
TACKLING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO IMPROVE GIRLS' SCHOOL RETENTION: THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTION IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effectiveness of school and community-based intervention in tackling sexual and gender-based violence to improve girls' school retention across Adamawa State. The objectives of the study include to determine the school initiatives that are put in place to promote retention and prevent violence against girl-child in secondary schools in the state; and to conduct a statistical survey of how community interventions promote the girl-child retention in secondary schools in the state. The simple random method was used to select 405 students from 9 schools at rate of 45 students per school structured questionnaire was used for data collection where data were analyzed using percentage, mean and standard deviation and linear regression was used to test hypotheses. The study found that the school initiative against SGBV significantly influence retention of girl – child in secondary schools in Adamawa state, and the community initiative against SGBV positively influence the girl-child retention in secondary schools of Adamawa State. The study concluded that the school initiation of stringent rules and WASH facilities is discouraging SGBV and boosting girl-child retention in school. In the same vein, the community strategy against SGBV is working and enhances school retention. Thus, it was recommended that the Adamawa state ministry of education through post primary board management should support the school authorities to ensure that school-based policies and strategies against sexual and gender-based violence remain functional and effective.

Keywords: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Girls' School Retention: School and Community Based Intervention

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) or Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) according to Anderson (2019) of the World Bank is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. He argued that the numbers are staggering, about 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. Likewise, globally, 7% of women have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner and an estimated 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner. Also, 200 million women have experienced female genital mutilation/cutting (Fawole et al., 2018). This issue is not only devastating for survivors of violence and their families, but also entails significant social and economic costs for the society because of its impact on girl-child school retention and general educational participation.

According to General Recommendation No. 37 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in many contexts, gender inequalities limit the control that women and girls have over decisions governing their lives, as well as their access to resources such as food, water, agricultural input, land, credit, energy, technology, education, health services, adequate housing, social protection and employment. As a result of these inequalities, women and girls are more likely to be exposed to disaster-related risks and losses to their livelihoods, and are less able to adapt to changes in climatic conditions.

The combination of gender inequalities, biases, and social norms dictating specific roles for women and men, encourage gender based violence against women and girls, which lead to a differential impact of environmental factors by gender. In particular, some of women's biological markers, such as their reproductive role or their physical traits, can make them differentially and/or disproportionately impacted to environmental harm such as air pollution or toxic industrial chemicals (Taofik, 2019). Exposure to environmental harm can also vary between men and women, as well as their respective roles in addressing the consequences of natural and man-made hazards (Parkes et al., 2016).

In a country-wide study for sub-Saharan Africa, Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka, and Loxton, (2019) on "Gender-based violence among female youths in educational institutions of Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis" revealed that, the overall prevalence of overall gender-based violence, sexual, physical, and emotional violence was high in Sub-Saharan Africa. The lowest prevalence of GBV was observed in Nigeria with 42.3% and it was highest in Ethiopia with 67.7% respectively (Beyene, et al., 2019). In some countries, violence against women is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP – more than double what most governments spend on education (Anderson, 2019).

In Nigeria and Adamawa state in particular, violence directed against people because of their gender is the most severe form of discrimination and remains part of everyday life for too many people. Failure to address this issue also entails a significant cost for the future (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). Numerous studies have shown that children growing up with violence are more likely to become survivors themselves or perpetrators of violence in the future (Evans et al., 2021; Beyene, et al., 2019; and Fawole et al., 2018).

One characteristic of gender-based violence is that it knows no social or economic boundaries and affects women and girls of all socio-economic backgrounds: this issue needs to be addressed in both developing and developed countries (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020). Decreasing violence against women and girls requires a community-based, multi-pronged approach, and sustained engagement with multiple stakeholders. The most effective initiatives address underlying risk factors for violence, including social norms regarding gender roles and the acceptability of violence (Sanusi, 2019).

According to World Health Organization [WHO] (2019), promoting gender equality is a critical part of sexual and gender-based violence prevention against girls and women. In the same vein, Beyene et al. (2019) of DFID stated that, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the most widespread form of abuse worldwide, affecting one third of all women in their lifetime. They added that, violence and abuse in education settings violates women and girls' human rights and can have a negative impact on their educational experience and long-term outcomes.

