



# Examination of Tertiary Education Opportunities among Genders in Gombe State.

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## Abstract

Societies define their customs, values and norms. They define roles and responsibilities to both genders. Some societies believe in the saying, *what a man can do, a woman can do it*, while others hold the opinion that males and females have unique abilities and hence, the society has special expectations on each gender. While some people may view tertiary education as a necessity to only males, others may see it as imperative to females too. This study sought to find out whether equal opportunities to tertiary education exist between males and females in Gombe State. The design for this research was Survey. The entire tertiary institutions of learning within Gombe State served as the population of the study from which purposive sampling technique was used in drawing the sample. The instruments for the data collection was a structured questionnaire named, Gender Opportunity to Tertiary Education Questionnaire (GOTTEQ). The data was analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. The research revealed the chances given by government, parents and spouses to different genders for tertiary education. From the results of the study, government at all levels has provided the enabling environment for gender equity to tertiary education, but significant number of parents discriminated between genders in that regard. Recommendations were made as to how to overcome gender disparity in tertiary education opportunity where exists.



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Muhammad Bashir Muhammad

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## Introduction

Culture, values, norms and beliefs differ from people to people. Depending on a nation or a community, importance of education to males and females may differ. Some see education as an obligation to only males, while others prioritize female education. But in ideal sense, education should be for both genders. For us to develop as a nation, education of citizens with equity must be prioritized as Muhammad (2020) noted that, much of the development of education in the modern era has been brought about in the name of equity in access to education.

“The gender concept has found prominence in access to education in contemporary times” (Joe, 2021). According to Gijsbert and David (2020), most developed nations, fewer men than women enroll in postsecondary education, with the potential for long-term disruptions in social cohesion and economic development.

Nigerian constitution and the National Policy on Education did not discriminate against any gender in access to educational opportunities at all levels. But there is argument as to

whether stakeholders give equal opportunity to education for both genders. It is clear that enlightenment on equal opportunity to all citizens irrespective on any attributes including gender is ongoing. This campaign seems to stop at basic education. In contrast, opportunity to tertiary education needs to be investigated. This is because of the importance attached to higher education (as well). This is because, gender equality in access to higher education is an important factor in building a sustainable world (Olumuyiwa, Segun, Comfort & Aderemi, 2022).

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According to Muhammad (2020) social upbringing, cultural orientation and social-economic status of parents are among the number of problems attributed to poor participation of females at the tertiary level of education in northern Nigeria. Parents favored boys' education more and regard girls' education as a waste since they will end up in the kitchen. What leads to this belief is lack of religion knowledge, and issues of poverty (Usman, 2013).

Gombe as one of the states in northern Nigeria, all that is applicable to the region

may be applicable to the state. However, it will not be always true considering the state's diversity in cultural orientation, adaptation and hospitality. Hence the need to investigate whether equal opportunity to tertiary education is given to citizens of Gombe State.

### **Conceptual Framework**

According to Saim (2022), Gender is the socio cultural definition of a girl/boy and men /women given by society. Our society defines what girls and boys should wear, what they should do, how they should be treated and what are their rights and responsibilities, because gender is created by societies. The definition of gender can vary from society to society and time to time. The need to investigate the implementation of equity in access to education is now generally accepted as one of the tools of educational reforms (Biodun, 2000).

International trends in gender inequalities in higher education can be determined by examining the changes in the composition of the student population in higher education, the relative share of degrees awarded to women each year, the levels of education

attained by men and women and, lastly, the differences between the subjects studied by men and women (Stephan, 2008).

According to Stephan (2008), The last few decades have been marked by greater growth in the participation of women than men in higher education, which initially led to a reduction in gender inequalities and their subsequent reversal. On average there are more women than men, irrespective of age, in both general higher education and higher technical education in (western) countries. It is only at the doctoral level that men remain, on average, in the majority, although women are visibly catching up and parity has almost been achieved. But the outcome of his research may not necessary be true for all countries. This is because every nation has its unique characteristics. The same nation may have different or even opposite views as to the which gender need what level of education.

Abdullahi, Samantha, Iskuhi, Candice, Shari & Shirelle (2022), carried out a study on Gender Disparities in Education and Employment as a necessary step for

achieving sustainable development in the Caribbean. Their findings suggest that the Caribbean has achieved and maintained gender parity in access to education at the primary and lower secondary education levels. At the upper secondary education level, boys are lagging behind in terms of net school enrolment. At the tertiary education level, the study confirms what is already public knowledge about the under representation of men.

