



# THE COUNSELLOR

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# COUNSELLORS' PERCEPTION ON ENHANCING GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*Girl child education is the process through which a young girl obtains knowledge in order to develop her potentials for self-actualization. The present study investigated the counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This research design was used because it provides an accurate description of a phenomenon. The target population for this study were the secondary school counsellors in the state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 70 respondents from each of the three senatorial districts in Kwara State. Thus a total of two hundred and ten counsellors participated in the study. The researchers developed questionnaire titled "Counsellors' Perception on Enhancing Girl-Child Education Questionnaire" (CPEGQ) was administered to the school counsellors. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The findings revealed that counselling parents on the need for girl-child education, establishing friendlier girl-child schools, provision of incentives for girl-child in school are factors that can enhance girl-child education. Also, it was found that parents level of education; cultural norms and religious injunction were the major factors militating against girl child education. Four null hypotheses were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that there were no significant difference in the counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State, on the basis of gender, years in service, and educational qualification. However, a significant difference was found on the basis of school type. It was therefore recommended that the government should organize community based enlightenment programme on the importance of the girl child education.*

**Key Words:** Education, Girl-Child, Counsellor and Perception

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## **Introduction**

Education is the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another and it is seen as a potent tool for growth and development of people. According to Orji (2012) education empowers people and strengthens nations, it is a powerful equalizer that prevents discrimination and poverty. The government has been charged with the responsibility of providing education for children at all levels, thereby equipping every citizen with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to meaningfully contribute to the development of the country. In the light of the above, education is an efficient processes that can lead to all round development of an individual (Oladejo, 2005). Ocho (2005) also defined education as the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society. The Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, made education compulsory for all citizens irrespective of gender. The article further stipulated that education should be made free at least at the elementary stage.

Abioma (2005) and Adili (2014) explained that Obafemi Awolowo introduced free education scheme in the western region so as to encourage the enrollment of children in schools. This serves as the bedrock for the launching of universal free primary education by General Olusegun Obasanjo administration in the year 1976. By 1999, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was established to replace Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme. Amenze (2008) noted that many

people registered their wards in schools as a result of this policy. In the past, parents were very reluctant to send their female children to school due to the traditional and cultural practices that was in existence. As such, education which is the right of every child becomes an illusion as underage girls were forced into early marriage. In order to enhance girl child education in Kwara State female schools were established. According to Jekayinoluwa (2003), out of the 62 Federal Government Colleges and Unity Schools in Nigeria, 31 are for girls only.

Girl child education is the process through which a young girl obtains knowledge in order to develop her potentials for self-actualization in a changing world (Oladejo, 2005). On the other hand, Abdulkarim and Mamman (2014) defined girl-child education as a type of learning programme which provides sufficient opportunities for girls to register, attend and complete their education without any sense of discrimination. According to United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund (2008), a girl child is female who is below 18 years of age. NEPAD (2014) explained that the purpose of girl child education is to create gender equality awareness in an egalitarian society, reduce the level of illiteracy especially among women, improve the living standard of girls, enhance high enrolment rate and reduce the incidence of girls dropping out of schools.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2006) revealed that 14.1 million out of 21 million school-age children are not in schools while the National School Census (2008) showed

that 19 percent of primary school age children between 6 – 15 years in Nigeria are yet to enrol in school. UNICEF (2003) reported that in the Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of girls out of school each year has increased from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002. UNICEF (2007) estimated that 121 million children worldwide are out of school, while 65 million are girls. Mohamed (2014) revealed that there is an obvious disparity in the enrolment rate of the girl-children in schools especially in Nigeria. The United Nations has continued to stress that the enforcement of child right act is the actual way to enhance girl child education. Do Something Organization (2015) reported that 61 million primary school age children are not enrolled in school.

The program on Every Child Counts in Kwara State emphasized on the need that every child must be given quality education irrespective of gender. This is done in such a way that mutual responsibilities are acknowledged between the teacher and the student (Education Strategic Plan (ESP), 2008). In order to increase the enrollment rate of girls in schools, the Federal Ministry of Education, Government and UNICEF launched the Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria (SAGEN) in the year 2003.

The Girls' Child Education Project (GEP) was established in the year 2004. This was aimed at enhancing girl child education in Nigeria (Garba, 2014). NEPAD (2014) through their various activities conducted a national stakeholders Workshop on the best practices and measures for promoting quality girl-child education in Nigeria.

