

## Perception of Parents Toward Girl-Child Completion of Secondary School Education in Rural Area of Kwara and Osun State, Nigeria

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijaerds.15/vol11n21324>

Published September 29, 2024

**Citation:** Ige, T.O., Alfred, S.D.Y. and Akinwalere, B.O. (2024) Perception of Parents Toward Girl-Child Completion of Secondary School Education in Rural Area of Kwara and Osun State, Nigeria, *International Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, pp.13-24

**Abstract:** *This paper reviews the perception of parents towards the completion of girl-child secondary school education in the rural area of kwara and osun state, Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 240 respondents purposively. A well-structured interview and Focus Group Discussion were used to collect data on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and perception towards girl-child completion of secondary school education. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, pie-chart, bar-chart. Also, hypothesis was analysed using T-test. The study revealed that the mean age of respondents was 43years, it was discovered that majority of the respondents (79%) were males, while only 21% were females. Religion revealed that 42.1 % of the respondents practiced Christianity, 56.7% practiced Islam and 1.2 % practiced traditional religion. Also, respondents received an average monthly income of ₦30,000. This implies that most of the respondents were low-income earners. The study further revealed that the perception of parents had a significant difference towards girl-child secondary school education, due to the popular African Myth that a male child is superior to a female child. This study recommends enlightenment for parents in the rural areas. Also, adult education should be encouraged by both government and non-governmental organisations especially for mothers, as they play key roles in the education of a girl child.*

**Keywords:** girl-child, education, perception, completion

### INTRODUCTION

Human development is known to be facilitated by education. Therefore, education is a means by which wisdom, aptitude, morality, values, and disposition are gained and passed to the following generation. Similarly, education exposes an individual to acquire knowledge about the environment so as to know the causes of variations in a person or persons, groups and also for sustainable development in a country (Eze and Eze, 2018).

However, a girl-child education could be seen as a form of knowledge impacted to a young female child, in order to increase her sense of dignity and self-respect. (Blossom, 2023). It is noteworthy that, countries dominated with low-income groups, had a declining level of a girl child completing

