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## Language and Cultural Influence Towards Girl-Child Education: A Case Study of Katsina Senatorial Zone

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined Language and Cultural Influence Towards Girl-Child Education: A Case Study of Katsina Senatorial Zone. The purpose of the research was to investigate how language practices and cultural beliefs influenced the participation, retention, and academic achievement of girls in formal education within the Katsina Senatorial Zone. Specifically, the study sought to identify the linguistic and cultural barriers that hindered girl-child education, explored community perceptions toward educating girls, and determined how these factors contributed to gender disparity in school enrollment and completion rates. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from selected primary and secondary schools across the senatorial zone through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions involving pupils, parents, teachers, and community leaders. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation from rural and urban areas. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring cultural and linguistic patterns influencing educational outcomes. Findings from the study revealed that language and cultural influences significantly contributed to disparities in girl-child education. Linguistically, the dominance of indigenous languages at home, coupled with limited exposure to the language of instruction in schools, affected girls' comprehension, confidence, and academic performance. Cultural factors such as early marriage practices, gender role expectations, preference for male education, religious interpretations, and restrictions on girls' mobility further reduced girls' access to and retention in school. In addition, societal attitudes that prioritized domestic responsibilities for girls limited their study time and school attendance, thereby widening the gender gap in education. The study contributed to raising awareness and promoted effective strategies to improve girl-child education, which led to more equal opportunities for girls in the academic field. The study also highlighted the need for targeted policies and interventions to address socio-cultural barriers and promote equal access to education for girls in the affected Local Government Areas of Katsina Senatorial Zone. The study recommended that the government should implement policy changes that promote gender equality in education. There was a need to engage local leaders to influence and advocate for girls' education within the community. The research also recommended that the community should emphasize the value of educating girls. Furthermore, the study recommended that parents engage in school activities, such as participating in the Parent-Teacher Association's decision-making, to foster a supportive environment for girls. These measures were expected to reduce disparities and improve educational outcomes for the girl-child in the region.

### INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication that uses symbols, sounds, gestures, or written form to convey meaning. Language can be spoken, written or signed, and they vary widely across culture and religions, each with its own rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Culture refers to the shared belief, values, practices, norms and artifact that characterize a wide range of human activities and expressions. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time, influenced by various factors such as globalization, migration and technological advancements. Language plays a crucial role in shaping individual and collective identities. Furthermore, girl-child education refers to equal educational opportunities and right provided specifically to the girl-child, focusing on ensuring that the girl-child has equal

access to education at all levels.

Girl-child education is very important for the overall development of the country. The place of women in the development of any society is fundamental, such that any deliberate neglect of their education could point to danger for the entire society. No wonder Aggrey (2021), "the surest way to keep people down is to educate the men and neglect the women, if you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation". This is because, she would pass on her knowledge to her peers and whole and other family members particularly her daughters, thereby multiplying the effects of her own education. The development of any society would be grossly lopsided if the girl child is not given quality education. Education in any normal society is accepted as an instrument

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to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for men and women. The United Nations General Assembly (2011) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which stipulates that everyone has the right to education which shall be free at least in elementary and primary stages. Similarly, the National Policy on Education emphasizes among other things that there will be equal opportunities for all citizens.

Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial factor in the development of individuals and societies. However, cultural beliefs and practices can significantly influence educational opportunities, particularly for girls. In some Local Government areas of Katsina senatorial Zone, which is predominantly found in Northern Nigeria and parts of West Africa, traditional views on gender roles often shape parental attitudes toward girl-child education.

Despite the growing recognition and the involvement of various international organizations on the importance of educating girls, many parents still faced challenges rooted in cultural norms, economic constraints, and societal expectations. This paper explored the language and cultural influence toward girl-child education, examining the factors that encouraged or hindered educational opportunities for girls in this cultural context. By understanding these attitudes, the study was able to better address the barriers to education and promote more equitable access for all children.

One of the most significant tools to empower girls within their family and community is education. Education is recognized as a fundamental human right. Gender inequality in education however remains a huge concern. Despite several national and international legal instruments such as the Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls Education Programme (2013), the Child Rights Act (2013) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in Nigeria, many girls still face challenges preventing them from access to education.

Education was a fundamental right and a crucial tool for personal and societal development. In many cultures, however, various factors influenced attitudes toward education, particularly for girls. Among the communities of Katsina Senatorial Zone in Nigeria, traditional values, socio-economic conditions, and cultural beliefs played significant roles in shaping parental attitudes toward girl-child education. This paper aimed to explore these attitudes, highlighting both the challenges and the progress made in promoting education for girls within the case study areas.