Newman (2021), studied Gender Equality and Educational System in Nigeria and found out that literacy rate among young women and men age 15-24 years was 59.3 per cent and 70.9 per cent in 2016 respectively. Female enrolment in Nigerian Colleges of Education was 46.1, 47.3 and 46.4 per cent (2014/2015, 2015/2016, 2016/2017 academic session). The paper also found that enrolment in Nigerian universities was 43.1 and 56.9 per cent for Female and Male (2017). The percentage of women lecturers in federal Colleges of education was 33.8 per cent for 2016/2017 academic sessions. The

percentage of Female professors in Nigerian Universities was 15.43 per cent in 2017.

According to Madume (2021), socio-economic factors such as father's level of income, number of siblings and income of the parents are the main factors affecting the enrolment of science based courses among female students in tertiary educational institutions. Similarly, Emily (2012), studied factors influencing low female students' enrolment in science based courses in tertiary institutions in Western Province Kenya. His findings revealed that, age, marital status and father's level of education are among the contributing factors of low participation of female students in science courses.

Among others, early marriage and early pregnancy impede girl-child education, that the girl-child education is negatively affected by the belief that if a woman is educated, she will dominate her husband, and that misunderstanding of the position of Islam on the education of girl-child education especially in the Northern Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The leading theories that informed the conduct of this research Freud's psychosexual theory and Bandura's social learning theory. According to Jennifer (2021), Psychosexual Stages of Development Freud's psychosexual theory states five stages of human development: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. These psychosexual stages capture the main growth points of a person from infancy to adulthood and focus on different facets of wants, needs, and desires.

Here are three terms Freud used within this theory:

- Libido: Sexual energy that can manifest through different types of behaviors
- Fixation: The idea that part of a person's libido is stuck in a particular stage of development through overindulgence or disruption
- Erogenous Zone: A part of the body that is sensitive to stimulation

The basis of Freud's theory suggests that a person's body has several erogenous zones, believing a person's libido would grow over

time and look for satisfaction through different types of behaviors using these zones, such as thumb sucking or sex. Depending on what happens in each stage, a person will quickly move from one stop to the next or develop fixations based on overindulging or disruption.

In addition to the five stages, Freud also explained conscious and unconscious desires through the id, ego, and superego.

- Id: An instinctive aspect of our biology where the impulsive part of us has desires and will do anything to fulfil them.
- Ego: A mediator between the id and the world. The ego uses reason to quell desires and fit into society.
- Superego: The moral high ground, incorporating learned behaviors from caretakers and societal norms. The superego balances the perfectionism of the ego and harnesses the chaotic nature of the id.

Saul and Olivia (2023), Social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others.

Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior.

At the observation stage, children tend to learn by imitating people close to them and similar to them. Hence, they imitate from same gender the most.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is true that, Federal Government has enacted number of policies upon which gender equality in access to every level of education is built. For example, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) emphasized the need for quality of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children, irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities, each according to his or her ability. It further stated that there will be the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (Akpoyovwaire, 2014). This provision on equality of opportunities was equally stressed in Section (18) of the 1999 National Constitution that government shall



direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. Despite all this provisions, achievement in gender equality to tertiary education in some Nigerian states is not well documented. It is against this background this study seeks to examine the tertiary education opportunities among genders in Gombe State.

### **Aims and Objective the Study**

The main aim of this study is to find out the tertiary education opportunities among genders in Gombe State. The Specific objectives are:

- i. To find out if tertiary institutions provide equal opportunities among genders in Gombe State
- ii. To find out if Gombe State parents provide equal opportunities to their wards irrespective genders to acquire tertiary education.
- iii. To find out whether Gombe State husbands provide enabling environments to their wives to acquire tertiary education.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. Do tertiary institutions provide equal opportunities between genders in Gombe State?
- ii. Do Gombe State parents provide equal opportunities to their wards irrespective of gender to acquire tertiary education?
- iii. Do Gombe State husbands provide enabling environments to their wives to acquire tertiary education?

### **Significance of the study**

The study is significant in several ways. Firstly, it highlighted the current state of tertiary education in Gombe State and identify the opportunities available to male and female students. This information will be useful in developing policies and programs that promote gender equity in tertiary education. Secondly, the study provided insights into the factors that influence the participation of male and female students in tertiary education. This information will be useful in developing targeted interventions that address the barriers faced by female



students in accessing and completing tertiary education. Thirdly, the study contributes to the existing literature on gender and education in Nigeria. It provides valuable data that can be used to compare the situation in Gombe State with other states in Nigeria and identify best practices that can be replicated in other contexts. Finally, the study will serve as a basis for further research on gender and education in Gombe State. It will provide a baseline for future studies that can track changes in the participation and achievement of male and female students in tertiary education over time.

### **Research Methodology**

The design for this research was Survey. "Survey research means collecting information about a group of people asking them questions and analyzing the results" (Shona, 2022). The survey design is therefore considered suitable, since the study sought information from a sample drawn from individual colleges, using questionnaire.