NEPAD also embarked on the School Enrolment Advancement Initiative programme by conducting sensitization programme on promoting quality girl-child education in the Northern Nigeria (NEPAD, 2014). The fourth World Conference on women held in Beijing in 1995, World conference on Education for all (EFA), Jomtien in 1993, World Conference on human rights in 1993 at Vienna, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at Cairo, were all based on girl child education and gender equality.

Achunine (2007) noted that educating females is the most essential investment that produces extreme returns for development and at the same time help to reduce infant mortality rate. When women are educated, millions of children will be saved from malnutrition and the rate of girl child marriage will automatically reduce. The education of girl child is very vital, when this lacking, the upcoming female generations are likely to be victims of disparity.

Mattias (2013) said that income related a problem is one of the reasons why girls are not enrolment in schools. Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school because of the economic crunch in Nigerian. In the same vein, Mohammed (2016) affirmed that girls are not enrolled in schools because of high rate of poverty in Nigeria, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, cultural and religious biases. In a survey carried out by Do Something Organization (2015) women who are not educated give birth to a lot of children and they are likely to contract HIV/AIDS infection. They also confirmed that 53% of the world's out-of-school children are girls

and 2/3 of the illiterate people in the world are women. Studies have shown that some religious, cultural beliefs and practices in Nigeria negatively influence educational ambition of girls, (Onochie, 2010). These invalid cultural beliefs and practices have greatly hampered the enrolment of young girls in schools. Furthermore, Mangwat and Abama (1999) acknowledged some factors militating against girls' enrolment in schools as child labour practices, economic hardship, early marriage for girls, societal perception of female roles and lack of community support. In addition, Garba (2003) discovered that girls are not enrolled in schools because of fear, ignorance, lack of good political will, lack of gender polity strategy and the dumfounding cultural belief that boys are more important than girls.

The duty of the school counsellor in enhancing girl child education cannot be overemphasized. Adeoye (2016) affirmed that school counselors are advocates between the students, parents and the community. They help in assisting the students in dealing with their educational challenges. In addition, they organize community based activities that will enhance the involvement of parents in the academic accomplishments of their children. Counselors can also help to promote national integration and at the same time advocate for system change at all levels (Bolu-Steve, Ajokpaniovo & Adeboye 2016). Counsellors can help in the placement of students, enrollment, retention and enhancement of girl child education through their activities. The school counselor assists the girl child to achieve the attitudes and skills necessary for success in all their endeavors. As a

leader, advocator, collaborator, counsellor, coordinators and data utilize, these major five roles permits the school counsellors to craft an helpful way of imparting the students life and the society at large (Laura, 2004).

Also, in order to enhanced girl child education in Nigeria Mattias (2013) noted that it is important to provide education that will allow girls to acquire jobs relevant skills that employers actually needs. This will change the mind-sets of parents and communities towards the educational training of the girl child. NEPAD (2014) also recommended that enlightenment programme on gender sensitivity should be encouraged, the government should enforce the Child Rights Acts in Nigeria, stakeholders should as a matter of urgency enlighten the public on the best practical measures for enhancing the enrolment and retention of girls in schools which can be done by counsellors. Also, Kalia (2014) advised that the government should develop curriculum and teaching material that encourages the participation of girls in schools. The government can also establish more girl friendly schools, employing more female teachers who can serve as role models (Jekayinoluwa, 2003)

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite all the joint initiatives between the Federal Government and UNICEF to attain the Millennium Development Goal 3 of eliminating gender disparity many children are not in school. This has become a major concern for stakeholders. UNSECO (2008) noted that in sub-Sahara region there are about 31 million girls of primary school age that are out of schools. In the same vein, in Nigeria

five and half million girls are out of school. Ogbobo (2014) lamented that due to the security challenges in the Northern part of Nigeria many parents have refused to enroll their girls in schools. In spite of all the efforts of the government, Agwagah and Aguele (2007) observed that gender imbalance in education is the major issue. Some of these challenges are deeply rooted in our religion and culture. Mangwat (2005) affirmed that discrimination against women and girls have been intensely entrenched in our culture.

Alubankundi (2004) carried out a research on the attitude of parents in Ilorin metropolis towards girl child education, Garba (2014) worked on factors militating against the enrolment and retention of girl-child students in junior secondary schools in Kaduna State while Ajao (2014) study was on parental influence on, and attitude towards girl child education in Kwara State. None of these scholars conducted a study that specifically focused on counsellors' perception on enhancing girl child education in Kwara State. Owing to the gaps identified above, the current researchers have tried in this study to look at the counsellors' perception on enhancing girl child education in Kwara State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The issue of girl child education has become a source of concern to stakeholders in Nigeria. The researchers therefore, aimed at investigating counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was also meant to find out if such perception is a function of gender, years in service, school type and educational qualification.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were generated for this study:

1. What are counsellors' perceptions on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State?
2. What are the factors militating against girl child education in Kwara State?
3. How do male and female counsellors differ in their perception on the factors enhancing girl child education?
4. What is the enrolment rate of girls in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State?
5. Is there any difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of gender?
6. Is there any difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of years in service?
7. Is there any difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of school type?
8. Is there any difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Four null hypotheses were postulated to further give focus for the study.