Despite the growing recognition and the involvement of various international organizations on the importance of educating girls, many parents still faced challenges rooted in cultural norms, economic constraints, and societal expectations. This paper explored the language and cultural influence toward girl-child education, examining the factors that encouraged or hindered educational opportunities for girls in this cultural context. By understanding these attitudes, the study was able to better address the barriers to education and promote more equitable access for all children.

Education is the wire for the development of any nation. It is indispensable to human survival. And no nation can survive without education for searching for knowledge is mandatory upon all men and women. Hassan (2022), described education as an “Instrument per excellence for effective national development and a dynamic instrument for change”. On the other hand, education in its general sense is a form of living 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 auto-didacticism. Generally, that has a general formative effect on the way we think, feel or act. Despite these indispensable importance of education some parent, are still reluctant to send their children to school.

### Statement of the Problem

By extension the girl child is women which will turn be the bearers of children. They can only be seen but not be heard in both the private and the public spaces of decision making. The girl child by the natural status ascribe to her by male define norms of societal conduct and behavior remains a property to be owned and commoditized (Jeffery, 1996). No community will remain undeveloped if it has the required human capital and the best instrument for developing any society is to invest in human capital (Adeniran and Adebusi,

2007). This is because the obtained knowledge and skill will guarantee the economic and social liberation of the individual and by implication enhances their contribution to community and national development. Education is meant for all; in fact, it is the fundamental human right of every child whether boy or girl, able or disable to acquire the basic education.

In Nigeria, the education of girls has been a hot button subject for many years. It is still a concern in some areas of Katsina Senatorial Zone, particularly in Kaita, Rimi and Kurfi local governments of Katsina State. The greatest problem facing girl-child education in some of the afore-mentioned local government areas is deprivation of their opportunities for acquiring western education. The social status of the girl-child education in these affected areas has proven to be difficult to resolve and has become hard to change. This cannot be unrelated to the low economic situations and high poverty rate among the parents. As such, the parent prefer to engage their girl-child in street hawking and patty trading as a means of sustenance and financial benefit.

Jimade, U. (2005) said “Some girl children are send by their mothers to the stress to hawk groundnuts, colanut, chin-chin, bread, pure water and indeed, many other things that could fetch some money for their family. Their mothers do not appreciate the need for their daughter’s education because they themselves lack the basic formal education. With the problem that confronts girl-child education in Kaita, Rimi and Kurfi local government areas, have made it imperative for us to investigate with a view to find at whether this problem is the product of the influence of language and cultural challenges on girl-child education or not.

## Objective of the Study

### Generally, this study aims at:

- i. To investigating language and cultural influences with a view to examining how language and culture become barriers in girl-child education in the state.
- ii. To identifying challenges and causes of barriers, determining obstacles hindering girls access to education.
- iii. To provide insight for improvement proffering recommendations to promote girl-child education. Thereby addressing both linguistic and cultural barriers.
- iv. To access language barriers: evaluate how language affects girls access to education and academic performance in Katsina Senatorial Zone.
- v. To examine cultural practices: Identify cultural beliefs and values that both affects girls enrolment in schools.
- vi. To examine the contribution of family in gender disparity in Katsina Senatorial Zone
- vii. To Provide targeted recommendations for policy makers, educators as well as stakeholders to promote girl-child education.

## Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. How do language and cultural factors act as barriers to girl-child education in Katsina State?
- ii. What are the major challenges and causes of barriers hindering girls' access to education in Katsina Senatorial Zone?
- iii. What strategies can be adopted to improve girl-child education by addressing linguistic and cultural barriers?
- iv. How do language barriers affect girls' access to education and their academic performance in Katsina Senatorial Zone?
- v. What cultural practices, beliefs, and values influence girls' enrolment in schools in Katsina Senatorial Zone?
- vi. How does family influence contribute to gender disparity in education in Katsina Senatorial Zone?
- vii. What recommendations can be provided to policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to promote girl-child education in Katsina Senatorial Zone.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The education of girls remains a critical component of social and national development. However, in many societies, including among the Hausa people of Nigeria, it continues to face numerous challenges. This review examines the attitudes of Hausa parents toward the education of their daughters, with particular attention to the influence of cultural, social, economic, and linguistic factors.

