' Dropouts, Zamfara, Nigeria.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic factors of parent are found to be some of the contributing factors to secondary school student's dropout; these include monthly family income, financial situation of parents and engaging in selling. Other factors include accessing of internet connection, organizing extra lessons, cost of transportation and cost of text books as usually mentioned by the parents (Kainuwa, 2014). According to the United

Nations Millennium Goals (2008), children from some of the Nigerian states are not likely to enroll in school, and if they do, it is unlikely they will complete primary and secondary education due to the high level of poverty. High levels of poverty often force parents to choose between food for the family and school for the children. This situation becomes magnified when looking at higher levels of education and it contributes to the cycle of poverty which was passed on from generation to generation. Often parents choose to take their

children out of school and involve them in activities that produce income, and many times these activities are illegal, immoral, and extremely detrimental to the lives of the children (NBS, 2009, United Nations Millennium Goals, 2008). In Nigeria especially Zamfara state, there is high poverty rate among parents which may be attributed to economic factors. This may have relationship with their inability to meet the financial demands for their children schooling (Yusuf, 2008).

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Despite international and national efforts to ensure a successful migration from gender disparity to gender parity of secondary school students, huge success has not been recorded. Evidence has noted that in Nigeria, governmental, non-governmental and private initiatives within and outside the frontiers of the nation for the northern states to embrace education has proved abortive (Mohammed, 2004). The number of secondary school students more especially girls attending schools in some northern states of Nigeria such as Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto is still abysmally low while the male child has a choice to attend; his female counterpart is strictly discouraged from obtaining the basic western education (UNGEI-Nigeria, 2012, www.ungei.org). UNGEI-Nigeria (2012) further stated that there are still millions of boys and girls without access to primary need secondary education across the continent and many millions that have started dropout.

Instead of replicating studies that dealt with other recurring variables, this study concentrated its efforts on dropouts in gender types based on the parental economic factors and the differences of these factors among secondary school students of Zamfara Nigeria. The gender of interest is male and female secondary school students. The findings of this study also provided the necessary suggestions that could be applied to lessen student's dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education has many benefits and has positive impact in our life. Education, no doubt, remains the most outstanding development priority area in the world. An educated person is an asset for any country. In today's world, human capital is considered the best national resource. Education improves productivity, health and reduces negative features of life (EFA, 2002).

However, there is much debate over the general topic of students dropping out of school especially from secondary school. There is much debate also, over the best indicators to use in identifying who is susceptible for dropping out of school. Studies have shown that various factors such as parental and school factors can be used as predictors of dropping out of school more especially from secondary school (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Lehr, et al., 2004). As noted by Collins (2009), the crisis of secondary schools dropouts is an international problem and the prevalence of drop out varies between and within countries depending on the educational

structure and patterns of participation in that country and the factors that usually lead to dropout.

The researcher's personal experience as an indigene of Zamfara state and working with different communities has shown that, despite the existence of the Universal Basic Education Act (UBE Act 2000-2004) in Nigeria, the secondary school students in other communities of Zamfara do not participate much in basic education. The female dropouts in some schools were higher than males, 42.10% as against 28.67% (Ajaja, 2012). According to Ajaja, (2012) percentage of dropout was still higher among female students in other schools, 24.28% for females as against 21.47% for males. In another studies it has shown that the participation of the female children and secondary school students in general in these communities is far greater than in other rural communities of Northern Nigeria with an increase of over 60% in enrolment (UNICEF & DFID Report 2008). It is of paramount importance therefore, to investigate the parental economic factors and the relationship of these variables on secondary school students' dropout and provide solutions to the problem. By so doing, it is hope that the level of dropout will be reduced if not eliminated and the level of enrolment retention and completion will increase rapidly.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- ✓ To explore the demographic profiles of dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.
- ✓ To examine the difference of economic factors of parent, across gender among students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ What are the demographic profiles of dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria?
- ✓ Is there difference of economic factors of parent, across gender among students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho1. There is no relationship between economic factors of parent, with students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the World Bank report (2004) and Gender in Nigeria report (2012), Nigeria has the largest population of any African country, some 162.5 million people. Of this magnitude 49% are female; some 80.2 million girls and women. The report said that any discussion about Nigeria's future must necessarily entail consideration of girls and women, the role they play and the barriers they face in making the future. In another report by Gender in Nigeria report

(2012) and World Bank report (2008) Girls' dropout rates are high. Nigeria has the largest number of out-of-school and dropout children in the world. The figures show wide disparities between States and across communities. A total of 70.8% of young women aged 20-29 in the North-West are unable to read or write compared to 9.7% in the South-East. Several reasons explain this such as early marriage, early childbirth, poor sanitation, and the shortage of female teachers. However, two reasons stand out.

