

INFLUENCE OF PEER PRESSURE AND GENDER ON ATTRITION TENDENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the influence of peer pressure and gender on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Two research questions, two objectives and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Conceptual and empirical literature were reviewed in line with the objectives of the study. The descriptive survey design was used. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 1,049 student out of a population of 20,910 SS3 students. A researcher developed instrument structured in a 4-point Liker scale was used for the research. Data were analyses using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test. The two null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate accepted. The study found a significant influence of peer pressure and gender on attrition tendency among students. Recommendations were therefore made that among other measures, guidance counsellors should create awareness on the implications of negative peer pressure on the personality development of the individual.

Keywords: Peer pressure, Gender, Attrition Tendency.

Introduction

Developed and developing nations of the world have come to see in education, a veritable means for effecting national development. This probably explains why successive governments have allocated enormous resources to education. However, it is observed that despite persistent efforts at encouraging formal education, not all students stay to complete their circle of education. Cases of attrition appear to be ever increasing. Observably, this development has an ultimate negative effect on the basic principles of Nigerian education. Education in Nigeria is based on the assumption that it is an essential tool for achieving national development. With the two major aims of national integration and provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens. Secondary education occupies a major place in the Nigerian educational system. This explains why secondary education should be taken seriously not only as an acceptable qualification for jobs, but also as a door to higher education. As such, attrition by students become a waste of government resources and the underutilization of government, efforts. It is observed that failure to complete secondary school not only limits the opportunity for higher education but also significantly presents a drain on the scarce resources which government has for delivering of quality education.

In Borno State specifically (and probably in the North at large) it is observed that there exists a wide gender disparity in education in favour of the males. Probably owing to religion and he socio-cultural values, gender plays significant roles in the chances of a student staying to complete school. Society's preference for male children makes the parents focus more on the education of the male child than the female (Abba, 2021). In addition to this, is the issue of peer pressure. It is known fact that human choices can be shaped by the group one belongs. Adolescent stage is the age prior to adulthood when the individual can easily be influenced by developments around him. In the opinion of Jones and Sampson (2009), the peer group has the ability to pressurize or compel a member of the same social ranking or age bracket to do what he could not have thought of since they are people of the same age bracket, the tendency towards attrition may be developed within the group and if becomes peculiar to the group. By reason of the losses suffered by society when children drop-out of school, it becomes imperative to find out the factors that could be responsible for this with specific searchlight on peer pressure and gender factors.

Statement of the Problem

In Borno State, cases of attrition have been on a steady increase for the past years as more and more students drop-out of school (specifically between 2009 and 2013). Since the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency coupled with the attendant effect of their activities on the economy, religious orientation and social life generally, more and more students at the secondary school level are leaving school without completion. Parents, education stakeholders and researchers have pondered on what could be the possible causes of this. Accusing fingers are easily pointed at the school factor such as lack of teaching and learning facilities, poor management style, poor teaching methods and a general lack of conducive environment for teaching and learning. Discussions have hardly centred on other variables.

The public SSS enrolment table above shows the public SSS 1 enrolment was 27,110 in the 2020/2021 session; out of which 12,792 were girls who constitute 47% of the total public SSS 1 enrolment. Similarly, the public SSS 2 enrolment in the 2021/2022 session was 24,748 in the 2021/2022 session; out of which 10,690 were girls who constitute 43% of the total public SSS 2 enrolment. Lastly, the public SSS 3 enrolment was 20,970 in the 2022/2023 session; out of which 10,002 were girls who constitute 48% of the total enrolment. This shows a gradual reduction in students' population as they get to their last year in school.

It was the burden of this study to investigate the influence of peer pressure and gender on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Education stakeholders and the public at large may wish to know if this tendency is capable of truncating, the life chances of the individual. The study was therefore motivated by the urge to find out if there is any influence of peer pressure and gender on attrition by secondary school students in Borno State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of peer pressure and gender on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study has the following objectives to:

- i. establish the influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.
- ii. investigate the influence of gender factors on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- i. What are the ways peer pressure influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?
- ii. In what ways do gender factor influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study;

- Ho₁** Peer pressure does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State.
- Ho₂** Gender factor does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State.