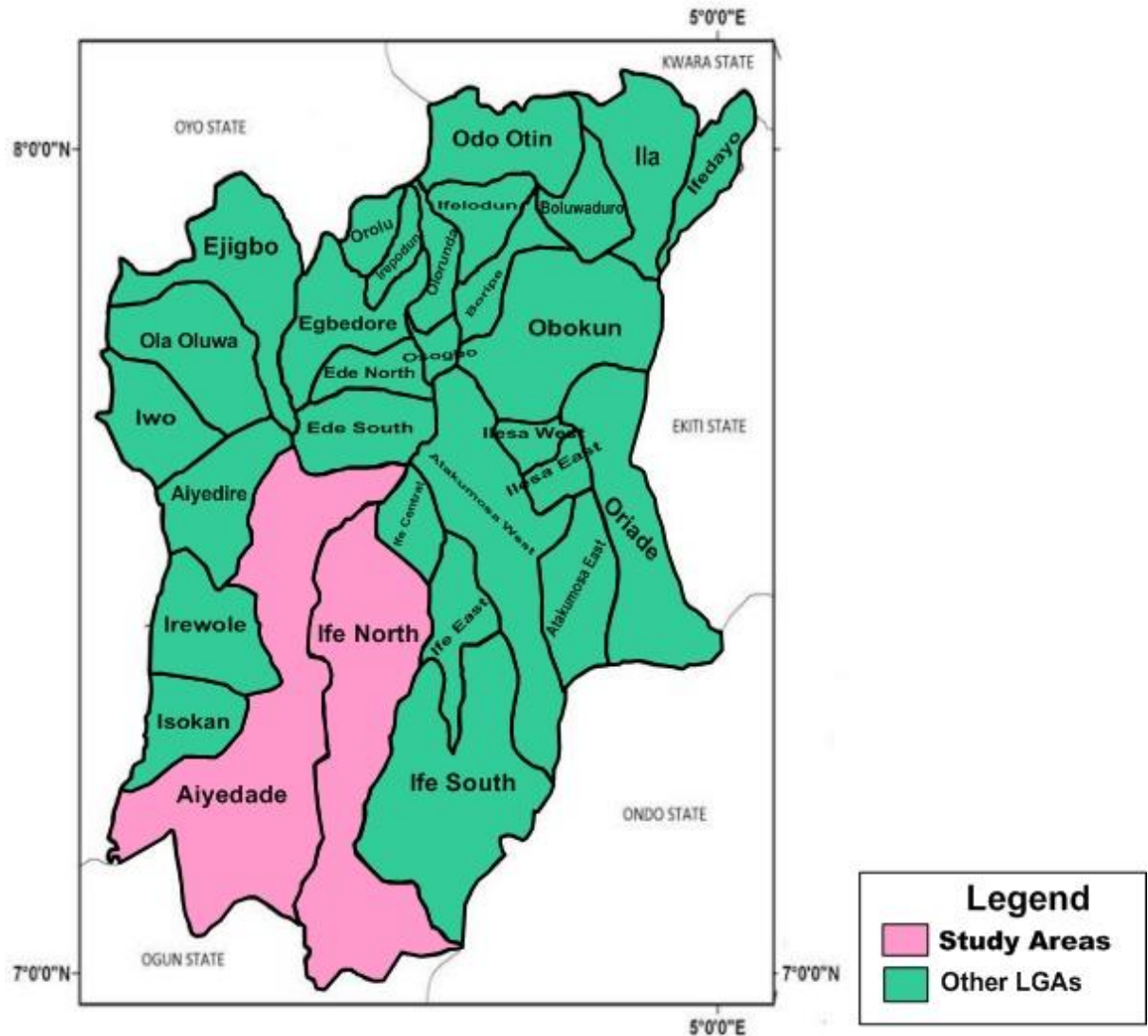
secondary school education, this constituted 36 percent compared to 44% of the male counterparts (world bank,2022). Senior secondary completion rates had equal disparities for lower income groups, accounting for 26% for young men and 21% for young women (World Bank, 2022). Also, Perception of parents about educating thier offsprings varies across regions, believes, status, upbringing, level of exposure and jobs (earnings). Evidently, some parents in local or rural areas do not wish to educate thier girl-child because they felt that girls should be managers of homes and give thier all to the need of the household, hence, educating them does not add any values (Maira,2023; Elfert,2019). Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate and explore the percepton of household heads towards the completion of secondary school education among rural girls in Kwara and Osun States. Specifically, the specific objectives are to: (1) ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents' and determine the perception of respondents toward rural girl-child completion of secondary school education. Also, validation of hypothesis for this study states that there is no significant difference between the perception of parents in Kwara and Osun States towards girl-child secondary school education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in both Kwara and Osun state(s), Nigeria, A multistage sampling procedure was used for this study. The first stage involved random selection of two (2) Local government areas (LGAs) from Osun State and two (2) from Kwara State which made it a total number of four. Aiyedaade and Ife North Local Government Areas were selected out of the thirty (30) LGAs in Osun State while Ilorin east and Offa were selected out of sixteen (16) LGAs in Kwara State.

The second stage involved the random selection of two (2) communities from each LGAs which made it a total of four (4) communities. The third stage involved the purposive selection of sixty (60) household heads from each Local Government that had a girl child. This implies that a total of 240 respondents (Household heads) constituted the sample size for the study. Both primary data and secondary source were used for this study. The primary data was obtained with the aid of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. A focus group discussion was also carried out to obtain more information from the respondents. Secondary source for this study was obtained from journals, textbooks, reports and other relevant published materials including the internet.

Furthermore, respondents' socio-economic characteristics was done at nominal, ordinal and interval level and determination of the perception of parents towards rural girl-child completion of secondary school education was operationalised by listing all variables, for the respondents to tick from on a four point Likert type scale. Also, the variables were tabulated and presented. Frequency distribution table, percentage, mean score and t-test were used to achieve the research objectives and hypothesis.



**Figure 1: Map of Osun State**

Source: Google map (2023)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic variables were discussed under the following sub-headings;

### Gender

Figure 2 reveals that 79% of survey respondents were male, while 21% were female. This reflects a gender disparity in household leadership, with a substantial majority being male. This distribution aligns with the broader demographic patterns observed in Nigeria, where the male counterparts, predominates as household heads. Evidently, this trend suggests that traditional gender roles and societal norms significantly influence household leadership dynamics. Ashagidigbi *et al* (2022) is

consistent with the findings of this study that the male predominates as household heads across various contexts within Nigeria.

