

ATTITUDE OF EDUCATED ELITES TOWARDS THE MALE -CHILD IN MUBI
METROPOLITAN AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING
AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitude of educated elites towards the male child in Mubi Metropolitan area of Adamawa State. A sample of 400 respondents comprising 100 literate males, 100 literate females, 100 non-literate males and 100 non-females were randomly selected using stratified and purposive sampling techniques. A self-constructed male-child preference scale (MCPS) Instrument was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity.

The inter-item analysis was computed and the correlation coefficient was 1.00 while the variance was .000. The reliability coefficient of -.87.23 and .99 were determined using Cronbach Alpha, Guttman's split half and Spearman-brown formula respectively. The data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics. The result of the study showed, among others, that there was a significant difference between the literate and non-literate males and females in their attitude towards the male child. The study recommended among other things that Nigerian women of timber and caliber should take responsibility for salvaging the traditional woman from oppression and intimidation by the male chauvinist society. The study also recommended that enabling laws should be made to protect the female producing women from being tormented by the family members for her failure to produce the coveted male child.

Key Words: male-child, female producing woman, male-producing woman, Educated elites, Literate and non-literate males and females, counseling and Human Development.

Introduction

In Mubi Metropolitan area of Adamawa State, married women, particularly female producing women suffer from all kinds of psychological problems, intimidation and mistreatment for continuously producing females children for the family. In most cultural groups in the state. When a marriage is not blessed with a male child, the community holds the woman responsible and subjects her to untold inhuman treatment. On the other hand, women who produce male children usually feel superior to those who do not as if they made any special contribution to the sex determination of the male children.

The authors of this paper were motivated to undertake this study after they participated in a number of heated discussion with some lecturers and civil servants from the University and Federal Polytechnic Senior Staff Clubs on the Male-Child Syndrome. Most of the lecturers expressed their burning desire to produce more male children than females children at whatever cost which is contrary to general expectation and exposure they have acquired, it is not unexpected that they will react positively to the birth of female children. One finds in some educated families where husbands exhibit the same behaviours characteristic of the unlettered masses in the traditional societies.

Although the male-child syndrome seems to be more pronounced in African than elsewhere, it is by no means a peculiarity of Africans. Ekpu (1998), reported that among the Cobinos of South American, male children are highly regarded and so are the women who bear them. Female children are put at the lower pedestal and a husband, according to traditions, responds to the birth of a baby girl by spitting on the wife's bed as a show of contempt. This shows that if marriage were to be treated like business contract, men would include the highly coveted male child as part of the agreement. Otite (1981), Ekpu (1998) and Enonazi (1997), stated that the aim of any marriage in Africa is to have children. In fact for some, it is the only purpose. To many married men and women, barrenness is regarded as a calamity. The childless woman is seen by family members as having been cursed by some evil spirits for promiscuity or some other wrong doing before marriage. She is therefore, treated as an outcast and has little or no influence among her fellow women. The birth of a child into any family is seen as a blessing from God and this brings so much joy and happiness to the family. Women express such joy by gathering around the newborn child and showering him with gifts. The authorities quoted above express their sadness that in most ethnic groups where the passion for a male child is strong, this hospitality and acceptance is not accorded the girl child. In a similar study in America and Asia, though most families favour the production of many children, the male child is preferred due to the following reasons: The need to immortalize the family name, to ensure security and insurance

against old age and the use of male children to perform social and spiritual functions. Traditional beliefs hold that male children are preferred because when females marry, they change their names to their husbands and thus the name is lost matrimony. (EPU, 1998; Otite, 19981; Patricia, 2007). According to Patricia (2007), China's one child policy has led to the highest rate of female infanticide arising from son preference. The reasons given for this preference according to their customs and traditions, is that when women get married, they are expected to take care of their husbands' families and not their natal families. Most literate reviewed revealed that the passion for male children is particularly more prevalent among less educated people. It is not uncommon to find relations of the man that is married to a females-producing woman putting pressure on him to either send away the wife or take another wife in addition with the hope that the new wife may be luckly enough to give family at least a baby boy. These traditionalists have developed traditional methods of sex selection to assist those couples desiring for the male child. For instance, Ekpu (1998), has reported that in some cultural groups the man and woman who want a male child have to wear their male's clothes. The woman wears the man's clothes while the man wears the woman's clothes as they make love. It is believed that the woman who wears the man's clothes will enhance the chances of fertilizing the man's 'Y' chromosomes thereby giving birth to a male child. In other communities, the man according to him is advised to wear boots to bed if he wants a baby boy. Others suggest aggressive sexual performance because the more vigorous the performance, the better the chances of having a boy.

