

# Parents Sex Differentiated Behaviours and Adolescent Girls' Educational Achievement and Career Interests in Lebialem Division, South West Region of Cameroon

Efuetngwa Diana Fobellah. Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>, Njungwa Zinkeng Martina. Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon

<sup>2</sup>Department of Guidance and Counseling, H.T.T.T.C, Kumba, University Of Buea, Cameroon

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between parents' sex differentiated behaviour and adolescent girls' educational achievement and career interest in Lebialem Division. The sample comprised 652 adolescents selected from nine secondary schools in Lebialem Division. Data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis using the statistical package for the social science (SPSS). The Results revealed "There is a significant relationship between parents' sex differentiated behaviour and adolescent girls' educational achievement and career interests. Based on this result, some recommendations were made; parents who are the earliest and most sustained source of contact with the children should be aware of the dangers involved in discriminating between their sons and daughters when education and career choice are concerned. They (parents) may be able to socialize the children in gender fair manner, send both boys and girls to school, and reduce the work load for girls at home so as to enable them have more time for studies like their brothers.

**KEYWORDS:** Parents' sex differentiated behaviour, Adolescent girls, educational achievement, career interests

## INTRODUCTION

Parents sex differentiated behaviour refers to the discriminating attitude of parents in the treatment of children through the process of socialization (Chinda, 1997). By this we mean the different parental behaviour expectations for sons and daughters, for example, encouragement of sons to aspire and achieve highly while daughters assume motherly attributes of nurturance and care.

Since the World Conference on Education (1990) in Jomtien, Thailand, girls' and women's' education has received considerable attention. The conference has created awareness about the need to improve the status of women's education. It recognized the fact that there was a gender gap between the education given to men and that given to women. This called for gender parity and equality in education through Education For All (EFA). Various international and regional meetings such as the United Nations Submit meeting (2000) and the Dakar Framework for Action took up this issue and came up with various plans and intervention programmes (UNICEF, 1992), to promote girls' and women's education, particularly in developing countries. Among the six millennium Development Goals (MDG) adopted by the Millenium Submit meeting of World Leaders in 2002, goal 5 focused on the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achievement of gender equality for all levels of education by 2015. This has not happened yet. The attainment of these objectives has been illusive, as most countries, particularly in Sub Saharan Africa, continue to experience high primary school dropout rates, high repetition rates, poor academic performance and low transition to secondary schools and tertiary education. According to Mlama (2003), girls are affected more than boys.

Researchers have identified some of the obstacles to gender parity (Hyde, 1995, Ikojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu, 1996) in

Sub Saharan Africa. They include: socio-cultural attitudes and practices (gender-socialization, early marriage parental attitude), socio-economic factors (parental education, occupation and income), family size, school factors (distance, facilities and teachers), ethnic, religious factors and child fosterage.

This study is an attempt to examine one of these barriers in the context of girls education in Lebialem, namely parental attitudes (parents' sex differentiated behaviour) and its influence on girls' educational aspiration and achievement as well as their career interests.

## PARENTAL ATTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT

Many of the parents' sex-differentiated behaviours seem to be associated with achievement, particularly in the attitudes and behaviour of fathers, parents especially fathers, are more likely to stress the importance of a career or occupational success for sons than for daughters (Hoffman, 1997). Differences in treatment of boys and girls are particularly marked in the area of mathematical achievement. In a variety of cultures, parents believe that boys are better in mathematics than girls, while girls are superior readers (Anderson 1986). In teaching and problem-solving situations, fathers of boys are more attuned to achievement and the cognitive aspects of the situation. Fathers of girls seem to be less concerned with performance and more concerned with interpersonal interactions with their daughters. In addition, fathers but not mothers will respond to appropriate task oriented questions and requests for help from boys, but are more likely to reinforce inappropriate dependency bids from daughters.