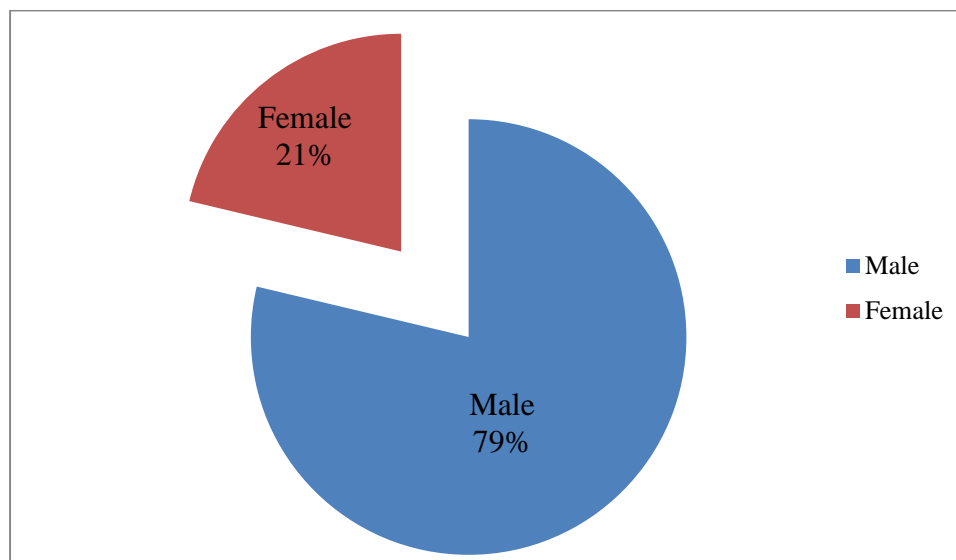


Figure 2: Sex of Respondents  
Source: Field survey (2023)

### Age

The demographic structure of respondents, as presented in Table 1, below which reveals a high concentration within the age brackets between 41 and 50 years (54.6%), 31-40years (37%), and 51-60years (8.3%), with an average age of 43 years offered great insight into economic and social fabric of the population. The age distribution of the respondents indicated that a significant percentage was in their most productive years and therefore, likely to be at work. This is in line with the analysis, as performed by Aksoy et al. (2019) and Kotschy & Bloom (2023), which provides more details on the wider economic implications of population aging. These studies help to unravel the complicated relationship between an aging population and economic performance, indicating that although ageing of population presents a deflationary impulse on macroeconomic performance; some policy interventions, technological advancements as well shifts in retirement behaviours could counteract some negative effects.

### Level of Education

As shown in Table 1, 42.9% of the respondents attempted secondary school, approximately 34.6% of the respondents completed secondary school, while 3.3% of the respondents had no formal education. Additionally, 4.6% of the respondents attempted primary school, 11.7% completed primary school, 2.1% attempted tertiary institution and 0.8% completed tertiary education. The implication of this is that educational attainment of parents plays a significant role in the academic success of their children. Research indicates that parents with higher education levels tend to value educational achievement highly, which in turn influences their children's academic pursuits and success. This is partly because educated parents were more likely to engage in achievement-oriented behaviours and provide their children with environments that foster a pursuit of education. For instance, a study highlighted by

Lamar University points out that children of college-educated parents were more likely to enrol in higher education and had lower drop-out rates compared to their peers from non-degree families (Lamar University, 2021).

Furthermore, the education level of parents, especially mothers, has been closely linked to the nourishment and academic preparation of children. Educated mothers, with their higher self-esteem play a pivotal role in influencing various aspects of their children's lives, significantly impacting their educational achievements. Conclusively, these findings underscore the importance of parental education, as it is not just for economic benefits but also for creating a conducive environment for children's academic growth and success. This study supports Mansur and Bilyaminu (2021) that parents that have solid educational foundation are more likely to send their girl children in to school

### Average Annual Income of Respondents

The income distribution among respondents in the study area suggests majority were low-income earners, with significant portions earning between ₦21,000 and ₦40,000 annually. This aligns with findings of Edinyang, et al., (2020) that financially stable families encourages girl child education.. Contrastingly, in this study, a smaller fraction earned above ₦800,000. Given the mean annual income of ₦33,000, it's clear that most respondents faced financial constraints, potentially affecting their ability to meet basic needs and invest in their children's education. This financial landscape in the research area, highlights the economic challenges faced by the community and the need for interventions to enhance income and livelihoods.