The Greeks also believe that the sperm from the left side of the testicles are meant for girls while those the right side represent boys. If a boy is wanted, they would tie off the left testicles and if a girl is needed, the right testicle will be tied before making love. It is believed that tying the left or right testicles helps in preventing the sperm from entering into the woman's vagina during ejaculation and therefore, promotes the chances of getting the desired sex. In some cultural groups, the clients are advised to take some boiled herbs which promote the chances of giving birth to male children. These are the methods that have been used down the ages. Whether they have the ability to usher in the baby of the preferred sex is an entirely different matter: It is clear from the preceding discussion that every individual including group of individuals have their views and feelings about issues, problems and events that affect their own lives. For instance, we all have our own feelings about problems of life such as examination malpractice, population explosion, abortion, preference for male or female children etc. Sartain (1968) and Okoronka (2004), believe that these differences in personal views and feelings about issues of life are influenced to a very large extent by attitudes, beliefs and prejudices. They define attitude as a tendency to react positively or negatively towards an object. According to them, an attitude is usually directed towards an object such as a person, event, policy, material object, God or freedom. Similarly, Onwuasoanya (2007), defines attitude as a relatively enduring way of thinking, feeling and behaviour towards a person, place or idea which almost involves a certain amount of bias on one's part. The implication of this is that a person can either have negative or positive attitude towards the male or female child and this is expected to vary in degrees from being extremely favourable or unfavourable. A person is said to posses an ambivalent attitude if he has both positive and negative tendency towards the male or female child.

Attitude as a dynamic concept helps us to deal effectively with the environment as long as our problems are solved. What this therefore, means is that if people's favourable attitude towards the male child will continue to solve our problems as reported by Otite (1981) and Patricia (2007), as reasons for son preference, the attitude will continue to wax stronger and stronger. If on the other family than the male-child, the male-child syndrome is bound to crumble and has to be either replaced or modified. Recent development in the Nigerian family environments have shown that a good percentage of parents prefer to have more female children than males because the former tend to assist the natural family to solve problems more than the later.

The purpose of this research into attitude is to identify how literate and non-literate people in the study area develop favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the male or female children. There seem to be from the above discussion, that a relationship exists between attitude and male or female preference. Sartain (1968) and McMahan (1995), revealed that people's attitude and beliefs are learned through the process of socialization. As the individual grows, he acquires all the values and norms that are cherished by the society through the process of identification and observation of the behaviours of the significant others. Authorities like (Sartain, 1968; Nwobi, 1997; Henrieta 1997; McMahan, 1995; Enoazi, 1997), have reported that people's specific experiences with the object of attitude can affect their attitude or beliefs. This is because, when we experience rewarding experience in dealing with a particular person, or object, we come to like him and when we are frustrated, or have had a bitter experience, we develop hatred or unfavourable attitude towards the object. Sometimes a single experience can produce a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards an object or person.

In our literate and non-literate communities therefore, one find that in some families, owing to differences in experience, members have favopurable attitude towards male children in others, they prefer children to male children. This means that if the male children in that family help their parents and the community to solve the problems facing them, there is every tendency that they will like to have more males than females in the family. On the other hand, if the boys give them more headache than girls, their attitudes will tend to trip in favour of girls.

Our attitudes are also influenced to a great extent by the remarks and opinions expressed by other significant others. For instance, when remarks such as 'male children are better than females', it is not economical to train girls because they will soon get married and abandon the family' etc. will no doubt pull others to accept their views thereby developing favourable attitude towards the males- child. Authorities like (McMahon, 1995; Sartain, 1968; Mangvat, 2005; Udo, 2002; Bahago, 2005; Uzochukwu, 2005 and Salami, 2000), believe that stereotyping, social prejudice, discrimination and scapegoats, social institutions; cognitive dissonance, Government influence and people's customs and traditions can also be powerful instruments in changing people's attitude towards a particular behaviour. This explains why according to them people in the traditional societies have stereotypic views about women in general and is treated in accordance with such beliefs. The writers, however tend to disagree with the position of these authorities and support the views of pnonazi (1997), Henrieta (1997) and Aluede (1997), that cultural values and people's customs and tradition lead to the development of gender stereotyping, social prejudices, discriminations and scapegoats. The impact of these values according to them, lead to gender inequality, son preferences sex roles stereotyping early marriage, over production of children in search of the male child etc.