Research dedicated to understanding the phenomenon, and mainly to overcome it, points to the importance of violence prevention in the first years of school, focusing on the reduction of student aggressiveness, and the importance of community participation in the development of strategies to prevent and overcome violence at school (Anderson, 2019); strengthening of school management and peer group in the development of actions (Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020); and, when it comes to universities, institutional actions in support of victims and receiving complaints (Beyene et al., 2019). Badri (2016) points out that school is an important socialization agent for individuals. Therefore, it can also be an important place for preventing and overcoming violence, once it provides diverse relationships and interactions in which the teacher can act directly in appreciation and consolidation of less violent relations, lessening gender stereotypes. But for this, teachers need to be prepared to work for the prevention and eradication of gender violence, as highlighted by Badr et al. (2018). It is against this background that this study intends to investigate the impact of sexual and gender-based violence on girl- child school retention in secondary schools in Adamawa state, Nigeria

Statement of the problem

The seriousness of the problem of GBV in the school environment deserves to be highlighted; since, in addition to being constant, as indicated by research on bullying, for example, it has serious consequences such as decrease in academic indexes, dropping out of school, more interpersonal difficulties, depression, anxiety, and suicide (UNICEF, 2012; Duque and Teixido, 2016; UNESCO-United Nations Scientific Educational, 2017). The girl child being vulnerable and less privileged economically are constantly faced with relatively high risks such as unemployment, gender based violence, disease, hunger and even crime.

In Nigeria, an average girl-child faces significant obstacles in accessing proper education because of many circumstances, including socio-cultural norms, political, beliefs of the society and economic barriers and practices that inhibit access to formal education, especially for girls (Asbeh, 2021). According to the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report as cited in Mike and Muhammad (2020), the percentage of males and females in the total population is approximately equivalent: 49.2% and 50.8%, respectively. This model is comparable across rural-urban areas and the states. However, more male children are in school than female children in Nigeria. According to a UNICEF (2015) report, the female adult literacy rate (ages 15 and 9 above) in Nigeria was 49.7% compared to that of males, 69.2%, with a gender difference of 19.5%. In the northeast part of Nigeria, the picture is even bleaker due to inadequate policy framework that will enhance the girls' access and participation in education (Sanusi, 2019). The problem of GBV in Adamawa state has continued to attract attention because of its growing magnitude and non-reporting due cultural and religious beliefs of upholding secretes of sexual violence because of its effect on the girls' future marriage and personality. The cases of rape, child pregnancy and sexual harassment in schools have been on the increase as reported by some literatures.

The problem is made worse because many victims are hesitant to report acts of sexual violence for fear of being shamed or stigmatized or because they are concerned that they will not be believed or will face retaliation from their aggressor or aggressors. Nevertheless, available figures suggest that sexual violence and abuse in schools perpetuated by staff and by other students, is a reality for many students, particularly girls which have negative consequences on the school attendance, participation, retention and completion and therefore, academic performance (Mike & Muhammad, 2020). The study will attempt to answer these questions through primary and secondary data review of relevant and current literatures with base line data on the impact of sexual and gender-based violence on girl- child school retention in secondary schools in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. Survey school initiatives that are put in place to promote retention and prevent violence against girl-child in secondary schools in the state.
2. Conduct a statistical survey of how community interventions promote the girl-child retention in secondary schools in the state.

Research Question

1. How does the school initiative that is being put in place promote retention and prevent sexual and gender-based violence against girl-child in secondary schools in the state?
2. How effective are community interventions in prevent sexual and gender-based violence and promote the girl-child retention in secondary schools in the state?

