

# FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECLINE OF MALE ENROLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and the descriptive survey research design was adopted. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 120 respondents (60 teachers and 60 parents) from the population of 641 teachers and 5,435 parents of the 18 secondary schools in Awka South. A 25-itemed questionnaire designed for the study was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean. Findings revealed among others that parental background, the quest for money on the part of the child and inability of the student to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout are factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school. Based on this finding of the study, it was recommended among others that parents must be conscious of the importance of educating their male children in view of future benefits.*

**Keywords:** *Male Enrolment; Secondary school;*

## **Introduction**

Enrolment is referred to as registration for membership (Roget's 21<sup>st</sup> century Thesaurus, 2011). Schultz (2012) noted that enrolment in schools represents the largest component of investment in human capital in most societies. The human resources of a nation are considered to be the engine of growth of that country. These must however be adequately developed and

efficiently utilized. According to Aliu (2011), education bestows on its recipients a disposition of a life long acquisition of knowledge and skills. Hence rapid social-economic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of human capital in that country. Education is thus central to the development process.

The pivot of educational policy throughout the Federal Government of Nigeria is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme launched in 1999 (Rahji & Fakayode, 2011). This is meant as a strategy to reduce illiteracy in the country and to enable the poor to be educated out of their poverty. The decision to extend the scheme to the junior secondary school is a welcome development. Ralji and Fakayode (2011) submitted that the extension is in the line with international standard.

Enrolment in secondary schools is of policy significance and relevance in Nigeria. Secondary education is the education children receive after primary and before tertiary stage (NPE, 2013:18) and parents due to the knowledge of the aforementioned invest in their children this natural endowment. Under such situations children are valued by their parents for different reasons and girls and boys are not exact substitutes. For this reason, enrolment of males and females in secondary schools in Nigeria differs. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2018), reports that the gross enrolment value of females and males in secondary schools in Nigeria in 2016, 2017, 2018 was 41.51%, and 46.78% respectively. The enrolment of males in the report is higher than that of the females implying that education of males in secondary schools is more preferred than the females in most states in Nigeria.

There is a common belief in the African culture and in Nigeria as well as Anambra State in particular, that a male child would later in life attain a higher social and economic status, and turn to assist his parents when they get old. In the case of the females as Halima (2012:312) noted, they are perceived as marital commodities that can be taken by someone else. The general feeling is that females belong to outsiders and contribute absolutely little or nothing to the economic well being of their parents. The male is therefore given more priority than the females in terms of education.

On the contrary, it has been observed that in Anambra State, especially Awka South LGA, the numbers of girls in schools are far higher compared to the number of boys in schools. The ratio of girls to boys is 3:2 as sited by Okoye (2017). However the office of research and statistics, post Primary schools service commission (2018) reports that the enrolment value of females and males in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State as at 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic session is (6,818, 6,627 and 6,849) females, and (4,893, 4,636, and 4,854) males. This is indicating that female enrolment is higher

than that at male, thus showing a decline in male enrolment. The observed decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State Justifies the study.

The problem of the study is thus: What is responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State as perceived by principals and teachers?

Finding from the study will hopefully reveal to the leadership (Principals, Vice – principals, Deans, Head of Departments and Teachers) of secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra States the reasons for the decline of male enrolment as well as salient corrective measures to adopt in solving the problem. Parents, guardians among other members of the general public will hopefully be encouraged to make amends to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools as the decision to enroll their children and wards in these schools rest on their shoulders.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local government Area of Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. Identify the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What are the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

### **Method**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is made up of Awka, Umuokpu, Okpuno, Nibo, Mbaukwu, Nise, Agulu-Awka, Amawbia and Isiagu towns. Awka South Local Government Area presently contains eighteen secondary schools (Post Primary Schools Service Commission, 2018). The population used for the study includes 641 teachers and 5,435 parents of the 18 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State (Post Primary

Schools Service Commission, 2018). Note that number of parents is the same with the number of students since every student has a parent.

A sample of 120 respondents (60 teachers and 60 parents) was used for the study. The simple random sampling technique specifically balloting was employed in the selection of 6 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique again was used to select 10 teachers and 10 parents from each of the sampled schools.