Literature

Peer Group and Attrition Tendency

When adolescents make decisions, they are always influenced by the behaviour of significant people around them. As children approach adolescent, they spend most of their time with their age mates who gradually become the most important reference group and, influential persons in, their decision-making and

behaviour (Dekoric, Wissine and Meijerb, 2004). Peer group is assumed to be one of the major elements that can exert tremendous influence on school drop-out tendency of secondary school students. In every society, individuals belong in one group or the other. According to Lippino and Sander (2015) the next most important group after the family that an individual pays great attention is the group that is made up of his peers. In most cases, a teenager spends more of his time with his playmates than with his family. The influence of the peers according to Ezike (2000) is of greater impact on adolescent behaviour than any other factor.

There are instances and as observed by the researcher, where children are given the necessary support by parents or guardians for schooling, yet they still drop out of school. Since children grow up and interact with different people in the society, there is every tendency that such interactions are often obvious in the behaviour of the individual. This, in the opinion of Oke and Tejumola (2021) include the adverse effects which may lead to withdrawal from school before graduating. Nwankwo (2006) opined that peer group exercise considerable influence on the adolescence by setting a pattern of values and behaviours for an individual. In his study, peer group was found to have influence members to drop out of school to join their friends in activities such as going to the beach and parks; to work as potters during school hours, engage in money-making ventures and petty business instead of continuing in school.

Adams (2006) stressed that as a child associates with friends who are smokers, drunkards or drug addicts, he may likely develop a negative behaviour towards schooling. This is because there is a tendency for adolescents to adopt the behaviour of the group that they belong in their quest to be acceptable in their peer groups leading to them behaving deviantly to the established norms of the society. This deviant behaviour may result in suspension from school. Many peer groups among adolescents constitute out laws in the school. As such, their chances of completing school become very slim. Ubog (2004) in his perspective also added that engaging in deviant behaviours such as stealing, smoking, dishonesty, disobedience, drug abuse, examination malpractice, cultism among others could result in attrition by the student concerned.

McGrace (2004) is of the view that peer pressure influences not only the intellectual aspects of students, but also the moral, emotional, psychological and physiological aspects. Adolescent are always anxious to do what their peer group members do such as reading, playing, joining social groups in the school like Boys Scout and girls' guide, whose influence can help in developing and raising the moral standard of the child'. Schneider and Yin (2011) observed that peer group engagements can become a real problem to the adolescent in school in particular and the society in general, especially at the secondary school level where they make friends, form clubs and association which are mostly informal in nature. This implies that excessive peer group activities, as posited by Ojo (2000) often push some children to copy certain negative aspects of their peers' behavioural attributes if close attention is not paid.

Social learning theory suggests that it is not necessary for adolescents to observe a given behaviour and adopt. It is sufficient to perceive that the peer group accepts it in order to be able to opt for similar behaviours (Petraitics, Flay and Miller, 1995). Peers may strongly influence preference in the way of dressing, speaking, using illicit substances, sexual behaviours, adopting and accepting violence, adopting, criminal and anti-social behaviours, and in many other cases of the adolescent's life (Padilla, Walker and Beari, 2009; Tome, Matos and Diniz, 2008). As observed by the researcher, there is always the desire to be acceptable in a group by teenagers. To be accepted therefore, they may choose to mimick the usually compromising conducts noticeable in group members.

Peretemode (1993) as quoted in Ibia (2006) observed that peer association can be seen either to bolster or to weaken the basic social identities and outlook that were developed earlier in life. It is capable of doing this because of the relatively small number of members which make possible a high degree of interpersonal interactions and communications. On the positive side, peer group teaches unity and collective bargaining. Members of a peer group most often see themselves as a collective body and speak with one voice. In addition to this, it is observed that peer group discourages social discrimination which is common in the adult world. As observed by Eze (2009) the peer group may then have a positive influence on a student's

behavioural disposition when its activities help in motivating the young person to behave in acceptable ways.

From the foregoing, it may then be correct, to say that peer pressure is capable of altering the way a student thinks, behaves and acts. Peer pressure can assist the student to develop and maintain a positive interest for school activities. It can also mar a student's chances of excelling academically. When this happens, attrition may set in. It is the type of peers which a child moves with that affects his life choices and chances. Association with friends with noble dreams like becoming a doctor, lawyer, engineer and architect can motivate a child to also dream big. But as observed by Yoyele (2000), when a child associates with peers with much interest in drug abuse, lateness to school, sexual molestation of opposite sex, among others, his academic achievement may become very poor and he may gradually loss interest in school.