Hypothesis

- H₀₂:** The effect of school-based initiative against SGBV does not significantly influence retention of girl-child in secondary schools in primary schools in Adamawa State
- H₀₃:** The level of community-based initiative against SGBV does not significantly influence retention rate among girl-child in secondary schools in Adamawa State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Principles of the National Gender Policy

In conformity with the Nigerian constitution which advocates for social justice and equality; the National Policy of Education, which highlights education as an instrument for development; the Universal Basic Education Law which advocates for free and compulsory basic education; the National Policy on Women which calls for all Nigerian women to acquire basic education and enjoy the full benefits of contemporary living and contribute meaningfully to the development of the country, and to all other supportive policies and legal provisions before this policy, the Gender and Basic Education Policy will be guided by the following guiding principles:

- i. A commitment by all stakeholders to gender equality, social justice and equity. Greater and more meaningful involvement and participation of communities and their representative structures.
- ii. Striving for gender balance at all levels of policy planning and implementation. Political commitment and national ownership
- iii. Effective participation among key actors including private sector, international development agencies, civil society and communities

- iv. Involvement of religious and traditional leaders as forerunners, advocates and monitors of policy
- v. Commitment to free and compulsory Basic education as a human right to all children irrespective of gender, at all levels of the system (federal, state, LGA, community and school)
- vi. Commitment to continuous monitoring and evaluation based on reliable data for effective implementation of Gender and Basic Education Policy
- vii. That the federal and state governments, acknowledge and exercise responsibility to provide Nigerians, and especially girls, with adequate information to ensure enrolment in, retention and completion of basic education
- viii. That various levels of government in Nigeria acknowledge and exercise their responsibility to provide for the basic education and well-being of pupils especially girls, which shall be fulfilled by the provision of appropriate gender sensitive, child friendly school/schooling environments
- ix. There will be secure environments protecting the rights of all children irrespective of gender, religion, and family, social, mental and economic status.
- x. To re-orientate the public on the proper understanding of societal norms and values as they affect the roles of males and females towards educational development;
- xi. Value re-orientation of the society on gender issues as they affect basic education
- xii. Integrating affirmative actions in favor of the marginalized groups
- xiii. To provide equal access for boys, girls and Non-Formal Education learners throughout Nigeria.

Gender Based Violence in School

Although gender based violence is a global phenomenon, the nature and forms of GBV is differ one context to another (Oguntayo, Opayemi, & Popoola, 2018). In academic arena, gender based violence is existential subject to the policy and program of institutions and may different according to the specific culture of school and society. The nature and forms of gender violence are culturally specific (Olalere, 2022), however, against the contextual variations, the causes of gender violence are similar. In school they are rooted in the formal and informal processes of schooling, which serve to establish the gendered norms of behavior in what is commonly termed a „gender regime“ Connell as cited in (Mike & Muhammad, 2020). Gender based violence in school can take many other forms; verbal and physical abusive and

perpetrators may include teachers, school administrators, other school personnel as well as students and outsiders (Olalere, 2022).

Oguntayo et al. (2018) concluded that, not only formal aspects of the school which have impacted on access and participation, but also the informal school environment plays crucial roles in perpetuating gender differentiation in education (USAID, 2008). USAID (2008) classified three major types of school related GBV namely; sexual, physical and psychological. Sexual violence is the most commonly identified form of school related GBV which includes direct physical contact, such as unwanted physical touching of any kind or rape. Sexual violence can also be perpetrated verbally, through sexually explicit language or any repetitive, unwanted sexual attention such as teasing or taunting about physical appearance. Likewise, physical violence includes corporal punishment, forced labor, fighting, and bullying. Among these, corporal punishment is the most widely administered and tolerated. Psychological abuse includes harassment or exploitation on the basis of sex. Bullying is most cited type of violence within this theme, which can range from teasing to physical violence perpetrated by students or teachers, and it tends to occur as a pattern of behavior rather than an isolated incident (USAID, 2008).

Observing violence against others can have a psychological effect on students, causing them to feel afraid or helpless (USAID, 2008). If a student experiencing harm on the basis of their sex in relating to schooling, it adversely affects the quality of education and students' quality experiences (Olalere, 2022). Hence, quality learning is a major problem in developing countries but quality learning cannot take place in unsafe situations (Parkes et al., 2016). GBV can occur in any school areas like classrooms, latrines, corridors or during travel to or from school. The girls and boys both may be the perpetrators of violence in school although the form it takes may differ. Punishment in schools often manifests itself in gendered ways. Boys generally experience more frequent and severe physical punishment, while girls are more vulnerable to psychological forms of punishment (Naidoo, 2023).