Before concluding that differential reinforcement of gender-typed behaviour can explain all observable sex differences in behaviour, it should be noted that boys do not get more reinforcement for aggressive behaviour than girls. The fact

that the female child lacks adequate educational opportunity which obviously affects her achievement is supported by many. Many countries still do not provide primary education for all children. The female child is disfavoured (Hyde 1991). Numerous girl children repeat grades, thereby occupying scarce places. Many of those lucky enough to enrol in primary school drop out before completing it and their level of achievement is often low. In Africa, for example, girls' primary school enrolment accounts for only 25% of the school – age population, compared with 75% for boys. On average, girls in Africa are more likely than boys to drop out of primary school and to score lower on examinations, which in turn limits their enrolment at the post primary levels (Okojie, 1996).

The reason for female low enrolment, persistence and achievement in the region are undoubtedly many and may differ across and within countries. Research from many countries like that of Okejie, Chiegwe & Okpokunu (1996) suggest for example that the constraints to girls education are related to many factors some of which are: family cost, including opportunity cost, socio-cultural barriers, early marriages, gender bias in the socialisation process, inaccessibility to schools, which many parents see as a greater obstacle to girls than to boys, cultural perception of boys' superior abilities, poorer performance of girls on examination, lack of employment opportunities of educated girls, and so on.

The human capital model illustrates that parents' are likely to provide less education for daughters than sons where labour market rewards male's education more than female education. The theory also suggests that the educational levels of girls would rise if educational costs were reduced sufficiently even without a corresponding increase in female wages. Due to the fact that societies view marriage as the ultimate goal for a woman, education is not considered necessary preparation for a "house wife" (Basow, 1992). When having to choose between sending a daughter or a son to school, parents' gravitate towards sons because they believe sending daughters to school makes little economic sense as they marry and leave the family to live with husband and in-laws whereas, sons even when married, remain in the home and have care of ageing parents. Qualities most valued in women are modesty, acquiescence and service to others. Education is seen to be counterproductive to these quantities because it breeds independence and assertiveness. Unless an educated girl finds employment, she becomes a liability. (Basow, 1992).

An educated girl requires a more highly educated man and a higher dowry price which may be difficult to secure, hence the former may go without a husband which was usually not condoned by most African societies in the past (Mengu, 1997). Moreover, a girls' reputation for "virtue" critical for marriage prospects, is vulnerable to gossip and innuendo if they remain in school just before attaining puberty. Girls taught by male teachers except in urban areas; are subject to damaging comments (Raffaelli, 2004). In Moslem societies, cultural barriers will not even allow girls to be taught by male teachers since the culture is against male-female interaction. Village schools located beyond safe areas near housing cluster and urban schools far from home accessible only through heavily trafficking commercial zones display girls to unwanted public exposure.

The United Nations notes for speakers also identified some obstacles to women's education which influence parental attitude. It explained that in rural areas of virtually all developing countries and a few developed ones as well girls are often barred from education, either because schools are few and far and their families cannot afford their transport and/or fear for their safety or because their labour is virtually needed in the household and on farmstead (UNESCO, 2000).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gender imbalance in education is still the preoccupation of many researchers despite the progress made in improving girls' education in many countries in Sub Saharan Africa. Girls continue to face many stereotype gender biases in schools, in the family and in the society, which impede their learning and sustain their under education (Okojie, Chiegwe and Okpokunu 1996). This gender gap still persists partly because of the complexity of the issue as well as the many factors involved in girls education.

One of these factors is the attitude of parents in the process of gender-socialization. In bringing up children, parents tend to have greater expectations of their sons than of the daughters, particularly in the area of academic achievement and career choice. They encourage the boys to work harder in school, attempt subjects which will enable them to get into careers or jobs which are either science related or prestigious. They do not give similar encouragement to their daughters whom they expect to be given in marriage as soon as the opportunity comes. In this way, boys tend to dream of the various careers for their future, while girls dream more about their future husbands and the roles they will be expected to perform in the society. Polygamy is a common practice and so there are many large families. Early marriages are common and therefore many young girls become mothers before they are eighteen. Many children most of them girls do not aspire high in education. Most parents too are not literate hence do not see education as a necessity for their children, especially the girls. Parents prefer to spend the little money they have on the education of the male child because they see the female child as an asset, that is, potential wealth (dowry/bride price). It was on the basis of this that this study was carried out to examine the relationship between parents, sex differentiated behaviour educational achievement and career interest of adolescents particularly girls in Lebialem.