Peer pressure tends to have a greater effect on most students with low self-esteem (Lami, Snijders, Steghch and Torlo, 2011). Although most students may tend to join a peer group on their own volition, some others might be compelled by various pressing reasons to join. In the views of Meeker, Edmonson and Fisher (2008), when a student is particularly compelled to join a stronger and deviant peer group, he may also be compelled to do the things that go against his will. In this way, the pressure from peer members can influence the student to be involved in some aspects of social deviant behaviours such as drug abuse, alcoholism, absenteeism and lateness to school. Such students eventually drop out of school since they are more likely to exhibit deviant behaviours. Since children learn by imitation and also from their peers, understanding the type of association the student keeps would help the parents and teachers to understand when the child is drastically becoming vulnerable to a new influence that may distract his attention from schooling.

Peer pressure puts a kind of social pressure on secondary school students to adopt a form of behaviour, dress or attitude in order to be accepted as part of a group. This has the tendency to affect them either positively or negatively. The work of Castillo (2010) suggest that there are students who influence other students positively as they display discipline and become role models for others to emulate; or negatively as they portray social problems like immoral behaviours because at this level, the youth seek to establish their independence from their parents due to a new lifestyle, growth of unruly lifestyle epitomized by drug addiction, alcoholism, and carefree sex behaviours; peer pressure which can bring about attrition is one of the most serious important issues being emphasized by the developing governments of the world (Unicef, 2001).

When discussing how peer group influences students' choices, Castillo (2010) stated that the kind of friends that the students in secondary school make differ according to students' gender, social class, ethnicity and academic background. Consequently, some students are more likely to have friends who are careless about school learning and are less likely to associate with peer who care about school. Students may drop out of school due to peer pressure or rejection by peer making them feel lonely and disassociated from having friends to fit with into a group (Mutwol, Cheserek, Bolt & Mining, 2012).

Gender and Attrition Tendency

It would be a bit difficult to divorce gender related factors from attrition even in the contemporary age specifically in societies like Borno state where gender-related factors still shape decision making processes as a result of the socio-cultural values of the people. By the twentieth century, women were winning greater access to educational programs at all levels. Feminists of various orientations have overtime made considerable contribution to politics of gender awareness and empowerment as well as issues of equal opportunities and access to resources such as property, wealth and education (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). Currently, girls' education has been viewed as a primary predictor for a number of development indicators including national fertility rates, infant mortality family income and productivity. World Bank economists have recognized girls' education as a single development intervention with the greatest individual and social returns (Brent, 2005).

Female education is not only important as a social indicator or an engine for economic development leading to a greater level of health, economy, security, liberty and participation in social and political activities, but can possibly yield higher rate of return than any other investment available in developing world. (World Bank, 2002). Equally, a report by UNICEF (2004) indicated development of stronger families, better services, better child health, and effective participation in governance.

However, despite the obvious benefits of education to national development, research findings indicate that the attrition rate of female students was higher than that of boys. Further, reports indicate that girls' primary school completion rate was far behind that of boys, at 76% compared to 85% for boys. This gender gap meant that million more girls than boys are dropping out of school each year. UNICEF (2003) showed a worrisome report from Sub-Saharan Africa where the number of girls out of school rose from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002. The report also indicated that 83% of all girls out of school in the world live in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific.

According to United Nations millennium project (2005), a close look at the number shows that girls' enrolment rates were still low in most regions. Data from a sample of 8000 primary school which participated in a survey carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2002, shows that the dropout rates in primary schools in Kenya had for long remained below 50%. It was established that more girls than boys were dropping out in North Eastern and Nyanga province. The repetition rate decreased from 15.2% for girls and 15.6% for boys in 1993 to 12.9% for girls and 13.5% for boys in 2002. (Chege and Sifuna, 2006). It was unclear whether grade repetition increased the chances of completion, but what was apparent was that grade repetition extended the age range and this increased the possibility of dropout. This signifies a higher percentage of attrition for females than male students.

In a report released by USA; it is estimated that about 35 percent of girls between the ages of 16 and 20 were in school, compared to about 50% of boys between the same age range. For every 10,000 girls leaving school every year before completion, the government alone lost an estimated 750,000 dollars (Muganda and Omondi, 2010). The dropouts face many difficulties in these days of worldwide economic difficulties where jobs are scarce and types of jobs available to school dropouts are decreasing with advancement in technology. Countries striving to attain Universal Primary Education have to eliminate wastage and dropout in particular. In countries like Kenya, and as reported by Education for All (2015) the dropout problem for the girl-child is very serious in some districts. Records indicate that some selected primary schools have an average of 70% dropout rates.