A study by Olawumi (2023) on the impact of gendered experiences on retention and achievement found that gender violence in the form of sexual intimidation, verbal abuse and physical assault was a significant contributor to irregular attendance and underachievement of students, especially of girls. Teachers' widespread use of verbal abuse generates low self-esteem in students. It was found by many pupils that verbal abuse was more hurtful than corporal punishment (Parkes et al., 2016). Gender violence in school impacts the educational status of students, whether they are affected directly as victims or indirectly as bystanders. There are several consequences of School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) including lack of motivation among students, increasing the risk of educational failure, failing grades,

absenteeism, demoralizes students, affecting their ability to achieve their educational goals and increased numbers of dropouts (USAID, 2008).

Family Background as a Factor in Success and Lapses in Girl Child Education

Okafor (2021) stated that the problems of the girl child education begin from home. It is at this level in the community that girls are educated in a different manner as compared to boys. The parents, siblings, relatives and even the neighbors, identify girls to be fundamentally different from boys. The CREAM study (2007) suggested that while boys attend school, girls are less likely to attend and complete school since some of them stay at home to be groomed for marriage and matrimonial responsibility. It further indicates that even where educational opportunities are afforded to girls, equality is not achieved automatically, because girls are many times overburdened with domestic chores, impeding upon their ability to fully concentrate or participate in their studies.

In support of this, Olawumi (2023) explains that this combination of factors interacts in complex ways to impact negatively on the participation of girls and women in education. Ifeoma et al. (2022) study indicated that there are a variety of reasons that prevent girls from completing education and these include socio-economic, socio-cultural and school related factors. Mezie-Okoye and Folusho (2018) also noted that a major restraint to the female takes up and follows through educational opportunities, even when these are available it's a near universal essential cultural bias in favour of males. The common functioning of the patriarchal systems of social organization, of customary early marriage, of the incidence of early pregnancy, in and out of marriage, of weightier domestic and subsistence duties of females, especially in rural areas, a usually lower regard for the value of female life, all combine, though differentially in each case, to negatively affect the participation of girls and women in formal education. Naidoo (2023) added that the legacy of injustice against the girl child has continued in some parts of the world especially in African and Asian countries.

Dandy (2021) conducted a study on factors influencing girl child participation in public primary education among the nomadic pastoralists in Magadi division, Kajiado north district, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the factors influencing participation of girl-child in public primary education among the nomadic pastoralists in Magadi division, Kajiado north sub-county, Kenya. The study established that the level to which the head teachers' administrative experience influenced girl-child participation in public primary education. The study revealed that head teachers who had taught between 6 to 20 years were 60% while the others who had taught for over 20 years will be 40%. Head teachers must recognize that

they have the capacity and power to make key decisions which affect the participation of girls in education. The findings also established that there is need for both the classroom teachers and the subject teachers to motivate girls in their classrooms for successful participation in primary education. Besides, it will be established that inadequate or lack of materials posed a great challenge to teachers from implementation of quality participation in education. The study recommended that public primary schools should be equipped with adequate resources and facilities for all children especially girls to fill several gaps that still exist.

In a study, Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) investigated School-related strategies for enhancing girls' participation in education in public primary schools in Kajiado West sub-county, Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to explore the teachers' and girls' perceptions of the school-related strategies for enhancing girls' participation in education in public primary schools in Kajiado West Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory. This was a qualitative research study that was positioned in the interpretivist paradigm. The study adopted a multiple case study research design. Two public primary schools with the lowest participation of girls' in education in Kajiado West Sub-County were selected purposively as cases of the study. The target population of the study was 44 teachers and 660 girls from the selected schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 2 head teachers, 6 teachers, and 24 girls as the participants of the study. Data was generated through focus group discussions and semi-structured individual interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data that was generated in the study. The findings revealed that the teachers' and girls' perceptions regarding sanitary facilities were that the sanitary resources were inadequate at school, there was an inconsistent supply of consumable sanitary resources, the quality and relevant education on menstruation management was insufficient, a disengaged relationship existed and that gender stereotyping was a major issue that affected the enhancement of girls' participation in education. The study recommended that all stake holders in girls' education should be fully involved and in communication with each other to achieve the goal of improving girls' participation in education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study adopted descriptive survey design.