In the light of the literature reviewed above, it is evident that the desire for a male child is strong among both literate and non-literate males and females. The females producing woman takes all the blame for the inability of the family to get the coveted male child. These stereotypic behaviours of attitude are caused by socialization whose agents include personal experience, propaganda, social group, pressure, social prejudice, dissemination and Government influence. Studies so far conducted have not touched on the male-child syndrome educated elites and information is lacking as to why it is still prevalent in spite of their exposure to modern civilization. This is the hallmark of this research.

Statement of the Problem

In Mubi metropolitan area of Adamawa State like other Nigerian communities, female producing women are subjected to all forms of psychological problems such as fear, anxiety, intimidation, depression, frustration and emotional instability by their husbands and family members for their failure to produce at least a male child to immortalize the family name. Contrary to general expectations, most educated elites still fined it difficult to detach themselves from the traditional beliefs that male children are better than female children despite their adequate knowledge on human reproduction. Different methods are employed by both educated elites and non-literate couples to get the coveted male child that will ascend the family throne. When these traditional and modern methods of sex selection fail to get the desired male child, it is the woman who tales the blame. The man is advised to either send away the family throne. The poor woman is left to suffer untold hardship such as depression, despair, anxiety, fear, abandonment and inferiority complex for the rest of her lie.

Although many investigation have been conducted on the male-child syndrome across the continent of Africa, such investigations conducted on the values placed on the male-child and the cultural factors responsible for this preference. Studies carried out so far even outside the shore of Africa do not show whether this favourable attitude towards the male-child or unfavourable attitude towards the female child is prevalent among literate or non-literate communities. In the light of this therefore, an empirical study in to the attitude of educated elites will no doubt contribute in extending the frontiers of knowledge on education and social sciences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the favourable or unfavourable attitude of educated elites towards the male child. Specifically, the study sought to find out the following:

- i. Attitude of educated elites towards the male child
- ii. Relationship between the literate and non-literate couples in their attitude towards the male child
- iii. Determine if difference exists between male and female educated elites and non-literate couples in their attitude towards the male-child.

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to carry out this study:

- i. Is there any difference between male and female educated elites in their attitude towards the male child?

- ii. Is there any difference between educated elites and non-literates in their attitude towards the male-child?
- iii. Is there any relationship between the female educated elites and non-literate females in their attitude towards the male-child?
- iv. Is there any difference between literate and non-literate males in their attitude towards the male-child?
- v. Is there any difference in attitude between literate males and females and non-literate males and females towards the male child?

Hypotheses

From the research questions above, the following null hypotheses were derived to be tested using appropriate statistical tools:

HO1: There is no statistically significant difference in mean scores and T-values between male and female educated elites in their attitudes towards the male child.

H02: There is no significant difference in mean scores and calculated T-Values between the educated elites and non-literates in their attitude towards the male child.

H03: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores and r-Values literate and non literates females in their attitude towards the male child.

H04: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of literate and non-literates males in their attitude towards the male child.

Research Method

This study was aimed at finding out the favourable or unfavourable attitude of educated elites towards the male-child in Mubi Metropolitan area of Adamawa State. This section therefore deals with research design, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability, procedure for administration, scoring and data analysis.

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey type. This method is preferred because it is the best research design used in attitude research in education and social sciences. It enables the researcher to capture the complexity of every day behaviour through data collection. (Anagbogu, 2007).

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The study was carried out in Mubi Metropolitan area of Adamawa Stat. The population comprised an estimated population of 4000 males and female elites as well as non-literate males and females resident in Mubi Metropolis. Most of the educated elites are lecturers in the four tertiary institutions. Four hundred respondents participated in this study. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were used. The stratification was based on sex and level of literacy. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered to each stratum of the target population Educated males and females and non-literate males and females