### **Research Population**

The population of this study will consist of all tertiary institutions (public and private) within Gombe State.

### **Sample Size/Sampling Technique**

The sample size was determined using Yamane formula. Nine (9) tertiary institutions of Gombe state were selected using purposive sampling technique. However, Simple Random Sampling Technique was employed in selecting the respondents of each sampled institution. According to Julia and Saul (2023), in Simple Random Sampling Technique, each member of a population has an equal chance of being chosen through the use of an unbiased selection method.

### **Research Instrument**

A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire, named, Gender Opportunity to Tertiary Education Questionnaire (GOTTEQ) was administered to solicit for the required information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A was for collection of information on personal data

of respondents while section B consisted questions soliciting responses from the respondents based on the research objectives. The Instrument was validated by an expert in Test and Measurement.

### **Method of Data Collection**

This study collected all the needed data through questionnaire items which was administered to the respondents. The researcher carried out the administration of the questionnaire items by themselves though assisted by research assistants.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The study employed the use of quantitative data analysis method. The data collected from the completed and returned questionnaires were thoroughly checked, presented, analyzed, and quantified in analytical form using statistical tables. Quantitative data analysis “is helpful in evaluation because it provides quantifiable

and easy to understand results” (Pell Institute, 2023). The data was analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. Each question acceptance level for mean was 2.50, such that a mean rating on any item less than 2.5 was regarded as rejected.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered in the nine (9) tertiary institutions of Gombe state. Out of the 400 copies distributed, three hundred and sixty-four (364) were returned but only three hundred and thirty-two (332) were properly filled. Hence, this analysis was based on the 332 copies.

The collected data are presented on tables and analyzed using frequency counts and mean scores. Each research question acceptance level for mean was 2.50, such that a mean rating on any item less than 2.5 was regarded as rejected.

## Results

### Research Question 1

Do tertiary institutions provide equal opportunities between genders in Gombe State?

Data relevant to this research question were collected using the first ten questions of the questionnaire. The summary of the data is presented on table 1.

**Table 1**

S/N	Question Item	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{X}$	Remarks
1	How strongly do you agree or disagree that tertiary institutions in Gombe State provide equal opportunities for both genders?	47	42	145	98	2.90	+
2	How much do you agree or disagree that there is gender discrimination in admission processes of tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	95	109	77	51	2.25	—
3	How much do you agree or disagree that women are provided with equal opportunities for scholarship and financial aid programs in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	85	78	90	79	2.50	+
84	How much do you agree or disagree that both genders have equal access to educational resources and facilities in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	44	49	125	114	2.93	+
5	How much do you agree or disagree that there is gender-based discrimination in academic performance evaluations in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	74	76	94	88	2.59	+



6	How much do you agree or disagree that there is gender-based discrimination in employment opportunities in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	85	91	87	69	2.42	—
7	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-specific programs and initiatives in tertiary institutions in Gombe State to promote gender equality?	96	87	70	79	2.40	—
8	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more awareness and education on gender equality in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	85	98	81	68	2.40	—
9	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for policy changes in tertiary institutions in Gombe State to promote gender equality?	118	107	59	48	2.11	—
10	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-balanced representation in leadership positions in tertiary institutions in Gombe State?	122	113	47	50	2.10	—

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**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

## Research Question 2

Do Gombe State parents provide equal opportunities to their wards irrespective of gender to acquire tertiary education?

Data relevant to this research question were collected using questions 11 to 20 of the questionnaire.

The summary of the data is presented on table 2.

Table 2

S/No.	Question Item	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{X}$	Remark
11	How much do you agree or disagree that Gombe State parents provide equal opportunities for both male and female children to acquire tertiary education?	102	119	66	45	2.16	—
12	How much do you agree or disagree that there is gender-based discrimination in the support and encouragement given to children to pursue tertiary education among Gombe State parents?	58	74	105	95	2.71	+
13	How much do you agree or disagree that Gombe State parents provide equal financial support for their male and female children to acquire tertiary education?	93	94	77	68	2.36	—
14	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a gender bias in the selection of fields of study for children by Gombe State parents?	66	70	107	89	2.66	+
15	How much do you agree or disagree that Gombe State parents provide equal opportunities for both male and female children to attend preparatory programs for tertiary education?	92	86	76	78	2.42	—



16	How much do you agree or disagree that Gombe State parents provide equal access to educational resources and facilities for their male and female children to prepare for tertiary education?	58	67	113	94	2.73	
17	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more awareness and education on gender equality among Gombe State parents to promote equal opportunities for their children to acquire tertiary education?	60	76	113	83	2.66	+
18	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for policy changes and interventions to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education among Gombe State parents?	75	80	94	83	2.56	+
19	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-balanced representation in leadership positions in educational institutions in Gombe State to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education?	78	66	93	95	2.62	+
20	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-sensitive educational programs and initiatives to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education among Gombe State parents?	55	72	123	82	2.70	+

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

### Research Question 3

Do Gombe State husbands provide enabling environments to their wives to acquire tertiary education?