Population of the Study: The population of this study comprised of all the the girl-child, teaching staff and school heads in the 178 secondary schools distributed among the three senatorial districts and five educational zones of Adamawa State. The State is sectioned into three senatorial zones, which are Northern Zone, Central

Zone and Southern Zone. The enrolment pattern into Senior Secondary School in Adamawa State, shows that in public secondary school, the SSS 1 enrolment was 41,614; out of which 19,368 were girls which constitute 47%. Similarly, the public SSS 2 enrolment was 40,849; out of which 19,058 were girls which constitute 47%. While, the public SSS 3 enrolment was 37,567; out of which 17,495 were girls which constitute 47%. This gives us a total of 120,030 comprising of 55,921 (47%) females and 64,109 (53%) males (Adamawa State School Census [ASC], 2022). Therefore, the target population of this study is the 55,921 (47%) female students (F Girl Child) in senior secondary schools and female teachers.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures: The study purposively selected nine schools at rate of three schools per senatorial zone based on accessibility and larger staff-student strength. The study also randomly selected a total of 3 teachers from each of the nine earlier selected schools. Thus, 27 teachers were chosen for this study. The respective principal was choosing across the 9 schools, while representative of parents was considered for each school. The sample size for the students was determined using Taro Yamane which give total 397 students from 55921 populations. However, the researchers choose to select 405 students as against 397 to give even representation, at proportion of 45 students per school across the 9 schools. Therefore, 15 female students in each of SS I, SSII and SSII for each school were randomly selected across 9 schools.

Sampling Procedures: The study used simple random sampling, purposive and snowballing technique in the selection of schools and participants.

- i. **Sampling of schools:** Purposive and stratified random sampling was used to select the three secondary schools from each of the three senatorial zones from Adamawa state from which data were collected. The nine secondary schools were selected based on their large girls' population.
- ii. **Sampling of female students (Girl-Child):** Purposive and stratified random sampling was used to select the 405 female students from the 9 schools selected.
- iii. **Sampling of heads of schools:** the principals were purposefully sampled because they handle the school resource including the teachers' affairs and are in charge of implementation of all government policies in their respective schools. A total of 9 samples were obtained from principals.
- iv. **Sampling of teachers:** Teachers sampling was done using simple random sampling. A total of 27 teachers were selected from each of the 9 secondary schools under study giving a total of respondents for quantitative data. The selected teachers were selected for interview through focus group discussion. The representative of PTA was considered for each schools.

Methods of Data Collection: Data on the impact of sexual and gender-based violence on girl- child school retention in secondary schools in Adamawa State were collected using questionnaires. The structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data on research questions 1-2 and consist of 25 items divided into three sections based on key objectives of gender based violence factors and their impact on girl child academic performance. The questionnaire was structured on a closes ended format on five point Likert scale ranging from, Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, graded as 5, 4, 3, 2,1 respectively.

Methods of Data Analysis: The primary data collected through the use of questionnaires was coded using appropriate scales (Likert scale) to allow for statistical analysis on the research questions quantitatively estimated the respondents' opinions. Thus, research questions were answered using percentage, mean and standard deviation, while linear regression was answered using linear regression analysis at 0.05 significance level.

Research Question 1: How does the school initiative that is being put in place promote retention and prevent sexual and gender-based violence against girl-child in secondary schools in the state?

Table 1: Effectiveness of School Initiative in Prevent SGBV against Girl-Child and Increasing their Retention in Secondary Schools in Adamawa State

S/n	Items	SA Fx (%)	A Fx (%)	D Fx (%)	SD Fx (%)	x	Std. Dev	Rmk
1	Schools are position in locations that are safer and accessible for girl-child which facilitate participating in school activities	51(13.78)	65(17.57)	86(23.24)	168(45.41)	2.00	0.76	D
2	The provision of WASH facilities reduces abuses of girl child mostly experience while seeking water from stream or distance water source	188(50.81)	67(18.11)	56(15.14)	59(15.95)	3.04	0.50	A