Instrumentation

The main instrument that was used in collecting data for this research was a two point likert Questionnaire. It was developed by the researchers after a careful review of relevant literature and it was tagged 'Male child preference scale' (MCPS). The 29-item questionnaire was conducted using a two point Likert Scale. The two-point scale was chosen because it is not only the best scale used in attitudinal studies, but also the best scale to be used in eliciting information from both literate and non-literate respondents. The instrument was subjected to content and face validity. To do this, the researcher submitted the draft of the questionnaire with 35 item 35 items to the university counselor and a specialist in Physics education whose Ph.D research was on attitudinal studies. The purpose of the study and the research questions were given to them as a guide. The experts were asked to review the content coverage and appropriateness of the language structure and expression. These experts made very careful suggestions and corrections which led to the reduction of the number of items from 35 to 29. the 29 items were further subjected to inter-item analysis to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The range and variance was .000. There reliability of the instrument was also established by using Cronbach Alpha. Guttman's Split half and Spearman-Brown formula after the questionnaires were administered. Cronbach alpha and Guttman's Split half gave a reliability of -.87.230 while that of Spearman's Brown formula was .99. These values was considered valid and good enough for this study.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher, with the help of research assists, visited the tertiary institutions to administer the questionnaires to the respondents using purposive sampling procedure while non-literate respondents were accessed on Sundays, fellowship days, markets and beer parlours. The questionnaires were collected on completion at the same period, thus, ensuring 100% return rate. To allay their fears and sentiments, the column for name was deliberately omitted from the instrument. A total of 400 questionnaires were finally collected for scoring and analysis. The data were analysed using student's-t-test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics. The results were all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study are presented in the tables below as answers to the research questions and test of hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels.

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant difference in mean scores and calculated T-values between male and female educated elites in their attitude towards the male child.

Table 1: T-test Analysis of Male and Female Attitudes Towards the Male Child.

Sex	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
Male	100	14.52	12.188	98	6.42	1.96	Significant
Female	100						

Data in Table 1, show that there is a significance difference between male and female educated elites in their attitude towards the male child. Calculated t-value of 6.42 is far greater than the t-critical value of 0.01 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the answer to research question and hypothesis 1, is that the educated males and females do not have the same attitude towards the male child. From the data collected, it appears that the educated females prefer more girls than boys while the males prefer more boys than girls.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in mean scores and calculated T-values between the educated elites and the non-literates in their attitude towards the male child.

Table 2: T-test Result on the Attitude of Literate and Non-Literate Males and Females Towards the Male Child.

Sex	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
Male	200	0.93	22.28	398	4.14	1.96	Significant
Female	200						

Decision: From the decision rule, the null hypothesis is rejected since the critical value (1.96) is less than the calculated value (4.14) at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the attitude of literate males and females towards the male-child tend to differ from those of the uneducated males and females.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores and r-values of literate and non-literate females in their attitude towards the male child

Table 3: Test of Significance Relationship between Attitude of Literate and non-literate Females Towards the Male Child

	N	X	SD	DF	r-cal	r-cri	Decision
Literate Females	100	46.14	13.15	98	0.06	1.96	Insignificant
Non-literate Females		47.38	20.07				

Decision: From the decision rule, we accept the null hypothesis since the calculated value is less than the critical value and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that a significant relationship does not exist between the attitude of educated and uneducated females towards the male child. The data collected show

that the educated females tend to have a favourable attitude towards the female child than the non-literate females.

H04: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of literate and non-literate males in their attitude towards the male child.

Table 4: Test of Significant Relationship between the Attitude of Literate and non-Literate Males Towards the Male Child.

	N	X	SD	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Literate Female	100	53.69	19.37	0.29	1.96	Insignificant
Non-literate Females	100	48.93	15.05			

Decision: Based on the decision rule, accept hypothesis since the calculated value is less than the table of 1.96 and accept the alternative hypothesis. This means that literate and non-literate males do not differ significantly in their attitude towards the male child. The non-literate males are likely to show a more favourable attitude towards the male child than the literate males.

Attitude of Educated Elites Towards the Male -Child in Mubi Metropolitan Area of Adamawa State:
Implications for Counselling and Human Development

Discussion of Results: The purpose of this study is to examine the attitude of educated elites towards the male child in Mubi Metropolis and the implications of such findings on counseling and Human Development. Based on the data collected and analysed, the following findings have been identified. The study revealed a significant difference between the literate and non-literate males and females in their attitude towards the male child.