1. There is no significant difference in counsellors' perception on the

- factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of gender.
- 2 There is no significant difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of years in service.
  - 3 There is no significant difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis of school type.
  - 4 There is no significant difference in counsellors' perception on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State on the basis educational level.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive method was adopted. Hassan (1995) stated that descriptive survey method describes variables in a given situation. Stangor (2004) pointed out that this method is preferred to other research designs because it systematically describes an event in a factual manner. This research design was used because it provides an accurate description of a phenomenon. The population for the study comprised of counsellors in Kwara State. The target population for this study were the secondary school counsellors in the state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 70 respondents from each of the senatorial districts (Kwara North, Kwara South and Kwara East) in Kwara State. Thus, a total of 210 respondents participated in this study. The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire tagged "Counsellors' Perception on

Enhancing Girl-Child Education Questionnaire" (CPEGCO). The instrumentation consists of three sections. Section A focused on demographic data of the respondents while section B dealt with counsellors' perception in enhancing girl child education. Section B and C were scored on a Four-point Likert Type scale, scores were allotted as follows: Strongly Agree - 4 points, Agree - 3 points, Disagree - 2 points and Strongly Disagree - 1 point. Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on each of the items using the Four Point Likert -Type scale. The instrument on section B contained fifteen items. The highest possible score is 60 (4x15), while the lowest possible score is 15 (1x15). Therefore, the range is 45 (60-15). The mid-point of range is 22.5 (45/2) the cut-off point is therefore 60-22.5 (I.e maximum score minus the mid-point of the range) or 15 +22.5 (i.e. maximum scores plus range) in which either case is 37.5. Thus respondents, who score 37.5 and above are positive in their perception, while those scoring below 37.5 are negative. Item analyses were done using SPSS. A mean score of above or below 2.50 are accepted or rejected respectively.

The validity of any instrument is the degree to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure (Hassan, 1995). In order to determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the draft of the questionnaire to some experts in the related field of study for content validity. The modification and comments made by these experts were considered in the final selection of items on the questionnaire.

Reliability means the extent to

which the results obtained from the test can be consistent if the same test is administered to the same group of persons (Stangor, 2004). To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was adopted. The researcher administered the same instrument on twenty (20)

respondents at an interval of four weeks. The two group's scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a reliability index of 0.73 was found. Therefore, the questionnaire is believed to be statistically reliable for the study.

## Result

**Research Question 1:** What are counsellors' perceptions on the factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Counsellors' Perception on Enhancing Girl-child Education in Kwara State, Nigeria**

| S/N |                                                                                           | Mean  | SD    | Remark |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1   | Enforcement of government policies on girl child education                                | 3.51  | .493  | Agreed |
| 2   | Government encouraging gender equality                                                    | 3.49  | .555  | Agreed |
| 3   | Prohibition of girl-child marriage                                                        | 3.36  | .589  | Agreed |
| 4   | Free and compulsory basic education                                                       | 3.52  | .605  | Agreed |
| 5   | Organizing enlightenment programmes for parents on the need for girls enrolment in school | 3.49  | .636  | Agreed |
| 6   | Provision of mid-day meal for students                                                    | 2.64  | .501  | Agreed |
| 7   | Provision of favourable environment for learning                                          | 3.35  | .501  | Agreed |
| 8   | Advocacy from stakeholders on the importance of girl-child education                      | 3.42  | .646  | Agreed |
| 9   | Establishing more friendly girl-child school                                              | 3.50  | .541  | Agreed |
| 10  | Involving community leaders in the campaign for girl-child education                      | 3.25  | .886  | Agreed |
| 11  | Provision of incentives for girl-child in schools                                         | 3.50  | .479  | Agreed |
| 12  | Recruitment of female teachers who can serve as models                                    | 3.08  | .917  | Agreed |
| 13  | Counselling parents on the need for girl -child education                                 | 3.59  | .935  | Agreed |
| 14  | Ensuring good practice of second chance education after pregnancy                         | 2.73  | .910  | Agreed |
| 15  | Encouraging religious leaders on the need for girl-child education                        | 3.38  | .876  | Agreed |
|     | Aggregate mean and standard deviation                                                     | 49.81 | 10.07 |        |

Table 1 shows the mean score and standard deviation of respondents' perception on the factors that enhance. The mean scores ranges from 2.64 to 3.59. Specifically, items 13 had the highest mean score of 3.59, while item 6 had the lowest mean with 2.64. The mean score were above the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, all the items were accepted as the counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State.