Ahmed (2001) is of the view that gender distinction in education needs to be geared to afford individuals irrespective of gender access to school enrolment and completion. He is of the opinion that the education of women is very important because the more enlightened the women are, the better home managers they would be. Women according to him, should be allowed access to a sound education. According to Akin and Iskender (2011), the importance of education for women including, but not limited to better managers of the home, effective use of health services, improved hygiene and nutrition practices, low child mortality, longer life expectancy, better educated children among others.

Nevertheless, statistics highlight the scale of the problem of school enrolment and completion in Nigeria in relation to gender structure as follows: school enrolment retention and completion rates in basic education (primary and junior secondary) are still low for the girls with a Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) for Basic Education standing at 60% (Federal Ministry of education). A study by Adenipekun (2009) revealed that 10 million school-aged children are out of the formal school system. According to the study, more than 60% of this figure represents the girls residing in the 19 states of the North. There are 3.6 million out of school children in primary school and 7.2 million in junior secondary. This represents about 11 million (or 35%) of school-aged children are still not enrolled in school (National Demographic and Health Survey, 2012). The report further indicates a Gender Parity Index of 0.86 in favor of boys and national completion rates are just over 50% with 17% of children dropping out of junior secondary school.

Geographical differences in school attendance ratios are also marked with attendance rate as high as 83% in the South West and as low as 42% and 43% in the North West and North East respectively. In the latter two regions only 49% junior secondary school aged boys and 34% of girls attend school and the majority dropout of school by the end of their Junior Secondary (Strategic Action on Girls Education in Nigeria, 2012). Nigeria ranks 118th out of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index (British Council, 2012). In the South Eastern geographical zone, more boys than girls drop out of secondary school due to the preference for trade, quest for quick money, parental decisions, lack of employment opportunities, long process of education and lack of proper career counseling. Mutundi (2001) reveals that high cost of schooling was the major barrier to girls' education in Kilome Division of Kenya. She also identified gender assumptions that limited the allocation of resources to girls and deny them access to meaningful educational opportunities. According to Hallman and Grant (2006) early school leaving and adolescent pregnancy are strongly associated with low economic status. Lloyd and Mensah (1995) reveal that lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women, and the demands placed on them, coupled with the gender inequalities of education system, may result in unsatisfactory school experience, poor academic performance and endorsement of early motherhood.

In Borno State of Nigeria, clear gender disparities exist between male and female students in their chances to complete school. Since the 2014 kidnap of female students in Government Girls Secondary school, Chibok, many parents have been scared of allowing their daughters complete school for fear of the same fate befalling them. As reported by Akpan (2022), the security crises have had a direct negative impact on girls' access to and completion of school. Among the Maasai people of Tanzania for example, family and peer pressure for early marriage is one most cited reason that girls drop out of school. In the Maasai culture the girls are taught that circumcision is a rite of passage to womanhood and that once circumcised, they should not continue with education but should be married off since schooling is for children. Maasai women are traditionally valued on the basis of how many children they can produce for their husband and not how educated or economically successful they may be. Again, in the Maasai culture, girls sleep in separate houses without supervision and when a girl becomes pregnant before marriage, she brings disgrace to the family and reduce the bride price. This is why parents insist that their daughters leave school and marry early (Afrol, 2007).

Methodology

The study used the descriptive survey research design in its investigation. The descriptive survey is most appropriate in investigating events that had already occurred with the aim of identifying possible causes and relationships with the variables under investigation. According to Ndem, Udoh and Joseph (2003) the ex-post facto design is suitable when the researcher is seeking for information on a variable already in existence and which cannot be easily manipulated by the researcher. Ndiyo (2005) agreed that the descriptive survey research design is the most suitable design to adopt when gathering information on the effect or influence of an independent variable over a dependent one.

The design was therefore considered suitable for this study since the researcher was not able to manipulate the independent variables constituting social environment which are already in existence. Beyond this, design allows the use of the questionnaire as research instrument for the collection of data through impersonal information supplied by the respondents on the influence of social environmental variables and attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Population of the Study

Population of the study comprised of all the Senior Secondary Three (SS 3) students in Borno State, Nigeria. There are 20,910 SS 3 students in the 74 Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State. (Borno State Teaching Service Board, 2023).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 1,049 SS3 students representing 5% of the population of study were selected for the study. According to Nwana (1981) if a population is in several thousands, a five percent or less sample will do.

Multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. At the first stage a proportion of 20% of Local Government Areas was selected from the three Senatorial District, which gives a total of six Local Government Areas. At the second stage, a proportion of 20% of secondary schools was elected in each of the Local Government Area, which gives a total of eight schools. At the last stage, a proportion of 30% of students which gives a total of 1,049 students. The summary of the selection process is shown in Appendix IV.

Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed instrument tagged: “Social Environmental Variables and Attrition Tendency Questionnaire (SEVATQ)”. The component scale of the instrument measured the influence of social environment exemplified by peer group and gender.

The instrument was divided into two parts: ‘A’ and ‘B’. Part ‘A’ of the instrument collected the bio data information of the respondents while the part ‘B’ contained the questionnaire items to measure the influence of the variables on attrition in a Four Point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Method of Data Collection

An introduction letter was obtained from the Head of Department, Educational Foundations to the principals of the schools selected for administering the research instruments. Three research assistants who are conversant with the language of communication in the study area were trained to assist in administering the instruments. Items in the instrument were explained to the respondents with the assistant of their respective class teachers. The respondents were then guided to respond to the items and then copies of the questionnaire retrieved. Out of the 1,049 copies of the instruments administered, 1,022 were properly completed and returned. This gives a 97.43% retrieval rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were coding in a coded sheet before being analysed. The data were then analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Hypotheses 1 and 4 were tested using analysis of variance while hypotheses 2, 3, 5 and 6 were tested using independent t-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question One: What are the ways peer pressure influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Peer Pressure on Attrition Tendency

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My friends always distract me in my school activities.	1022	2.58	.63	High
2	Many of my friends who left school are doing well.	1022	2.28	.97	Moderate
3	I despise friendship with people who always think of leaving school to start a trade.	1022	1.95	.86	Moderate
4	I enjoy friendship with people who like school.	1022	2.15	.99	Moderate
5	I prefer social life with my friends to schooling	1022	2.35	1.01	Moderate
6	I and my friends are planning to leave school to start a trade.	1022	2.73	.97	High
7	I respect my friends advise than that of my parents or teachers.	1022	3.00	.92	High
8	I am more trusting of my friends than my parents or teachers.	1022	2.55	.95	High
9	I like the way my friends dress and speak.	1022	2.45	.86	Moderate
10	My friends always pressurize me to act like them.	1022	2.31	.84	Moderate
Grand Mean			2.44	.90	Moderate

Decision rule: 1.00 -1.4 = Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3.4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very high

The result in Table 4.1 shows the mean influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 2.44 shows that peer pressure has a moderate influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Research Question Two: In what ways do gender factor influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Gender Factor on Attrition Tendency

S/N	Items	n	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Educated ladies do not always respect their husbands.	1022	3.55	.73	Very High
2	Educated ladies hardly make good wives.	1022	3.82	.38	Very High
3	I feel that both male and females should be given equal access to education.	1022	3.53	.67	Very High
4	I feel that boys are naturally more brilliant than girls.	1022	2.90	.95	High
5	I feel that western education promote immorality among females.	1022	3.02	.91	High
6	Parents should spend more on males than females.	1022	2.57	.92	High
7	There should be more boys in school than girls.	1022	2.57	.63	High
8	Girls should be given out early marriage.	1022	2.27	.97	Moderate
9	Schooling delay boys from becoming rich.	1022	1.95	.87	Moderate
10	Educated girls hardly find a suitor.	1022	2.15	.99	Moderate
Grand Mean			2.83	.80	High

Decision rule: 1.00 -1.4 = Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3.4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very high

The result in Table 4.2 shows the mean influence of gender factor on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 2.83 shows that gender factor has a high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Hypothesis 1: Peer pressure does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State.

Table 4.3: Dependent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Peer Pressure on Attrition Tendency among Students

Variables	N	mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Peer Pressure	1022	25.02	2.33	55.47	1021	.000
Attrition Tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in Table 4.3 shows that the calculated t-value of 55.47 for the influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Hypothesis 2: Gender factor does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State.