Data relevant to this research question were collected using questions 21 to 30 of the questionnaire.

The summary of the data is presented on table 3.

**Table 3**

S/No.	Question Item	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{X}$	Remark
21	How much do you agree or disagree that husbands in Gombe State provide enabling environments for their wives to acquire tertiary education?	114	97	71	50	2.17	—
22	How much do you agree or disagree that there is gender-based discrimination in the support and encouragement given to wives by their husbands to pursue tertiary education in Gombe State?	72	88	78	94	2.58	+
23	How much do you agree or disagree that husbands in Gombe State provide equal financial support for their wives to acquire tertiary education?	109	120	44	59	2.16	—
24	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a gender bias in the selection of fields of study for wives by their husbands in Gombe State?	63	67	109	93	2.70	+
25	How much do you agree or disagree that husbands in Gombe State provide equal opportunities for their wives to attend preparatory programs for tertiary education?	71	84	95	82	2.57	+
26	How much do you agree or disagree that husbands in Gombe State	86	88	78	80	2.46	—



	provide equal access to educational resources and facilities for their wives to prepare for tertiary education?						
27	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more awareness and education on gender equality among husbands in Gombe State to promote equal opportunities for their wives to acquire tertiary education?	77	71	89	95	2.61	+
28	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for policy changes and interventions to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education among husbands in Gombe State?	80	81	91	80	2.52	+
29	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-balanced representation in leadership positions in educational institutions in Gombe State to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education for wives?	97	86	76	73	2.38	—
30	How much do you agree or disagree that there is a need for more gender-sensitive educational programs and initiatives to promote gender equality in access to tertiary education among husbands in Gombe State?	65	73	105	89	2.66	+

Source: Field Survey, 2023

### Major Findings of the Study

From the analyses of the responses in the tables 1-3 above, the findings of the study are summarized below:

1. Gombe State tertiary institutions provide equal educational opportunities between genders
2. Gombe State parents show gender-discrimination in tertiary education opportunities among their wards
3. Gombe State husbands do not provide enabling environments to their wives to acquire tertiary education

### Discussion of Findings

This study focused on finding out whether equal opportunities to tertiary education exist between males and females in Gombe State. In order to answer the research questions earlier formulated, the study employed the use of questionnaire which consists thirty (30) items eliciting information from respondents.

For research question one, the outcome (as presented in table 1) shows that Gombe State

tertiary institutions provide equal educational opportunities between genders. At the same time, the results indicated that both genders have equal access to educational resources and facilities in tertiary institutions in Gombe State (as the mean for that item is 2.93). This is in line with the provision of Nigerian constitution Section (18) of the 1999 National Constitution and the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) which frown at discriminations against any gender in access to educational opportunities at all levels. The reason is clear as in the statement of because of Olumuyiwa, Segun , Comfort & Aderemi (2022) “gender equality in access to higher education is an important factor in building a sustainable world”. However, the outcome of the study shows that there is no for more gender-specific programs or initiatives, no need of further awareness and education on gender equality, nor awareness and education on gender equality.

For research question two, table 2 presented the analyses of the respondents’ responses. It is clear from the table that, Gombe State

parents show gender-discrimination in tertiary education opportunities among their wards. This agrees with Usman (2013) and Muhammad (2020) research outcomes as vindicated how Parents favoured boys' education more and regard girls' education as a waste since they will end up in the kitchen. Table 3 represented the responses of responded based on the research question three. From the table, Gombe State husbands do not provide enabling environments to their wives to acquire tertiary education. This might have contributed to the low participation of women than men in tertiary institutions of learning as revealed by Newman (2021), when he studied Gender Equality and Educational System in Nigeria and found out that literacy rate among young women and men age 15-24 years was 59.3 per cent and 70.9 per cent in 2016 respectively.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that: Government and tertiary institutions have provided the enabling environment for equal participation of both

genders to acquire tertiary education. But parents and husband of Gombe state discriminated between genders when it comes to giving opportunity to tertiary education.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings made and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. More awareness and education on gender equality in tertiary institutions in Gombe State should be carried out.
2. There should be more awareness and education on gender equality among Gombe State parents and husbands to promote equal opportunities for their children and wives to (respectively) acquire tertiary education.
3. Husbands and parents in Gombe State should be enlighten to provide equal access to educational resources and facilities for their wives and children to (respectively) prepare for tertiary education.
4. There is a need for more awareness and education on gender equality among parents and husbands in Gombe State to



promote equal opportunities for their children and wives children (respectively) to acquire tertiary education?

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