3	Schools have adequate teaching and learning materials which influence girl-child interest in school attendance and retention	26(7.03)	79(21.35)	99(26.76)	166(44.86)	1.91	1.34	D
4	The school authorities have stringent policy protecting girl-child from sexual abuse by teachers and male students, which account for higher enrolment and retention in school	212(57.3)	75(20.27)	36(9.73)	47(12.7)	3.22	0.64	A
5	The toilet facilities in schools are adequate for both boys and girls students at separate places, which safeguard the girl-child from abuses and encourage her school retention.	219(59.19)	81(21.89)	41(11.08)	29(7.84)	3.32	0.49	A

Note: Values in parentheses () are in percentage, SA: strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, X = weighted mean, Rmk: Remark

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the outcome of respondents views on the effectiveness of school initiative in prevent SGBV against girl-child and increasing their retention in secondary schools in Adamawa State. Thus, 45.41% of respondents expressed that school are not position in locations that are safer and accessible for girl-child, such that it could facilitate retention in school (Mean=2.00; standard deviation = 0.76). The provision of WASH facilities reduces abuses of girl child mostly experience while seeking water from stream or distance water source. This fact is buttressed by 50.81% respondents (Mean =3.04; standard deviation = 0.50). The 44.86% of

respondents expressed disagreement to the assertion that schools have adequate teaching and learning materials which influence girl-child interest in school attendance and retention (Mean=1.91; standard deviation =1.34). Most respondents (57.3%) expressed that the school authorities have stringent policy protecting girl-child from sexual abuse by teachers and male students, which account for higher enrolment and retention in school (Mean =3.22; standard deviation =0.64). The toilet facilities in schools are adequate for both boys and girls at separate places, which safeguard the girl-child from abuses and encourage her school retention. This fact is established by 59.19% pf respondents (Mean =3.32; standard deviation =0.49). this shows that school initiative to cater for girl-child protection and retention in schools are working only that school location and learning materials are needed to be improved on for more girl-child retention at schools as well as protection against sexual and gender-based violence.

Research Question 3: How effective are community interventions in prevent sexual and gender-based violence and promote the girl-child retention in secondary schools in the state?

Table 3: Effectiveness of Community Intervention in Preventing SGBV and Promoting Girl-Child Retention in Secondary School in Adamawa State

S/n	Items	SA Fx (%)	A Fx (%)	D Fx (%)	SD Fx (%)	x	Std. Dev	Rmk
1	Society has put up enough awareness campaigns on need to stop violence against girl-child which has increase their over school participation	178(48.11)	73(19.73)	91(24.59)	28(7.57)	3.08	0.98	A
2	The members of society have now aware of the need to stand against violence and sexual abuses of girl child which has contributes toward higher enrolment and school retention	192(51.89)	65(17.57)	57(15.41)	56(15.14)	3.06	0.83	A

3	The vocational training provided for the girls and women within the society is encourage them to gain economic independence and self-confidence even at school	57(15.41)	56(15.14)	70(18.92)	187(50.54)	1.95	0.76	D
4	The community watch groups is effective in monitoring and report incidents of sexual abuses or violence, which make girl child feel secure to go anywhere of their place including school	72(19.46)	73(19.73)	65(17.57)	160(43.24)	2.15	1.34	D
5	The struggle against sexual abuses and violence against girl child involve community and religious leaders which make it effective in ensuring girl-child protection including while on their ways to schools	21(57.03)	78(21.08)	67(18.11)	14(3.78)	3.31	0.81	A

Note: Values in parentheses () are in percentage, SA: strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree, X = weighted mean, Rmk: Remark