**Table1: Distribution of Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondent**

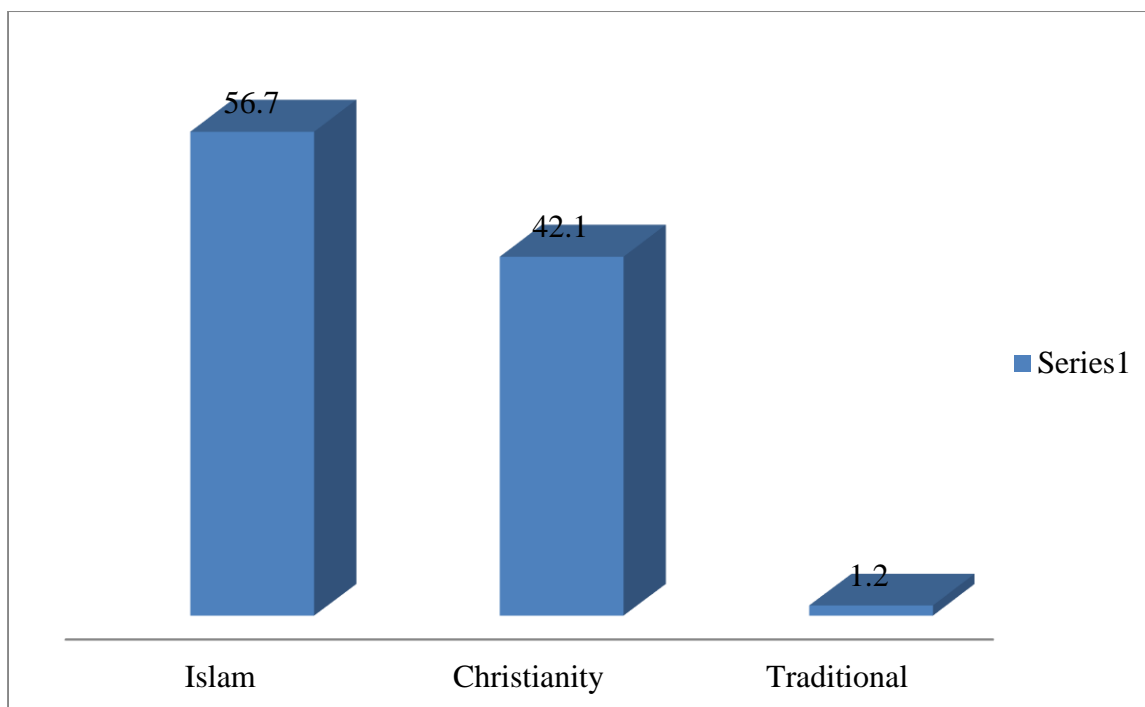
Socio-Economic Characteristics	Frequency	(%)	Mean
<b>Age</b>			
31-40	89	37	43years
41-50	131	54.6	
51-60	20	8.3	
>10	6	2.5	
<b>Level of Education</b>			
No formal education	8	3.3	₦33,000
Attempted primary school	11	4.6	
Completed primary school	28	11.7	
Attempted secondary school	103	42.9	
Completed secondary school	83	34.6	
Attempted Tertiary Institution	5	2.1	
<b>Average Monthly Income</b>			
Less than or equal t	70	29.2	₦33,000
21,000-40,000	864	35.8	
41,000-60,000	67	27.9	
Greater than or equal to 80,000			
	17	7.1	

**Source: Field survey (2023)**

### Religion

According to the result in Figure.3, more than half of the respondents (56.7%) practiced Islam, 42.1% practiced Christianity and 1.2% practiced Traditional religion. This implies that both Kwara s and Osun State were dominated by Muslims, followed by Christians. This also illustrates the religious diversity in Kwara and Osun States. Furthermore, the distribution reflects the broader national religious landscape of Nigeria, where both Islam and Christianity were predominant, with the Muslim population slightly exceeding the Christian population.