The instrument used in the process of data collection was a structured questionnaire named Factors Responsible for Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (FRDMESSQ). It contained 25 items organized in section 1 and 2 according to each of the research questions. The questionnaire (FRDMESSQ) was validated by 3 experts, while the reliability of the instrument was obtained using split – half method administered to 20 respondents for which 0.72 was obtained with the help of Spearman–Brown’s prophecy formula. The value was considered high enough for the study.

The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers and parents during the PTA meetings in the sampled secondary schools by the researchers through the help of 6 teachers (research assistant). The data were analyzed using frequency and mean to answer the research questions. The cut off point regarding an item as “agree” or disagree” was determined thus:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{N} \frac{\sum fX}{4} = 2.50. \text{ The mean score}$$

of 2.50 and above indicated positive response to the research questions where as the mean score below 2.50 indicated negative response to the research questions.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South LGA of Anambra State?

Due to little difference in the views of the respondents, the result of this research question is presented thus;

- a) Table 1: As perceived by teachers
- b) Table 2: As perceived by parents.

**Table 1: Teachers’ Perception of the Factors Responsible for the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools.**

S/ N	Factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in your school are:	Decision
		$\bar{X}$

1.	Poor economic status of the parents of the child	3.00	Agree
2.	Lack of interest of the parents of the child in his education	2.56	Agree
3.	Parental background of the child (broken home)	3.00	Agree
4.	Lack of interest on the part of the child	2.91	Agree
5.	Inability of teachers to bear with male students	2.65	Agree
6.	Government failure to provide free education	2.29	Disagree
7.	The quest for money on the part of the child	2.01	Agree
8.	Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed	3.05	Agree
9.	High population of female children than male children	2.09	Disagree
10.	Parents preference to other works of life (e.g trading) other than education	2.71	Agree
11.	Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students	2.21	Disagree
12.	Inability of the students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout	2.49	Disagree
13.	Poor performance of the student leading to school dropout	2.85	Agree
14.	Lack of focus on the part of the students leading to school dropout	1.98	Disagree
15.	The decisions of the student and that of the parents to join the business world	2.76	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.57</b>	

Data presented in table 1 reveal that all the items except 6, 9, 11, 12 and 14 have mean ratings above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that the agreed items are perceived as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools and the Grand mean of 2.57 supports the perception of the respondents as the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in the school.

**Table 2: Parents' Perception of the Factors Responsible for the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools.**

S/N	Factors responsible for the decline of male		Decision
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	<b>enrolment in your school are:</b>	$\bar{x}$	
1.	Poor economic status of the parents of the child	3.00	Agree
2.	Lack of interest of the parents of the child in his education	2.56	Agree
3.	Parental background of the child (broken home)	3.00	Agree
4.	Lack of interest on the part of the child	2.91	Agree
5.	Inability of teachers to bear with male students	2.65	Agree
6.	Government failure to provide free education	2.59	Agree
7.	The quest for money on the part of the child	2.01	Agree
8.	Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed	3.05	Disagree
9.	High population of female children than male children	2.09	Disagree
10.	Parents preference to other works of life (e.g trading) other than education	2.71	Agree
11.	Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students	2.21	Disagree
12.	Inability of male students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout	2.71	Agree
13.	Poor performance of male student leading to school dropout	2.85	Agree
14.	Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout	1.98	Disagree
15.	The decision of male student or the parents of the student to join the business world	2.76	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.60</b>	

Table 2: reveals that most of the items scored above the mean cut off point of 2.50, indicating that the items are perceived as factors causing decline in male enrolment in secondary, whereas items 8, 9, 11, and 14 which fall below the 2.50 are not perceived as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in the schools. However the grand mean of 2.60 indicates agreement to parents' perception of the decline of male enrolment in the schools.

### **Research Question 2**

What are the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools?

The result of this research question is presented together in table 3 below, since both respondents (teachers and parents) gave the same answer to the question.