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results on table 3 presents the perspective of respondents on effectiveness of community intervention toward preventing SGBV and promoting girl-child retention in secondary school in Adamawa State. The results showed that 48.11% of respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that the society put up enough awareness campaigns on need to stop violence against girl-child which has increase their over school participation (Mean =3.08; standard deviation = 0.98). also, 51.8% of respondents unanimously agreed that the members of society have now aware of

the need to stand against violence and sexual abuses of girl child which has contributes toward higher enrolment and school retention (Mean =3.06; standard deviation =0.83). Meanwhile, 50.54% of respondents strongly disagreed to the assertion that the vocational training provided for the girls and women within the society is encourage them to gain economic independence and self-confidence even at school (Mean = 1.95, standard deviation = 0.76). also, 43.24% of respondents disagreed to the assertion that the community watch groups is effective in monitoring and report incidents of sexual abuses or violence, which make girl child feel secure to go anywhere of their place including school (Mean =2.15; standard deviation =1.34). The struggle against sexual abuses and violence against girl child involve community and religious leaders which make it effective in ensuring girl-child protection including while on their ways to schools. This fact is buttressed by 57.03 of respondents (Mean =3.31; standard deviation =0.81). This shows that community intervention is to some extent contributing toward safeguarding the girl-child against sexual and gender-based violence, only that aspect of vocational training and community watch need to be improved on.

Hypothesis One: The effect of school-based initiative against SGBV does not significantly influence retention of girl-child in secondary schools in primary schools in Adamawa State

Table 3: Regression Analysis on Effect of School based Initiatives Against SGBV on Retention of Girl-Child in Secondary Schools in Adamawa State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.352	.084		27.919	.000	2.187	2.518
School based Initiative	.151	.031	.249	4.930	.000	.091	.211

Dependent Variable: Rate of Retention

$R=.249^a$; $R\text{ Square}=.063$; $\text{Adjusted } R\text{ Square}=.059$; $F_{\text{Anova}}=24.302$; $F\text{-Sig}=.001^b$

The results of regression analysis on effect of school-based intervention against SGBV on retention of girl-child in secondary school in Adamawa State presented in Table 3 revealed Standardized Coefficient Beta of 0.249, t-test value of 4.930 p-value pf 0.000. This imply that the current level of school based imitative against SGBV is only contributing about 24.9% retention rate among girl-child in the secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Hypothesis Two: The level of community-based initiative against SGBV does not significantly influence retention rate among girl-child in secondary schools in Adamawa State

Table 4: Regression Analysis on Effect of Community-based Initiatives Against SGBV on Retention of Girl-Child in Secondary Schools in Adamawa State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.176	.078		27.781	.000	2.022	2.330
Community Strategy	.231	.030	.378	7.822	.000	.173	.289

Dependent Variable: Rate of Retention

R=.378^a; R Square= .143; Adjusted R Square= .140; F- Anova= 61.183; F-Sig=.001^b

The outcome of regression analysis as presented in Table 4 shows that community based initiative agents SGBV contributed minimally toward girl-child retention in secondary school in Adamawa State. The result revealed Standardized Coefficient Beta of 0.378, t-test value of 7.822 p-value pf 0.000. This imply that the current level of community-based imitative against SGBV is contributing about 37.8% retention rate among girl-child in the secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Discussion

The results from this study shows that school initiatives are effective in addressing retention among girl-child in secondary schools in Adamawa State. Specifically, the provision of WASH facilities reduces abuses that girl child mostly experiences while seeking water from stream or distance water source. This is in accordance with the earlier findings by Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) and Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka and Loxton (2019) which established that provision of water sources within vicinity of school as well as other sanitary could go a long way of making girl-child actively involved in school activities. The fact that school authorities have stringent policy protecting girl-child from sexual abuse either by teachers or male students account for higher enrolment and retention in school. This shows that once the girl-child feel secure in school their attendance at school could high and their commitment toward classroom activities will be significant. This is in agreement with the finding made by Badr et al. (2018) that protection of female students through strong school rules and policy will make them feel secure and protected against brutal behaviour of male students or against ill advances from male teachers. Anderson (2019) observed that molestation of girl-child or gender abuses of any

kinds need to be tackled right from school level as most members of community meet within the limited space of school. The provision of toilet facilities separately for the male and female students accounted for privacy and security against abuses from male peer which was found accounted for more retention in schools. This supports earlier conclusion drawn by Asbeh (2021) that facilities in the schools could be allocated for male and female students if possible to prevent unusually mixing within them that can expose the female students abuses. Meanwhile, the results from this study shows that both school location and learning materials are not adequately favour girl child, which imply the need to improve on school location closer to community for easy accessibility and provision of learning materials to favour those students from less privilege families and improves overall school enrolment and retention. In short, the current study has reiterated the fact that the school initiative to cater for girl-child protection and retention in schools are working only that school location and learning materials are needed to be improved on for more girl-child retention at schools as well as protection against sexual and gender-based violence. Dandy (2021) maintained that school initiatives against girl child abuses can be very effective when they are comprehensive, inclusive, and well-supported. The key to their success lies in the combination of education, clear policies, support services, and community involvement. By creating a safe and supportive environment, schools can significantly reduce the incidence of abuses and help all students thrive academically and personally.