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Some prevailing attitudes towards female education have been brought out by Byrne (1997), Sadker (1985) and the Beijing Conference of 1995. Bryne (1997) points out that Africans are against the education of girls, "who will cook our food", is one of the questions raised and from Byrne's view, Africans say, "our girls become proud and do not wish to work hard anymore". Byrne is of the opinion that men must be led to see the folly of thinking that they can go on being educated to higher and higher level while their women folk remain ignorant. Sadker (1985) brings out past attitude towards female education. African men, according to him believe that, a woman cannot afford to risk her health in acquiring knowledge of the advanced sciences, mathematics or philosophy for which she has no use.

This comment is systematic of past attitudes towards women, attitudes of bias that have prevented females from

gaining access to education at all levels and that have ensured differential and unequal treatment when access was granted. During the Beijing Conference of 1995, it was further revealed that discrimination in girls' access to education persists in many areas, owing to customary attitudes and the socialisation practices such as early marriages and pregnancies, inadequate and gender biased teaching and educational materials, sexual harassment and lack of adequate and other wise accessible schooling facilities (Murphy, 2002). Girls undertake heavy domestic work at a very early age. Girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and early drop out from the educational system. This has long-lasting consequences for all aspects of women's lives, including their occupational preferences.

Another study carried out by Raffaelli (2004) drew on an opportunity sample of women (20- to 45 years-old Latina/Hispanic women). This study was to understand family factors that affect the achievement for boys and girls. Various recruitment methods were used, including direct mailings to Latina Faculty and staff at a large Mid-Western University, posting informational flyers in public locations and participants referrals. After providing informed consent, women took part in the individual interviews conducted in English. The findings revealed that gender role differentiation and privileging of boys in families with both sons and daughters were frequent themes among the women who participated in the study. For example sons were typically granted more freedom than daughters. This study also revealed that daughters and sons tended to have different household responsibilities; in particular, girls were expected to help around the house, whereas boys were not. A number of female respondents said that their parents encouraged them to act in "feminine" ways. Although some degree of "tomboy" behaviour was accepted in a number of families, as girls grew older parents tended to become less accepting of "unfeminine" behaviour.

These results suggest that many children growing up in Latino/ a family in the United States experience gender-socialisation that is marked by traditional expectations and messages. Raffaelli (2004) carried out another study on gender role socialisation differential treatment of sons and daughters, parental gender role attitudes, family language use, and family background characteristics. The sample included 97 women and 69 men to measure gender role socialisation. These items assessed how much each parent had encouraged specific behaviours traditionally considered "masculine" or "Feminine" while the respondents were growing up. Responses were on a 5 point scale. To assess differential treatment of daughters and sons, participants rated the extent to which they had their cross sex siblings had similar or different limits placed on them by their parents while they were growing up in 10 different areas. Items were equally rated on a 5 point scale.

Qualitative findings showed that young women were more likely than young men to say they were encouraged as children to play with girls' toys, do indoor chores and wear their hair long. Young men reported higher levels of encouragement to play with boys and do outdoor chores. No gender differences emerged on items that assessed encouragement to play indoors or take care of younger siblings. Comparisons of parental behaviour within gender

revealed that the same sex parents tended to engage in more socialisation of traditionally gender-appropriate behaviour than the cross-sex parents (Murphy, 2000). That is, mothers were more likely than fathers to encourage stereotypically feminine behaviours in daughters, and fathers were more likely than mothers to encourage stereotypically masculine behaviour in sons. Qualitative findings also showed women who said that they had had more limits placed on them by their parents than their male relatives did, and young men said that they had had fewer limits placed on them than their female relatives did.

The above results revealed that, gender role attitudes emerged as the most consistent predictor of parental socialisation. From early infancy; parents are likely to view their sons and daughters differently (Baliey, 1992). Parents are more likely to describe their new born daughters as smaller, softer, less attentive; more delicate and finer featured than their sons. Besides, fathers are more extreme than mothers in emphasising the size, strength, coordination and alertness of their sons versus the fragility and beauty of daughters. In view of such differences in parents' perceptions of their male and female infants, it is not surprising that from the earliest days of life, boys and girls are treated differently and that this differential treatment of boys and girls is most marked for fathers (Hyde 1993). These researchers found that adults play in more masculine ways with a baby that they think is a boy and a gender and more nurturant fashion with a "girl". They are involved with toys culturally appropriate for the sex of their child. Even before a child is born, father shows a strong preference to have a son (Hoffman, 1977). After birth, especially with first born children, they are more likely to stimulate and talk to their sons. As children grow older, fathers with male toddlers spend more time in play and watch and touch their infants more. Parents are more likely to gently candle than actively stimulate their infant daughters.