Conclusively, findings from this study revealed that Islam dominated both Osun and Kwara states. The general belief that western education is unacceptable in Islam led to non-completion of secondary school education in the research area. Also, due to the inherent cultural beliefs amongst the Christians and Muslims, girl child completion of education was hindered. This result disagree with the findings of Abdullah (2023) that there is no significant relationship between culture of parents and education of girl-child. Ge further revealed that there is no significant relationship between religion of parents and education of girl-child.



**Figure 3: Religion of Respondents**

Source: Field survey (2023)



**Perception of respondents toward rural girl child secondary school education**

Table 2 generally explained the perception of household heads in both Kwara and Osun State(s) towards girl-child secondary school education. It reveals that the respondents' perception were favourable towards the following Statement: Educating a girl child increases self-confidence and ability to participate efficiently in her society ( $\bar{x}=3.15$ ) and free education should be available to encourage girl-child education ( $\bar{x}=3.00$ ). Respondents in the study area believed that when free education is made available, more girls would be enrolled and there would be reduction in the rate of drop out among girls in public secondary schools in the State(s) and which could lead to girls having more confidence in themselves and being able to participate efficiently in the society. This study aligns with Salihu (2023) who says that, naturally born teacher, a girl or woman who is well educated usually commands respect and also serves as a role model. She can mingle with any kind of people boldly and full of confidence, could go places and her voice could be heard as she could positively contribute to matters affecting her community. Respondents also perceived that; Female children always take better care of their parents than male children ( $\bar{x}=2.99$ ), poverty is one of the factors that hinders girl-child education ( $\bar{x}=2.93$ ), School education is like a venture that does not yield immediate benefit ( $\bar{x}=2.82$ ), parent are expected to provide access to education of their children irrespective of sex ( $\bar{x}=2.75$ ), there should be no limit to education of a girl-child ( $\bar{x}=2.50$ ). Respondents believed that, the role of a woman has been that of home management and rising of children ( $\bar{x}=2.75$ ), the male child is superior to a female child ( $\bar{x}=2.55$ ). This study is not in support of Amoros (2005), who ascertained that men have remained in charge of producing goods and services, with the result that the exercise of power over the economy, government, policy-making and religion have been defined as masculine domains, while women have been relegated to the role of biologically reproducing human life and society while performing all the other domestic functions involved, mainly household chores such as; cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, the elderly, and the sick, and attending to the needs of their husbands.

However, on the other hand, the respondents disagreed that Educating a boy child is educating an individual but educating a girl child is educating a nation ( $\bar{x}=2.49$ ), Having a literate wife is a plus to the family in the area of finance, child ( $\bar{x}=2.49$ ), Girl should be given equal education as boys ( $\bar{x}=2.40$ ), Girl-child possessed higher interest for Education ( $\bar{x}=2.39$ ) and When a woman is educated, she will dominate her husband ( $\bar{x}=2.37$ ). Also respondents disagreed that, Girl-child often is preferred for street hawking of goods ( $\bar{x}=2.34$ ), Maintenance of girl child is difficult ( $\bar{x}=2.27$ ), early marriage should be encouraged for girl child ( $\bar{x}=2.24$ ), Girl-child education terminates at primary Education level ( $\bar{x}=2.21$ ), Educating a girl child is a waste of money because she does not retain the name of her father once she gets married ( $\bar{x}=2.00$ ), and Girls that have attained puberty stage should cater for her financial responsibilities ( $\bar{x}=1.80$ ). A study conducted by Elfert in 2019, cited by Maira (2023) revealed that across regions, believes, status, upbringing, level of exposure and jobs (earnings). Some parents in local areas do not wish to educate their girl-child because they felt that girls should be managers of homes and give their all to the need of the household, hence, educating them does not add any values but rather to be married. (Maira, 2023; Elfert, 2019)