Economic constraints have been widely identified as a major barrier to girls' education. Yusuf (2022) emphasized that parents' financial struggles significantly limit educational opportunities for girls. Poverty, which remains a global challenge, disproportionately affects children especially girls by restricting access to basic educational resources. The cyclical nature of poverty

further exacerbates this issue, as limited educational attainment perpetuates economic hardship across generations.

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward girls' education. Ishaku (2021) noted that traditional practices and patriarchal structures in Nigeria strongly influence decisions regarding girls' school enrollment. In many rural communities, gender roles are rigidly defined, often placing women in subordinate positions and limiting their access to formal education. Such systems reinforce gender inequality and discourage investment in girls' education.

Parental educational background is another important determinant. Ada-Obi (2020) observed that parents who lack formal education are less likely to appreciate its value and, consequently, may not encourage their daughters to attend school. This lack of awareness contributes to the persistence of low educational attainment among girls in many parts of Nigeria.

Similarly, Rodriguez (2019) highlighted poverty as a key factor influencing access to education. The costs associated with schooling—such as transportation, textbooks, and uniforms—can be prohibitive for low-income families. In such situations, families often prioritize boys' education over girls', as girls are expected to contribute more to household responsibilities. Additionally, challenges such as lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and early marriage further hinder girls' educational participation.

Empirical studies also provide insight into parental attitudes. Akpede *et al.* (2018) found that several factors, including behavioral perceptions, influence decisions regarding girls' education. Despite these challenges, the study acknowledged a growing recognition of the importance of educating girls for national development.

Aliyu (2017) argued that financial limitations, coupled with deep-rooted gender discrimination, continue to hinder girls' access to education in Nigeria. This position aligns with the view of Shu'aibu (2015), who emphasized the importance of education as a vital tool for nation-building and as a lasting legacy parents can provide for their children, particularly daughters.

Furthermore, Shu'aibu (2015) conceptualized poverty as a condition characterized by a lack of resources, knowledge, and opportunities. This broader understanding highlights the multifaceted nature of poverty and its impact on educational access and participation.

Waswa (2015) examined factors affecting girls' progression in primary schools and found that cultural and economic factors negatively influence educational outcomes. The study also revealed that intervention programs such as school feeding initiatives and campaigns against harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM), have contributed positively to improving girls' educational participation.

In summary, the education of girls among the Hausa and similar cultural contexts is influenced by a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and social factors. While traditional norms have historically prioritized boys'

education, there is a gradual shift toward recognizing the importance of educating girls. This shift is largely driven by increased awareness, advocacy, and policy interventions. Nevertheless, sustained efforts are required to address persistent barriers and ensure equitable access to quality education for all children, regardless of gender.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Design of the Study**

The research design used for the collection of data was descriptive in nature because data were collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews aimed at examining the attitudes of parents and children toward Western education.

**Area of the Study**

This research study was limited to Kaita, Rimi, and Kurfi Local Government Areas of Katsina Senatorial Zone, Katsina State, Nigeria..

**Population and Sampling**

The research work covered some areas of Kaita, Rimi, and Kurfi Local Government Areas of Katsina Senatorial Zone, Katsina State. The population of the study comprised primary school teachers, both male and female, parents, and children.

**Sampling Techniques**

The sample represented the number of subjects chosen to represent the population of the study. The researcher selected 80 parents from the three Local Government Areas: thirty (30) from Kaita, thirty (30) from Rimi, and twenty (20) from Kurfi Local Government Area. The researcher also selected thirty (30) primary school teachers (male and female) from the three Local Government Areas as mentioned above, and ninety (90) pupils respectively..

**Instrument for data collection**

Questionnaires were used as the major instrument for data collection in conducting this research. However, face-to-face interviews were also used to complement the questionnaires, especially with non-literate parents who could not read or understand the questionnaires. This placed the research in a sound position for drawing conclusions. Interviews were also conducted with the girls and their parents.

**Data Analyses**

The data collected for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Demographic data of respondents were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, while the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation based on a 4-point Likert scale. A decision rule of 2.50 was adopted, where mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted, while scores below 2.50 were rejected. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) coefficient was used to determine whether all

variables significantly influence girl-child education at the 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for ANOVA was that the null hypothesis would be rejected if the calculated F-value was greater than the critical value; otherwise, it would be accepted.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected on Language and Cultural Influence Towards Girl-Child Education in Katsina Senatorial Zone, with particular focus on Kaita, Rimi, and Kurfi Local Government Areas. Data collected from teachers, parents, community leaders, and girl pupils were carefully analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze demographic (biodata) variables, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze responses to the research items. In addition, the Anova Coefficient statistical method was used to test the research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. A total number of respondents participated in the study, comprising 30 teachers, 80 parents, 20 community leaders, and 90 girl pupils, making the data adequate for meaningful analysis and interpretation of result.