The results from this study shows that community intervention is contributing toward preventing SGBV and promoting girl-child retention in secondary school in Adamawa State. Specifically, the fact that the society put up enough awareness campaigns on need to stop violence against girl-child has significantly increased their over school participation and retention. Olawumi (2023) found that awareness among members of community is highly effective as they take ownership of such campaigns. Similarly, Taofik (2019) observed in his study on gender-based violence against girl-child that members of community became active agents against girl-violence and abuses when integrated from the beginning of the struggle. It is important that the members of communities are not side-lined from various activities that will make their community functional. Thus, it is interesting that the members of society are now fully aware of the need to stand against violence and sexual abuses of girl child which has contributes toward higher enrolment and school retention. Parkes et al. (2016) noted that without participation and collaboration by members of community the struggles against series violence and abuses of girl-child will not be effective as most of these violence occur within the family or at community level. Similarly, Evans, Hares and Mendez-Acosta (2021)

observed that the fight against abuses and gender-based violence are effect once the member of community become active agent in the fight. The struggle against sexual abuses and violence against girl child cannot be rated effective until those heading group of people within the society such as religions and community leaders are integrated into the struggle. *Ifeoma, Agubosi and Badamas (2022)* found that the participation of both religious and community leaders on the fight against gender based violence and other abuses were successful compare to various instances where leaders play non-significant role in the campaigns. The results from this study has however shows that watch groups among the community has not been effective in adequately reporting incidences of violence against girl child. This is in concordat with the earlier finding by Fawole, Balogun and Olaleye (2018) which indicated that community-based watch are less effective in detecting and reporting domestic abuse and sexual violence. It was concluded that most of the violence and abuses happened at home-based within the family which make the detection difficult. Also, Badri (2016) observed that unless the victims have the courage to speak out the cases of abuses may not be seeing the light of day. This shows how difficult it could be for an outsider to discover happening within the corner or room or within the perimeter fence. Meanwhile, the group rape and gang molestation of girl-child that normally happen in public places can be detected, reported and apprehended by community watch group. This at least shows the need for the community based watch group to over external security for the girl-child while away from home. This is accordance with the submission make by Mezie-Okoye and Folusho (2018) that community protection has to be a shared responsibility among members of community, security personnel and respective members of the family.

Conclusion

This study through its findings has reiterated the fact that sexual and gender-based violence against girl child is accountable for poor school retention in Adamawa State. Thus, as the incidences of sexual abuses and gender-based violence is increasing against girl-child the retention in secondary school reduces. More so, the school initiation of stringent rules and WASH facilities is discouraging SGBV and boosting girl-child retention in school. In the same vein, the community strategy against SGBV is working and enhances school retention. The media intervention has reduced the SGBV while improving the retention rate at schools for girl-child. The contribution of political intervention against SGBV was significantly effective in promoting retention of girl-child in school. The lack of political will among others accounted for poor government intervention against SGBV.

Recommendation

Based on the respective findings and conclusion from this study, the following are the recommendations:

- i. The school initiative against SGBV was effective in retraining girl-child in school. Therefore, the Adamawa state ministry of education through post primary board management should support the school authorities to ensure that school-based policies and strategies against sexual and gender-based violence remain functional and effective
- ii. The community initiative against SGBV has positive contribution toward girl-child retention in secondary schools of Adamawa State. Therefore, the awareness campaigns within the community should be sustained with scope to get more members of community onboard. Also, there should be cleared roles for community leaders, religion leaders, market women, youths, and other groups in the society for more effective struggle against SGBV and higher retention of girl-child at schools.

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