**Table 2: Perception of respondents toward rural girl child completion secondary school education**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
The male child is superior to a female child	39(16.3)	92(38.3)	72(30)	37(15.4)	2.55
The role of a woman has been that of home management and raising of children	57(23.8)	107(44.6)	36(15.0)	40(16.7)	2.75
Girl should be given equal education as boys	38(15.8)	62(25.8)	97(40.4)	43(17.9)	2.40
When a woman is educated, she will dominate her husband	43(17.9)	63(26.3)	73(30.4)	61(25.4)	2.37
School education is like a venture that does not yield immediate benefit	51(21.3)	126(52.5)	31(12.9)	32(13.3)	2.82
Girl-child education terminates at primary Education level	17(7.1)	76(31.7)	87(36.3)	60(25.0)	2.21
There should be no limit to education of a girl-child	44(18.3)	83(34.6)	62(25.8)	51(21.3)	2.50
Early marriage should be encouraged for a girl-child	23(9.6)	72(30.0)	87(36.3)	58(24.2)	2.25
Girl-child often is preferred for street hawking of goods	37(15.4)	71(29.6)	69(28.7)	63(26.3)	2.34
Girl-child possessed higher interest for Education	36(15.0)	63(26.3)	100(41.7)	41(17.1)	2.39
Parents are expected to provide access to education for their children irrespective of sex	50(20.8)	108(45.0)	53(22.1)	29(12.1)	2.75
Poverty is one of the factors that hinders Girl-Child Education	73(30.4)	104(43.3)	36(15.0)	27(11.3)	2.93
Free education should be available to encourage girl child education	79(32.9)	101(42.1)	41(17.1)	19(7.9)	3.00
Girls that have attained puberty stage should cater for her financial responsibilities	21(8.8)	40(16.7)	50(20.8)	129(53.8)	1.80
Maintenance of girl child is difficult	28(11.7)	49(20.4)	123(51.2)	40(16.7)	2.27
Educating a girl child is a waste of money because she does not retain the name of her father once she gets married	21(8.8)	62(25.8)	61(25.4)	96(40.0)	2.03
Having a literate wife is a plus to the family	36(15.0)	87(36.3)	76(31.7)	41(17.1)	2.49
Female children always take better care of their parents than male children	89(37.1)	93(38.3)	24(10.0s)	34(14.2)	2.99
Educating a boy child is educating an individual but educating a girl child is educating a nation	27(11.3)	97(40.4)	83(34.6)	33(13.8)	2.49
Educating a girl child increases self-confidence and ability to participate efficiently in her society	77(32.1)	123(51.2)	39(16.3)	1(0.4)	3.15

**Less than 2.5= unfavourable perception, greater than or equal to 2.5=favourable perception**

**Source: Field survey, 2023**

### **Difference between perception of parents towards girl-child secondary school education in Kwara and Osun State(s).**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between perception of parents towards girl-child secondary school education in Kwara and Osun State(s).

Table 3 below shows the t-test result of difference between perception of parents towards girl-child secondary school education in Kwara and Osun State(s). The results reveal that there were significant differences in parent's perception in Kwara and Osun State(s). These perception were; The male child is superior to a female child (2.4167, 2.6917), The role of a woman has been that of home management and raising of children (2.5917, 2.9167), When a woman is educated, she will dominate her husband (2.1833, 2.5500) and School education is like a venture that does not yield immediate benefit (2.6167, 3.0167). Girl-child education terminates at primary Education (2.0750, 2.3417), Girl-child possessed higher interest for Education (2.2167, 2.5667), Parents are expected to provide access to education for their



children irrespective of sex (2.5667, 2.8500) and Maintenance of girl child is difficult (2.0583, 2.4833). Furthermore, difference in perception include; Educating a girl child is a waste of money because she does not retain the name of her father once she gets married (1.8333, 2.2333) and having a literate wife is a plus to the family (2.6417, 2.3417). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the perception of parents toward girl-child completion secondary education differ for each state which means they do not have equal agreement to the statements listed above. The agreement that the male child is superior to a female child and that the role of a woman has been that of home management and raising of children were higher in Kwara State than in Osun State.

Table 2 also shows that there were no significant difference in parent's perception Kwara and Osun State(s). These perception were; Girl should be given equal education as boys (2.3500, 2.4417), There should be no limit to education of a girl-child (2.4917, 2.5083), There should be no limit to education of a girl-child (2.4917, 2.5083), Early marriage should be encouraged For a girl-child (2.1417, 2.3583) and Girl-child often is preferred for street hawking of goods (2.2833, .3917). More so, the perception were' Poverty is one of the factors that hinders Girl-Child Education (3.0250, 2.8333), Free education should be available to encourage girl child education (3.0833, 2.9167), Girls that have attained puberty stage should cater for her financial responsibilities (.8417, 1.7667), Female children always take better care of their parents than male children (2.8583, 3.1167) and Educating a boy child is educating an individual but educating a girl child is educating a nation (2.5667, 2.4167). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that the parents in both state(s) had same perception listed above toward girl-child secondary school education, though it differs in each state which means they do not have equal agreement to the statements listed above. This study aligns with Abdullahi(2023) opined that there is a significant relationship between religious background of parents and education of girl-child and somani (2017) also says that growth and development of a family lies on education of a girl-child even though Gender imbalance does exist in education despite the development goals and global interventions.