This pattern of differences in mothers' and fathers' interaction with sons and daughters suggests that the social force involved in gender-role socialisation may begin as early as the new born period and that fathers, through their more differential treatment of boys and girls, may play a more important role in the gender-socialisation process than do mothers. As children grow older, the question is "Do parents actively encourage and reinforce them for behaving in a gender-stereotype manner? According to social learning approaches, reinforcement and modelling ought to play an important role in shaping gender roles (Bandura, 1989). In general, it has been found that parents are more apprehensive and protective about their daughters' physical well-being. This is associated with more encouragement of dependency and close family ties in girls and more emphasis on early exploration, achievement, independence, and competition in boys. They think boys should be able to play away from home without telling parents where there are, run errands in the neighbourhood, cross the street *alone*, and indulge earlier age than girls. Boys are more likely to be left unsupervised after school and less likely to be picked up at school (Hoffman, 1997, Huston, 1983). This differential treatment may limit the development of feelings of acceptance, risk-taking, and free exploration in girls, and may promote greater conformity to cultural norms and values even in the areas of vocational interests or preferences.



## METHODS

The target population for this study comprised all adolescents in forms 4 and 5 of all the Government Secondary Schools in Lebialem for the 2014/2015 academic year. The accessible population was made up of all the adolescents in nine Government Secondary Schools which

are found in all the three –Sub Divisions of Lebialem Division. The sampled population was made up of 652 adolescents selected from forms four and five in the nine selected Secondary Schools. The distribution of sample was done in accordance with the table developed by Kredice and Morgan (1977) as cited by Amin 2005, 45).

**Table 1: Distribution of sample per Division, Schools, Classes and Gender**

Sub -Division	School	Class				Total
		Form 4		Form 5		
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Fontem Sub-Division	GBHS Fontem	26	34	40	55	155
	GHS Fontem	7	11	9	14	41
	GBSS Atulia	1	4	4	8	17
Alou-Sub Division	GHS Alou	4	7	38	55	105
	GHS Anya-Lewoh	15	21	11	15	63
	GHS Mmock-bie	9	13	11	17	49
Wabane Sub-Division	GHS Wabane	17	24	22	30	93
	GHS Besali	16	25	19	29	88
	GHS Mundani	11	15	5	7	41
<b>Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>652</b>

The research instruments used were students' questionnaire and interview guide for parents, Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (MOPS) students' end of year result broadsheets. Before the instruments were effectively used, they were pilot-tested. One section of the questionnaire had only two options. "YES" and "NO" and the other respondents had several options "always" sometimes "never" and the other section required them to "tick" the answers in boxes corresponding to the condensed version of the Likert's scale (strongly disagree, strongly, strongly disagree). It also had closed and open-ended questions). The researcher administered the students' questionnaire with the aid of some teachers while the interview for parents was administered personally.

The instrument which was trail-tested to establish its reliability in the schools not used for the main study. The Cronback Alpha technique was used to obtain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The quantitative data were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis using the statistical package for the Social Science (SPSS) version. For descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and means were used while the chi-square test of independence was used for the inferential statistical in order to verify the hypothesis.