Table 4.4: Dependent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Gender Factor on Attrition Tendency among Students

Variables	n	Mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Gender Factor	1022	27.25	3.91	16.44	1021	.000
Attrition Tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in Table 4.4 shows that the calculated t-value of 16.44 for the influence of gender factor on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of gender factor on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of gender factor on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Discussion of Findings

Peer Pressure and Attrition Tendency Among Secondary School Students in Borno State

Findings on the influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno state shows that there is a significant influence of peer pressure on attrition tendency. It was found out that students who experienced or were exposed to high level of peer pressure have a higher attrition tendency than the ones who are exposed to a low level of peer pressure. Corroborating this findings, Adams (2006) stressed that as a child associates with friends and peers who are addicted to drug and unruly behaviour, he may likely develop a negative behaviour towards schooling. This is due to the facts that there is a tendency for adolescents to adopt the behaviour of the group they belong. The position is also supported by Schneider and Yin (2011) who observed that peer pressure can go a long way to altering the way children think. This in a way equally influences their perception of education,

In the same vein, McGrace (2004) and Oyo (2000) in their separate studies agreed that peer pressure influences not only the intellectual capacity of a student but also the moral, emotional, psychological, physiological aspects. Excessive peer activities, according to the researchers often push students to copy certain negative aspects of their peer behaviours if they are not closely watched. The tendency to drop out of school before completion therefore become very possible if the group members do not possess a culture of academic inclinations.

The findings is also supported by Dienye (2012) who noted that peer group members can be negatively influenced by the culture of the group they belong. The implication of the above findings is that both teachers and parents in Borno state should closely monitor their children to ensure that the do not belong to wrong groups.

Gender and Attrition Tendency among Secondary School Students in Borno State

Findings on the influence of gender on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State shows a significant influence of gender on attrition. The result is in consonance with the findings of Unicef (2003) who discovered that millions of female students than the male students were dropping out of school every year. It was discovered that males have a better chance of school retention and completion than females. Specifically, in societies like Borno state where the need for girl child education is not fully appreciated probably given the religious persuasion of the people or the cultural traditions. The findings is also in agreement with that of Abdulkareem and Mamman (2014) who found out a wide gender disparity between boys and girls as regards to enrolment, retention and completion of school circle in the North. Factors such as early marriage, pregnancy and male child preference inhibit the chances of girls in the North East completing school, thereby creating a gender disparity in education.

The finding is also in agreement with Abba (2021) who discovered a strong influence of cultural values of the North East on education based on gender. It also supports the position of Holcamp (2009) who discovered that certain socio-cultural factors highly impact attrition rates among girls though those factors also impact attrition rates for boys but to a lesser extent. However, the findings seem to be in conflict with the findings of Sum and Hammington (2003) who revealed that between 1995 – 2007 in the United States, males were considered more likely than females to drop out of school before completion.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, there is a statistically significant influence of social environmental variables on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. The study discovered that socio-environmental variables such as peer pressure, and gender factors have significant influence on the chances of the individual student completing his education. The study found that, specifically in the North East cycle of Nigeria, insurgency and a faulty religious indoctrination has led many to assume western education a sin. Beyond this, the poverty index in the region is so high that many families struggle to survive on low income. This affects the acquisition of education by children born into such homes. Formal education remains crucial to sustainable human development globally. The study found out

that regrettably, despite the functional role of education in virtually all sectors of human life, the tendency towards attrition by most learners threaten the very essence of education. Borno State presently suffers a high rate of underdevelopment occasioned by insecurity, cultural challenges, religious bigotry, unemployment and worst of all, insurgency. These affects the delivery of education negatively and contributes to attrition tendency in the students. Many of the students who leave school never return and this poses a serious setback to development. It is evident and correct to say that if these variables are checked, the rate of attrition by students will be minimised.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Governments both at the federal and state levels should enact legislations that will put a check to inflammatory religious messages and doctrines that corrupt the adherents.
- ii. School guidance counsellors should create awareness on the implications of negative peer pressure on the personality development of the individual.
- iii. Government should provide security to educational facilities in the North East. Many schools in the North East do not have adequate and sophisticated security system.
- iv. The school environment should be made conducive for teaching and learning. Beside pronoun of functional learning facilities/classroom management technique and the general administrative style of the school needs to be improved upon to make learning interesting to the learners.
- v. Gender bias on education should be eliminated. Both the girl child and the male child should be given equal access to education.
- vi. Professionally trained counsellors should be employed in all public schools to serve as therapists for students with identifiable attrition tendency.

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