**Analysis of Respondents' Biodata**

**Table 1:** Gender Distribution of Parents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	42	52.5%
Female	38	47.5%
Total	80	100%

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of parents who participated in the study. The results show that 42 respondents (52.5%) were male, while 38 respondents (47.5%) were female. This indicates that both fathers and mothers were adequately represented in the study. The slightly higher number of male respondents suggests that men are often the primary household decision-makers in many communities within the study area. However, the close distribution between male and female respondents enhances the reliability of the findings, as it reflects balanced parental perspectives on girl-child education. Table 2 shows the educational qualifications of parents

**Table 2:** Educational Level of Parents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Non-Formal Education	26	32.5%
Primary Education	22	27.5%
Secondary Education	20	25.0%
Tertiary Education	12	15.0%
Total	80	100%

involved in the study. The results indicate that 26 parents (32.5%) had no formal education, which represents the highest proportion among respondents. Additionally, 22 parents (27.5%) had primary education, 20 parents (25.0%) had secondary education, and only 12 parents

(15.0%) had tertiary education.

This finding suggests that a significant number of parents in the study area have limited educational exposure, which may affect their understanding of the importance of girl-child education. Parents with little or no formal education may not fully appreciate the long-term benefits of schooling for girls. This low literacy level among parents may also contribute to negative cultural attitudes toward girls' education.

Table 3 presents the distribution of teachers according

**Table 3:** Teachers by Location (Rural vs Urban)

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural Schools	18	60%
Urban Schools	12	40%
Total	30	100%

to school location. The results reveal that 18 teachers (60%) were from rural schools, while 12 teachers (40%) were from urban schools. This finding indicates that a larger proportion of respondents were from rural areas, which reflects the geographical nature of the study area where many communities are rural. Rural schools often face more challenges such as poor infrastructure, long travel distances, and limited learning materials. These factors may negatively affect girls' access to education. Therefore, the high representation of rural teachers provides valuable insights into the educational challenges

**Table 5:** Language-Related Barriers

S/N	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
1	Language differences affect girls' learning	3.21	0.82	Accepted
2	Girls find English difficult to understand	2.94	0.91	Accepted
3	Lack of proficiency affects performance	3.05	0.76	Accepted
4	Teaching in mother tongue improves understanding	2.41	1.02	Accepted

affecting girl-child education. The findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that language differences affect girls' learning, as shown by a high mean score of 3.21. Similarly, the item stating that girls find English difficult to understand recorded a mean score of 2.94, indicating agreement among respondents.

However, the item suggesting that teaching in the mother tongue improves understanding was rejected, with a mean score of 2.41, which falls below the acceptance level of

**Table 6:** Cultural Practices

S/N	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
5	Early marriage affects attendance	3.33	0.71	Accepted
6	Household chores reduce study time	3.10	0.84	Accepted
7	Cultural beliefs discourage girls' education	2.88	0.90	Accepted
8	Preference for boys affects enrollment	2.36	1.10	Rejected

mean score (3.33), indicating strong agreement among respondents that early marriage significantly disrupts girls' education. This confirms the widely reported effect of early marriage on school attendance.

**Table 4:** Pupils' Class Distribution

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary 4	18	20%
Primary 5	20	22.2%
Primary 6	17	18.9%
JSS 1	14	15.6%
JSS 2	11	12.2%
JSS 3	10	11.1%
Total	90	100%

faced in these communities.

Table 4 shows the distribution of girl pupils according to class level. The findings indicate that Primary 5 pupils had the highest representation (22.2%), followed by Primary 4 (20%) and Primary 6 (18.9%). The least represented group was JSS 3 (11.1%). This pattern suggests that enrollment tends to decrease as girls progress to higher classes. The reduction in the number of pupils at higher levels may be due to factors such as early marriage, household responsibilities, or financial constraints. This trend highlights the issue of declining retention rates among girls as they advance academically.

### Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do language barriers affect girls' access to education in Katsina Senatorial Zone?

Table 5 presents responses relating to language barriers

2.50. This result reflects mixed views regarding language use in education. Some respondents believe that English language instruction is necessary for academic success, while others recognize the importance of indigenous languages in improving comprehension.