User fees (DHS, 2008) indicated that girls from the poorest wealth quintile are most likely to be out of school, and parents say that cost is a major reason for withdrawing girls from education. In theory education is free, but in practice parents pay fees, which disproportionately burden the poor. For both girls and boys, there is a strong correlation between income level and school attendance (Nigeria, 2012).

The link between poverty and dropping out from school had been highlighted by number of studies in looking at the interaction between secondary school student's dropouts in particular and the monthly family income and financial situation. All the studies agreed that students 'enrolment, retention and completion can seriously be affected by the poverty of the parents and can also be encouraged by financial situation of the parents which are related to parental economic factors (Birdsall, et al 2005; Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso & Verner, 2007). Poverty could be regarded as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for secondary school students to be out of school' (Hunt, 2008); Hunt (2008) call poverty, 'a plausible explanation of school disruption'. Chugh (2011) maintained that poverty of the parents still remains one of the significant causes for the low participation of children in schooling and dropout.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this study, conflict theory was used; this theory is more appropriate to be used in this study because it is closely related to the issue of social differences that existed between individuals especially gender difference (Crossman, 2013). Conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in society and that these conflicts become the engine for social change. In this context, power can be understood as control of material resources and accumulated wealth, control of politics and the institutions that make up society, and one's social status relative to others (determined not just by class but by race, gender, sexuality, culture, and religion, among other things).

According to Crossman (2013), Conflict theory originated in the work of Karl Marx, who focused on the causes and consequences of class conflict between the bourgeoisie (the owners of the means of production and the capitalists) and the proletariat (the working class and the poor). Focusing on the economic, social, and political implications of the rise of capitalism in Europe, Marx theorized that this system, premised on the existence of a powerful minority class (the bourgeoisie) and an oppressed majority class (the proletariat), created class conflict because the interests of the two were at odds, and resources were unjustly distributed among them.

Within this system an unequal social order was maintained through ideological coercion which created consensus--and acceptance of the values, expectations, and conditions as determined by the bourgeoisie. Marx theorized that the work of producing consensus was done in the "superstructure" of society, which is composed of social institutions, political structures, and culture, and what it produced consensus for was the "base," the economic relations of production.

V. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research design was adopted for this study. The study sought to determine the difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. The main population of this study consisted of all dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on the factors contributing to dropout and its social effects among secondary school students of Zamfara Nigeria. Data were collected from the dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria through the means of a questionnaire. A purposive sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the dropout students on the basis of their status that is all dropout students from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. Whereby stratified random sampling technique was used for the non-dropout. The actual population of dropout students according to Zamfara state Ministry of Education data (ZMOE, 2015) is 1,600; for non dropout the total population according to the same source (ZMOE, 2015) is 3165. The sample size for this study was 620 gifted students.

VI. FINDINGS

The study used quantitative methods of analysis to investigate the difference of parental economic factors across gender among students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. In the present study, the result of data analysis gathered from dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria will be reported.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF DROPOUT STUDENTS AND NON-DROPOUT FROM GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZAMFARA, NIGERIA?

This section present the background information of the respondents gathered from the survey. The first part of the questionnaire posits several questions related to the demographic information of the respondents. The questions are on group of respondent and gender of respondent. The descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 show that 310 (50.0%) respondents from among the student who participated in this study are dropout students.

At the same time 310 (50.0%) respondents from among the student who participated in this study are non dropouts.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Group of Respondents	Student's Dropout	310	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Non Dropouts	310	50.0	50.0	100.0
Gender of Respondent	Total	620	100.0	100.0	
	Male	420	67.7	67.7	67.7
	Female	200	32.3	32.3	100.0
Total		620	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1: Demographic Profiles of Dropout Students and Non-dropout

The result of Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the respondents' sex or gender and it shows that 420 respondents represented by 67.7% of the respondents who are from among the dropout students and non dropout are male. A total of 200 respondents represented by 32.3% for the whole sample are female students.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: IS THERE DIFFERENCE OF ECONOMIC FACTORS OF PARENT, ACROSS GENDER AMONG STUDENTS' DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUT FROM GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZAMFARA, NIGERIA?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho1. There is no relationship between economic factors of parent, with students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.

In this section, the data obtained from the questionnaire related to RQ2 concerning the difference of parental economic factors across gender among students' dropouts from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria was analysed. Below is the data analysis of the study according to the research question: To answer RQ2, a questionnaire was administrated to measure difference of parental economic factors, across gender among students' dropouts from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. Table 4.6 depicted the T-test result for this analysis.

	Gender	N	M	Lt	MD	DS	t	df	p value
Economic Factors of Parents	Male	420	2.8670	.033	.14227	.40688	3.962	365.034	.000
	Female	200	2.7248		.14227	.44036	3.853		.000

Table 2: T-test for Difference of parental economic factors across gender among students' dropouts

In the output of Table 2, the significance levels for Levene's test for all the variables are: .033, .724, .033 and .724 respectively. These are larger than the cut-off of .05. This means that the assumption of equal variances has not been violated.