## HYPOTHESIS

The educational achievement of most adolescents is often influenced by parents sex differentiated behaviour. This paper focuses on the hypothesis that "There is a significant relationship between parents' sex differentiated behaviour and adolescent girls' educational achievement and career interests. This hypothesis was analyzed using the parents interview guide and students' responses on questionnaires items. What differences exist between the academic achievements of girls and boys in secondary schools? Before answering this research questions, an attempt was made to establish if there were differences in the academic achievement of students participating in this study. To get students academic achievement data from the broad sheets of students' annual average scores were analyzed as seen on table 2 below;

**Table 2: Mean scores of male and female students per class in each school**

School	From 4		From 5	
	Boys mean score	Girls mean score	Boys mean score	Girls mean score
<b>Fontem Sub Division</b>				
G B HS Fontem	11.49	10.54	12.09	10.01
G H S Fontem	12.41	9.25	13.59	9.16
G B SS Atulia	13.40	10.20	12.25	11.05
<b>Alou Sub-Division</b>				
G H S Alour	12.13	10.21	11.95	10.63
G H S Anyalewoh	12.84	11.07	12.35	10.78
G H S Mmock-bie	12.74	10.45	12.51	10.81
<b>Wabane Sub-Division</b>				
G H S Wabane	12.47	11.10	12.13	10.37
G H S Besali	12.91	10.62	12.93	9.57
G H S Mundani	12.63	11.58	12.30	10.89

## Analyses of the Students' End of Year Results

The annual averages of all the 652 students were collected and used to find out whether a relationship exists between gender socialisation and adolescent girls' educational achievement.

From Table 2, it can be seen that in all the schools boys have a higher mean score than girls. The same picture is seen in Form 4 and form 5 where boys consistently have higher mean scores than girls. In form 4 the highest mean score for boys is 13.4 while for girls it is 11.58; the lowest mean score for boys is 11.49, while for girls it is 9.25. When we look at form 5, the highest mean score for boys is 13.59, while for girls it is 11.05; the lowest mean score for boys is 11.95, while for girls it is 9.16. The lowest mean score for boys in form 5 is higher than the highest mean score for girls. Table 17b shows the resultant means for both boys and girls.

**Table 3: The resultant means for both boys and girls**

Boys resultant mean	12.45
Girls resultant mean	10.46

Again, the resultant mean for boys (12.45) is higher than the resultant mean for girls (10.46). These statistics show that there is a difference between the academic achievements of boys and girls in these schools. The calculated Z-value (28.84) was greater than the critical value (1.96). The inference made led to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between gender- socialisation and adolescent girls' educational achievement.

Data to answer research question one and the first hypothesis came from students' responses to the questionnaire they completed as shown on Table 4.

**Table 4: Cross tabulation of issues on parents' sex differentiated behaviour for boys and girls**

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
<b>Girls</b>			
Our parents control girls' activities more than those of boys	226 (62.9%)	109 (29.9%)	30 (8.2%)
Housework prevents me from going early to school	171 (46.8%)	124 (33.9%)	70 (19.2%)
Boys and girls work equally in our house	36 (9.9%)	55 (15.1%)	274 (75.1)
Girls are sometimes asked to remain at home to care for a baby while the boys go to school.	186 (51%)	88 (24.1%)	91 (24.9%)
<b>Boys</b>			
Our parents control girls' activities more than those of boys	149 (51.9%)	103 (35.9%)	35 (12.2%)
Housework prevents me from going early to school	52 (18.1%)	66 (12.5%)	169 (58.9%)
Boys and girls work equally in our house	31 (10.8%)	89 (31.0%)	167 (58.2%)
Girls are sometimes asked to remain at home to care for a baby while the boys go to school.	161 (56.1%)	105 (36.6%)	21 (7.3%)

From table 4, 226 (62.9%) girls admitted that their parents control their activities more than those of their brothers, 109 (29.9%) said sometimes while 30 (8.2%) said never. For item 2, most of the girls, 171 (46.8%) also admitted that homework prevents them from going early to school while 124 (33.9%) said sometimes and 70 (19.2%) said never.

Considering item 3 most girls 274 (75.1%) said boys and girls never work equally at home while 36 (9.9%) said always and the rest 55 (55.1%) said sometimes. For item 4, majority of the girls, 186 (51%) accepted that they are always asked to remain at home and care for children while their brothers go to school. 88 (24.1%) said they are

sometimes asked to remain at home while 91 (34.9%) said never.

For item 5, 201 (55.1%) said their parents are planning marriage for them already while 164 (49.9%) said the contrary. When asked whether if the arranged marriage disturbs their education, 201 (55.1%) accepted while 164 (44.9%) said no. For the last item on the table 330 (90.4%) said they do not have computers at home while 35 (9.6%) accepted that they have computers at home.