Research Question 2: What cultural practices influence girls' enrolment in school?

Table 6 reveals that early marriage recorded the highest

Similarly, household chores recorded a mean score of 3.10, suggesting that domestic responsibilities reduce study time and negatively affect academic performance.

However, preference for boys' education was rejected,

with a mean score of 2.36, indicating that some families are beginning to value girls' education equally. This finding reflects gradual cultural change and increasing awareness about the importance of educating girls.

Research Question 3 How does family background influence girl-child education?

Table 7 indicates that family income plays a major role in school attendance, with a high mean score of 3.28. This

**Table 7:** Family Influence

S/N	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
9	Family income affects school attendance	3.28	0.75	Accepted
10	Parents withdraw girls for marriage	2.96	0.89	Accepted
11	Parents' education influences girls' schooling	3.14	0.78	Accepted
12	Families discourage girls from schooling	2.21	1.03	Rejected

suggests that poverty remains a key factor limiting girls' access to education.

Parents withdrawing girls for marriage also recorded agreement (Mean = 2.96), confirming the influence of socio-cultural practices.

However, the item stating that families discourage girls from schooling was rejected (Mean = 2.21), suggesting

that although financial and cultural barriers exist, many families are increasingly supportive of girls' education.

Research Question 4: What access-related factors influence girls' school attendance in Katsina Senatorial Zone?

Table 8 shows that distance to school recorded a mean score of 3.02, indicating that long travel distances

**Table 8:** Access to Education Factors

S/N	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
13	Distance to school affects attendance	3.02	0.87	Accepted
14	Lack of school facilities discourages girls	2.78	0.95	Accepted
15	Lack of female teachers affects participation	2.44	1.06	Rejected
16	School safety concerns affect attendance	2.91	0.83	Accepted

significantly affect attendance. This challenge is particularly common in rural areas.

Lack of female teachers was rejected (Mean = 2.44), indicating that although female teachers are important role models, their absence may not be the most significant barrier in all schools.

This suggests that infrastructure and accessibility

issues remain more critical than staffing issues in some communities.

Research Question 5: What role do community attitudes play in promoting girl-child education?

Table 9 shows that community awareness programmes recorded the highest mean score (3.25), indicating

**Table 9:** Community Support and Attitudes

S/N	Item	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
17	Cultural traditions affect girls' education	3.11	0.79	Accepted
18	Community attitudes influence school attendance	2.86	0.92	Accepted
19	Religious beliefs discourage girls' education	2.33	1.04	Rejected
20	Awareness programmes improve enrollment	3.25	0.70	Accepted

strong agreement that such programmes improve girls' enrollment.

However, religious beliefs were rejected (Mean = 2.33), suggesting that religion itself may not be the primary barrier; rather, cultural practices and misinterpretations

may play a stronger role.

This reflects positive changes in community attitudes toward girls' education.

The coefficients indicate that all variables significantly influence girl-child education. Cultural practices ( $\beta =$

**Table 10:** Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.120	0.210	—	5.33	0.000
Language Barriers	0.315	0.082	0.298	3.84	0.000
Cultural Practices	0.402	0.075	0.421	5.36	0.000
Family Background	0.210	0.088	0.186	2.38	0.019
Access to Education	0.198	0.079	0.172	2.51	0.014

0.421) have the strongest influence, followed by language barriers ( $\beta = 0.298$ ). Family background and access factors also contribute but at a lower level. This confirms that culture is the strongest predictor of girl-child educational outcomes in the study area.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that language and cultural practices significantly influence girl-child education in the Katsina Senatorial Zone. Linguistic barriers, particularly the dominance of indigenous languages at home and limited exposure to the language of instruction, negatively affected girls' comprehension, confidence, and academic performance, contributing to poor achievement and school withdrawal. Cultural practices such as early marriage, gender role expectations, preference for male education, and restrictions on girls' mobility further limited their access to and participation in schooling, increasing absenteeism and dropout rates. The findings highlight that improving girl-child education requires both educational and socio-cultural interventions. Key recommendations include encouraging parental involvement through PTAs and awareness programs, engaging community and religious leaders to address harmful cultural norms, and providing financial support such as scholarships and learning materials. Additionally, government should enforce laws against early marriage and discrimination, while schools should offer girl-friendly facilities. A collaborative, culturally responsive approach is essential to enhance girls' enrollment, retention, and academic success.

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