**Table 3: Remedies to the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools**

S/N	The remedies of the decline of enrollment in your school are:	male	$\bar{x}$	Decision
16.	Introducing free education		2.83	Agree
17.	Career guidance to encourage focus in the student		2.71	Agree
18.	Counseling the students confirmed exhibiting lack of interest at school work		2.85	Agree
19.	Awareness campaign around the school communities to educate parents on the importance of educating male children		2.61	Agree
20.	Sensitizing parents on the importance of boy child education through P.T.A. meetings		2.51	Agree
21.	Use of scholarship and bursary awards for male entrants to encourage male enrolment		3.22	Agree
22.	Introducing civic education in school where the students understand his right to education		3.45	Agree
23.	Deployment of more male teachers into the teaching profession to improve and encourage male enrolment		3.14	Agree
24.	Provision of facilities that are male friendly in the schools to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment		3.45	Agree
25.	Subsidizing tuition fee or granting free education to indigent male students to discourage the intention to dropout		2.96	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.96</b>	

The data in table 3 confirms that items 16 to 25 were rated positive by both teachers and parents, with a grand mean of 2.96 scores above the 2.50 cut-off point. This reveals the capability, of the items to remedy the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools.

## Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the study, the major finding was shown that:

1. The teachers agreed with all items identified as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment, except the following; Government failure to provide free education, High population of female children than male children, Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students, Inability of male students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout, Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout.
2. The parents agreed with all items identified as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment, except thus; Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed, High population of female children than male children, Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students, Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout.
3. The remedies to the decline of male enrolment are: Provision of facilities that are male friendly in the schools to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment, introducing Civic Education in schools where the students understands his right to education and use of scholarship and bursary awards for male entrants to encourage male enrolment.

## Discussion of Results

Findings of the study in table 1 with a grand mean of 2.57 reveals that both the parents of the child and the child himself are responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools. On the part of the parents, their poor economic status, background, illiteracy, their views that the educated are usually unemployed and their preference for trading rather than education shows that they are detrimental to the benefits of education despite civilization. These parents have failed to understand that “education fosters the worth and development of an individual for the individuals sake and for the general development of the society” (NPE, 2013:7) supposedly, the parents do not know the advantages of educating a male child. The common belief in the African Culture that a male child would later in life attain a higher social and economic status and in turn assist his parents when, they get old which is a major reason for educating the male child (Halima, 2012) is yet unknown to these parents.

The result of the study in table 2 from the previous chapter which showed a grand mean of 2.60 also revealed that the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools is not caused by the male students’ fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment frequently administered on them or lack of focus. The decline is rather caused by the inability of the



student to cope with school subjects, poor performance of the student leading to dropping out of the school and the decision of the student or the parents of the students to join the world of business at school age. The male students inability to cope and their poor performance can be traced to the teachers inability to bear (have patience) with male students, the parental background of the child or the parents lack of interest on the child or the parents' decision or the students' decision to be in business such as trading at school age. This may deprive him from living usefully within the society which is the broad goals of secondary education as stated by the National policy on education (2013:18).

Another finding from table 3 is that the serious problem of decline of male enrolment in secondary schools can be remedied by introducing free education, sensitizing parents on the importance of educating male children through P.T.A meetings, the use of scholarship and bursary award for male entrants to encourage male enrolment, provision of facilities that are male friendly to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment, introducing civic education in the school where the students understand his right to education, deployment of more male teachers into the teaching profession to improve and encourage male enrolment, awareness campaign around the school communities to educate parents concerned on the importance of educating male children, counseling students confirmed exhibiting lack of interest at school work and subsidizing tuition fee or granting free education to indigent male students to discourage the intention to drop out. The stated remedies to the problems showing a grand mean of 2.96, bothers on the school authority and the governments of Nigeria, Anambra state in particular as well as other concerned organizations that the decline of male enrolment is solved.

## **Conclusion**

The culture of the African society regards a male child as important. As a result, the male child is not deprived of life's greatest instrument of education for the dividend it offers in the future. This is not the case in Awka south. The study confirms that there is a serious decline in male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state and indicated several factors responsible which are majorly, parents view that the educated are usually unemployed, the quest for money on the part of the child and poor performance of the male student leading to school drop out. The remedies are that the students should be counseled and the parents, enlightened on the importance of educating a male child as well as free education, scholarship and bursary awards to male entrants and indigent male entrants into secondary schools.

If this factors bedeviling enrolment in secondary schools are not attended to and solved, in the future, men would be incapable of taking the society to its next level in terms of development which is an indication of a retarded society.

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