From table 4, most of the boys 149 (51.9%) accepted that their parents control girls activities more than theirs, 103 (35.9%) said sometimes while 35 (12.2%) said never.

For item 2, a few boys, 52 (18.1%) said that homework prevents them from going early to school while 66 (12.5%) said sometimes and the majority 169 (58.9%) said never. Considering item 3, 31 (10.8%) accepted that boys and girls never work equally in the home while 89 (31.0%) said sometimes while majority said never. For item 4, majority 161 (56.1%) accepted that the girl child is always asked to remain at home to care for children while their brothers go to school, 105 (36.6%) said sometimes it happens while 21 (7.3%) said never.

**Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Issues on Parents' Sex Differentiated Behaviour For Boys And Girls**

Items	Yes		No	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
My parents are planning marriage for me already	204 (55.9%)	0	161 (44.1%)	287 (100%)
Early marriages disturb girls education	189 (51.8%)	0	176 (48.2%)	0
Girls do not use computers in their houses like their brothers	330 (90.4%)	263 (91.6%)	35 (9.6%)	3 (9.4%)

From table 5, 204 (55.9%) of girls accept that their parents are planning marriage for them already while 161 (44.1%) said the contrary. All the boys 287 (100%) said no, meaning their parents are not planning any marriage for them yet. When asked if early marriages disturb girls education, 189 (51.8%) of girls said yes while 176 (48.2%) of girls said no. 330 (90.4%) of them said girls do not use computers in their houses like boys, while only 35 (9.6%) said the contrary. 263 (91.6%) boys also accepted that girls do not use computers in their houses like their brothers while only 3 (9.4%) said the contrary.

For item 5, all 287 (100%) boys said their parents are not planning marriage for them. For the last item, most of the boys, 263 (91.6%) said that the girls do not use computers like their brothers while only 3 (9.4%) said the contrary. After using the response format and weighting on table 19a and 19b, the effect of parental influence on adolescent girls' educational achievement had a percentage of 78%.

**Table6: Cross tabulation of Parental influence on adolescent girls' educational achievement responses by boys and girls**

Parents' sex differentiated behaviour affects adolescent girls' educational achievement.	SA	A	D	SD
<b>Boys</b>				
Frequency of responses	147	88	27	25
Percentages (%)	51.2	30.7	9.4	8.7
<b>Girls</b>				
Frequency of response	190	117	40	18
Percentages (%)	52	32.1	11	4.9

From table 6, 147 (51.2%) boys strongly agreed, 88 (30.7%) agreed, 27 (9.4%) disagreed while 25 (8.7%) strongly disagreed. This table shows that most of the boys 235 (81.9%) accepted that parental influence in adolescent girls' affect their educational achievement. On the other hand most of the girls 190 (51.2%) strongly agreed, 117 (32.1%) agreed, 40 (11%) disagreed while 18 (4.9%) strongly disagreed. This shows that parental influence on adolescent girls' affect their educational achievement.

**Table 7: Observed and expected frequencies of both girls and boys combined**

Parents' sex differentiated behaviour has an influence on adolescent girls' educational achievement.	SA	A	D	SD
Observed frequency	337	205	67	43
Expected frequency	163	163	163	163

df = 3  $\chi^2 = 7.82$  at 0.05 level of significance

The calculated value of  $\chi^2$  (571.08) was greater than the critical value of  $\chi^2$  (7.82) at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance so the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained following the decision rule. This means that there is a significant relationship between parent sex-differentiated behaviour and adolescent girls' educational achievement. After using the response format and weighting on table 5, the effect of parent sex differentiated behaviour on adolescent girls' educational achievement had a percentage of 82%, meaning that the relationship is high following the decision rule.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between parents' sex differentiated behaviour and adolescent girls' educational achievement and career interests. The  $\chi^2$  calculated value (26.34) was greater than the critical value (7.82) at 0.5 level of significance; so we upheld the alternative hypothesis. The analysis of data for this hypothesis showed that a majority of the parents have never been to school, especially the mothers, since mothers spend most of the time with children their influence is felt by the children especially with regards to education. Few of the parents had basic and secondary education. The educational level of parents has a lot to play in the interest they would have in their children's education. Low educational level of parents accounted for their low involvement in their children's education especially the girls. These results are consistent with those of Auster & Auster (1981)