For economic factors of parents the male students had (M=2.8670, DS=.40688), whereas female students had (M=2.7248, DS=.44036). The value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column of economic factors of parents which is .000, is less than .05 (.00= P<0.05), the results indicated that, a statistically significant difference was present in the mean scores on this variable for each of the two groups. Based on this, the Ho1 was rejected.

VII. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study shows that there is significant difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. The study revealed that, lack of financial support prevents parents from sending their female children to school. As said earlier, in most communities, particularly in rural areas, female children were introduced to household duties and minor income generating task from a very early age. In a nutshell, better living conditions in families enhanced female children participation in schools. The findings of this study is supported by User fees (DHS, 2008) which indicated that girls from the poorest wealth quintile are most likely to be out of school, and parents say that cost is a major reason for withdrawing girls from education. For both girls and boys, there is a strong correlation between income level and school attendance.

The study also found out that, some of the parents also are interested in sending their female children to school, but they were discouraged by economic problems. In fact, the incidence of poverty in the area under investigation is very high, which affects children's education in general, and in particular that of female children. In consequence, female children from low income and low financial support families are more likely not to be attending or drop out from schools.

The finding of the present study is similar to the research conducted by Ahmad Sanda and Tukur Garba (2007) based on data collected from 600 rural households of Sokoto State, Nigeria. The results confirmed significant gender disparity in educational attainment, school attendance, dropout and non-dropout with female children at a serious disadvantage. The study is in line with a study conducted by Usman (2009) who observed that in northern Nigeria, there were over 80% of the unskilled and uneducated adolescent street boys and girls, majority of them are dropout and out of school children. They depend on street begging and menial jobs for daily survival.

Similarly, studies from Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda matched the findings of this study where it was found that female children from poor households were less likely to be enrolled and stay in schools because of school fees, text books, school uniforms etc., (UNESCO's EDI, 2006; UNESCO Global Monitor, 2006).

Another issue related to gender and dropout in Zamfara is preference for boy's children education than female children's' education which is related to low income of the parents, because some parents were reported to have no sufficient money to cater for the whole children's' education as a result they prefer to send boys and withdraw their daughters from school.

VIII. IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study on difference of parental economic factors across gender among students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools is among the recent investigations conducted in Zamfara, Nigeria. These findings are considered basic and require further research and discussion in this area. The findings of this study highlighted

the significant differences between parental economic factors with students' dropouts and non dropouts from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. Further studies should investigate other variables among other categories of students to make the research more general in nature. Given that this study was conducted in only ten secondary schools of Zamfara state Nigeria, using more than ten schools to comprehensively investigate the problem of dropouts is necessary. The findings of this study suggested that parental economic factors influence the students' dropouts and non dropouts from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. Further research can examine the strategies for improving secondary school's education of Zamfara, Nigeria. Purely qualitative research methodology should be used to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon on students' dropouts and non dropouts.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account the extent to which parental economic factors are affecting secondary school student's education, the following recommendations might be helpful to authorities and the whole community to solve and tackle adequately the problem of student's dropout. Education is the weapon that breaks the bond of ignorance and poverty, if this is understood by the parents and guardian, and then it will encourage them to do all within their powers to send their children to school despite all odds.

Government and society should focus on how to alleviate some of the stress in the lives of people by introducing them to some related income earning occupations, and how to help students of all backgrounds thrive in school in order to lessen the problem of dropout. The government should institute a scheme of giving loans to farmers to help them make some income so that they can look after their children, who in turn will be good citizens of the country. The government should (especially in the villages) where the parents have made up their minds that they aren't going to educate their female children provide items such as books and uniforms at moderate prices or if possible free of charge.

Considering the general poverty of families in Nigeria, the government, at all levels should give priority to the funding of education and equip the schools with relevant teaching text books and learning materials. The government should also provide financial or material incentives by adopting a poverty-alleviation strategy, particularly for households headed by women and low financial support families is essential in the long run. Unless some income generating activities involving women parents are set in motion, the problem seems likely to continue to affect children for a long time to come. In the short run, it is required that providing students with financial support to buy pens, pencils, books or materials for clothing will help to solve some of the barriers to stay in schools. A policy strategy and action have to be adopted by the government and donors to assist in providing these grants and there should be a control mechanism to ensure that these materials have been distributed and used properly. There is a need for establishing of the institution of loan

scheme and provision of instructional materials at moderate price or free.

X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This explanatory study attempted to reveal the difference of parental economic factors across gender among students' dropouts and non-dropout from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. The findings explored the difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students and non-dropout from government secondary schools, which is a meaningful change in the Nigerian education system in general. The descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic characteristics were discussed in the earlier section of this study. These include group of respondent, sex or gender, age, parent's educational background and parent's occupation. The summary of the T-test results showed that a statistically significant difference was present in the mean scores difference of parental economic factors across gender among dropout students from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria.

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