The researcher's personal interaction with the respondents during the data collection exercise that most non-literate males and females seemed to have a more favourable attitude towards the male child than their literate counterparts. This is because in the traditional societies, the roles ascribed to the male child have more economic and social significance than the ones assigned to the female child. On the other hand, the educated elites have a milder attitude towards the male child because of their exposure to modern civilization. The result of the study supports the views of Sartain (1968), Onwuasoaya (2007) and Nwobi (1997), who agree that rewarding experience in dealing with a particular person or sex, opinions expressed by significant persons, social groups and propaganda can be powerful instrument in attitude development and change. The development of favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards the male child depends on the magnitude to influence such factors have on the people. This is what accounts for the differences in the attitude towards the male child.

The study also revealed similar findings where a significant difference between literate and non-literate males was found. It was found out among the educated elites that the women preferred to have more girls than boys whereas the men maintained their old traditional attitude of desiring the male child. Furthermore, the non-literate males and females have favourable attitude towards the male-child. This finding corroborates the work of McMahan (1995) and Sartain (1968), who reported among other things, that group pressure, propaganda, personal communication and government influence, traditional stereotyping, social prejudice and discrimination are responsible for these differences in the preference for male or female children.

The educated elites who operate in a liberal environment are really working very hard to swing the tide in favour of the girl-child. That is why Ugochukwu (2006), reported that propaganda and enlightenment campaigns mounted by governments at all levels and non-governmental organizations on the role of women in the transformation of the Nigerian Society are yielding good fruits. According to them, gender imbalance in school enrolment, political appointments, military and paramilitary services are being corrected. Most parents in rural and urban areas gradually accepting the fact that the girl-child is now becoming an economic asset to the family more than the male counterpart because it is not uncommon to see girls assisting their parents even after marriage. It is now the responsibility of the educated women who have won their freedom to help those who are still under the chain of male dominion in order to achieve gender equity in the interest of social justice and fair play.

Implications for Counseling and Human Development

The issues raised in this paper have serious implications for counseling and Human Development. The paper belief that Counseling is not just concerned with assisting clients to resolve their problems take

vita decisions but to provide valid data and enabling environment and maintenance of unfavourable attitude towards the female-producing women and female children by the male chauvinist society are not only morally wrong but a waste of human resources. Family and Marriage Counselors should, through marriage and family planning clinics, Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN) offer counseling intentions for victims of male-child syndrome. Counselors should employ the ABCDE principles of Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) in order to help the clients to flush out irrational ideas that family life is not complete without the male-child. He should provide enough data to show that the female child is even more capable of solving the family problems than the male-child provided she is properly brought up and educated. Williams (2007), recommends for Counsellors to shoot documentary films on influential women in order to showcase their relevance in society. Similarly, Omonni (2007), advocates for the use of Cognitive Behaviour Modification (CBM) and Video therapy (VDT) for handling cases arising from the male-child syndrome. CBM or RET is a counseling therapy that involves practicing the use of self-talks which is aimed at replacing irrational beliefs or thinking with rational ones. VDT involves the shooting of the Therapeutically relevant films (documentary) such as Ladi Kwali, Late Gambo Sawaba, Queen Amina of Zazzau, Grace Alele Williams etc and discussing with clients the issues raised by the actors and actresses and how they are related to the problems of the clients. The use of double barreled names, child adoption and accepting children as gifts from God are good counseling strategies for the barren or female producing family. The counsellor is also expected to work out details of how to develop potentials identified in female children and handle other issues arising from the male-child saga.

Recommendations

This paper therefore, recommends that while Counsellors are handling cases arising from the male-child syndrome, Nigerian women of timber and caliber should carry their own cross by mobilizing other women to practically demonstrate their relevance in the male-dominated society that female children are important if not important than their male counterparts in solving the problems of their natal families. This is the only way of destroying the traditional gender stereotyping and ensuring gender equity in our society. Women who have made marks in history, should, through relevant government parastatals and national and international organizations, find ways and means of liberating the women who suffer in the hands of their husbands. The Nigerian women of substance and other women in top government positions should ensure that necessary laws are made to protect female producing women from being intimidated by their husbands for their failure to produce the heir to the family throne. Free education at all levels should be given to women and necessary laws made to sanction parents who fail to enroll their daughters in schools.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the analysis and interpretation of results:

Most non-literate males and females have high passion for the male child than their literate counterparts who have a tolerant attitude towards the female child.

- 1) Attitudes are enduring behaviours which acquired through the process of socialization, take time to unlearn.
- 2) Personal experience, social institutions, group pressure, propaganda, cognitive dissonance, and government influence are powerful instruments in the development of favourable and unfavourable attitude towards the male-child.

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