These results are consistent with those of Okojie (1981) who suggested that one factor that influences academic outcomes of students is the occupational and educational status of the mother and father. In this light, a parents' educational level could be a major determinant in a child's life. They go further to opine that students whose parents ended school at elementary level do not tend to give sufficient encouragement to their children. They apparently do not see much value in further studies especially when they see those who have done higher studies jobless. Rural students, unlike their urban counterparts, tend to suffer especially their girls. In the same light, Hyde (1991) holds that most students whose parents hold less than a bachelor's degree most likely manifest low educational aspirations. On the other hand, whose parents are highly ambitions and aspirations?

This negative attitude of parents towards girls' education could result from a number of factors which include; lack of income, socialisation, parent's perception of gender roles just to name these. At home parents show a negative attitude towards their daughters' education. This result is in agreement with parents' responses which indicated that they (parents) do not value education for their daughters. These results confirm that of Hoffman (1972) who says, early childhood experiences and different patterns of parenting sons and daughters accounts for differences in achievements. For example, girls are allowed to stay close to their mothers at home and concentrate on house chores while boys are encouraged from an early age to separate themselves from their mothers and forge ahead

The results of this study also showed that Parents engage girls more than boys when it comes to doing house chores, prevent more girls from going early to school than boys and control girls' activities more than those of boys, do not allow the girls to work in the internet like their brothers, plan for early marriages for them. All these have to do with the values parents attach to their girls' education. These findings conform with those of Harris. (1991) who reported on how some parents send their girls to school late and this has a devastating effect on their participation and performance. Furthermore, Harris (1991) reported that female students are always late to school because they have too many household chores (cooking, washing of dishes, taking care of babies and the rest) in the morning before they leave for school. In the light of social learning theorists, parents are more apprehensive and protective about their daughters' physical wellbeing which is associated with more encouragement of dependency and lose family ties in girls and more emphasis on early exploration, achievement, independence, and competition in boys (Bandura 1977). They think boys should be able to play away from home without telling parents where they are, run errands in the neighbourhood (Hoff man, 1977; Huston, 1983). The differential treatment may limit the development of feelings of self (self-concept), risk-taking, and free exploration in girls in achieving high educationally. Nevertheless, Social learning approaches caution that re-enforcement and modelling ought to play an important role in shaping gender roles (Bandura, 1989).

There is ignorance on the part of most parents as the results showed that the majority of the students came from illiterate homes and their illiterate parents could not have the knowledge to counsel and guide their daughters on the importance of education. The polygamous nature of the



parents pre-disposes them to having many children who deserve education. But what the researcher found was that their parents preferred to educate their sons because they thought these sons will fetch them more earnings and be the pride of the family in future. The daughters on their part were not encouraged to forge ahead, rather were betrothed to marriage so that their bride prize will be used to educate the sons.

These views are in line with the sociological views of Eileen, (2004) who stated that individual choice is limited by the social status of one's parents and the structure of social organizations. Sociologists went further to emphasize that the educational level, type of job and financial status of parents influence the amount and quality of education the children will receive.

The study showed daughters cling more to mothers and sons to fathers. This is in line with study carried out by Raffaelli (2001) which shows that mothers do more direct gender-socialisation of daughters and fathers do more socialisation of sons. Young women rated their mothers higher than fathers on item that assessed parental encouragement to wear gender-appropriate clothes, be lady like and play with girls' toys. In contrast, young men rated their fathers higher than mothers on items that assessed encouragement to be involved in masculine activities and act "manly". These results are consistent with those reported in Leaper, Anderson, & Sanders, (1998) which revealed that mothers and fathers tend to talk differently to their children depending on the child's gender. Other studies have shown that mothers typically spend more time and know more about their daughters' activities, whereas fathers spend more time with and know more about the activities, of their sons (Harris & Morgan, 1991; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Therefore, parents are the primary authority in influencing sex role, socialisation, providing social skills training, promoting character development, and developing a sense of responsibility. Parental expectations and support are important factors in influencing future educational and occupational attainment (Hari, 2002).

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