**Table 3: t--test result showing difference in the perception of parents toward girl-child secondary school education in Osun and Kwara State.**

Variable	Mean Osun	Mean Kwara	t-test	Df	Standard Error Osun	Standard Error Kwara	Sig
The male child is superior to a female child	2.4167	2.6917	-2.285	238	0.08823	0.09281	0.023*
The role of a woman has been that of home management and raising of children	2.5917	2.9167	-2.549	238	0.09281	0.08743	0.011*
Girl should be given equal education as boys	2.3500	2.4417	-0.740	238	0.07908	0.09526	0.460
When a woman is educated, she will dominate her husband	2.1833	2.5500	-2.740	238	0.09242	0.09676	0.007*
School education is like a venture that does not yield immediate benefit	2.6167	3.0167	-3.447	238	0.09027	0.07294	0.001*
Girl-child education terminates at primary Education level	2.0750	2.3417	-2.316	238	0.08298	0.07982	0.021*
There should be no limit to education of a girl-child	2.4917	2.5083	-0.126	238	0.09393	0.09318	0.900
Early marriage should be encouraged	2.1417	2.3583	-1.812	238	0.09036	0.07832	0.071
For a girl-child							
Girl-child often is preferred for street hawking of goods	2.2833	.3917	-0.811	238	0.09407	0.09489	0.418
Girl-child possessed higher interest for Education	2.2167	2.5667	-2.930	238	0.07777	0.09070	0.004*
Parents are expected to provide access to education for their children irrespective of sex	2.5667	2.8500	-1.756	238	0.08435	0.08339	0.080*
Poverty is one of the factors that hinders Girl-Child Education	3.0250	2.8333	-1.567	238	0.08653	0.08643	0.118
Free education should be available to encourage girl child education	3.0833	2.9167	-1.429	238	0.07158	0.09211	0.154
Girls that have attained puberty stage should cater for her financial responsibilities	1.8417	1.7667	-0.574	238	0.07760	0.10501	0.566
Maintenance of girl child is difficult	2.0583	2.4833	-3.866	238	0.07876	0.07668	0.000*
Educating a girl child is a waste of money because she does not	1.8333	2.2333	-3.137	238	0.09492	0.08512	0.002*

retain the name of her father once she gets married							
Having a literate wife is a plus to the family	2.6417	2.3417	-2.482	238	0.08760	0.08326	0.014*
Female children always take better care of their parents than male children	2.8583	3.1167	-1.972	238	0.09113	0.09407	0.050
Educating a boy child is educating an individual but educating a girl child is educating a nation	2.5667	2.4167	-1.341	238	0.08090	0.07723	0.181
Educating a girl child increases self-confidence and ability to participate efficiently in her society	3.1583	3.1	-0.365	238	0.05917	0.06958	0.715
<b>(S=significant)</b>	<b>(N= Not significant)</b>			<b>(t&lt;0.05)</b>			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

## CONCLUSION

This study concluded that parents in the rural area of Kwara and Ondo state(s) had favourable perception towards girl-child completion of secondary school education believed that educating a girl child increases self-confidence and ability to participate efficiently in her society though some of them are still tied to their cultural beliefs about girl-child education.

## Recommendation

1. Adult education should be encouraged by both government and non-governmental organisations especially for mothers, so that, girl-child can also benefit from it since mothers play key roles in the education of their children
2. Advocacy program should be geared towards enlightening parents more to encourage the girl-child to acquire basic education, at least, that will make her self-reliant and secure a better future while the prevailing social thoughts that discourages or minimizes the importance of girl child education should be stopped or eradicated.
3. Parents in the rural area are to be enlightened on the benefit and usefulness of educating a girl-child

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