**Research Question 2:** What are the factors militating against girl child education?

**Table 2: Factors Militating against Girl-child Education**

| S/N | As far as I am concerned, the following factors militating against girl-child education: | Mean  | SD    | Remark    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1   | Culture                                                                                  | 3.58  | .538  | Agreed    |
| 2   | Lack of job after schools                                                                | 3.35  | .567  | Agreed    |
| 3   | Fear of sexual harassment                                                                | 1.53  | .692  | Disagreed |
| 4   | Early marriage of girls                                                                  | 3.54  | .554  | Agreed    |
| 5   | Parents level of education                                                               | 3.70  | .603  | Agreed    |
| 6   | Misplacement of priority by parents                                                      | 3.41  | .615  | Agreed    |
| 7   | Lack of female models in the school                                                      | 3.46  | .603  | Agreed    |
| 8   | Lack of policies enforcing girl-child education                                          | 2.14  | .899  | Disagreed |
| 9   | Lack of information                                                                      | 2.93  | 1.337 | Agreed    |
| 10  | Religious injunction                                                                     | 3.54  | 1.081 | Agreed    |
|     | Aggregate mean and standard deviation                                                    | 27.72 | 7.49  |           |

Table 2 revealed that responses on the counsellors perception on enhancing girl-child education. All items recorded the mean score ranging from 3.58 to 1.53. Only eight items are found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50 on Four Point Likert type scale. However, item 3 and 8 are below 2.50.

**Research Question 3:** How do male and female counsellors differ in their perception on the factors enhancing girl child education?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Respondents on Counsellors' Perception on Enhancing Girl-child Education in Kwara State, Nigeria**

| Variable          | Gender |                     | N  | X     | SD   |
|-------------------|--------|---------------------|----|-------|------|
| Years in Service  | Male   | Below 5 years       | 13 | 8.12  | 2.40 |
|                   |        | 6-11 years          | 33 | 13.01 | 3.22 |
|                   |        | 12 years and above  | 63 | 14.40 | 3.54 |
|                   | Female | Below 5 years       | 27 | 11.69 | 2.10 |
|                   |        | 6-11 years          | 26 | 11.12 | 1.01 |
|                   |        | 12 years and above  | 48 | 13.10 | 2.11 |
| School Type       | Male   | Public              | 59 | 14.59 | 2.40 |
|                   |        | Private             | 50 | 14.41 | 3.22 |
|                   | Female | Public              | 66 | 15.32 | 3.54 |
|                   |        | Private             | 35 | 12.44 | 2.45 |
| Educational Level | Male   | First degree        | 64 | 13.59 | 1.93 |
|                   |        | Postgraduate degree | 45 | 12.41 | 3.45 |
|                   | Female | First degree        | 73 | 11.32 | 2.33 |
|                   |        | Postgraduate degree | 28 | 10.44 | 1.22 |

Table 3 showed that male respondents with below 5 years in services had the mean score of 8.12, 6-11 years had the mean score of 13.01 while those with 12 years and above have the mean score of 14.40. Female respondents below 5 years in services have the mean score of 11.69 while those of 6-11 years have the mean score of 11.12 and those of 12 years and above have 13.10 mean score respectively. This shows that male and female counsellors in service agreed on the factors that enhance girl-child education. The male counsellors with the mean scores of 14.59 and 14.41 were from public and private schools while their female counterparts had the mean scores of 15.32 and 12.44 respectively. This indicates that both male and female counsellors agreed on the factors enhancing girl-child education. On the basis of educational level, table 3 shows that male counsellors with first degree have the mean score of 13.59 while those with postgraduate degree have the mean score of 12.41. The female counsellors with first degree have the mean score of 11.32 and those with postgraduate degree have the mean score of 10.44. The male and female respondents also agreed on factors that enhancing girl-child education.

**Research Question 4:** What is the enrolment rate of girls in public secondary schools in Kwara State?

**Table 4: Enrolment in Public Senior Secondary Schools by Level, Sex and LGEA**

| LGEA         | SSS 1         |               |               | SSS 2         |               |               | SSS 3         |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|              | Boys          | Girls         | Total         | Boys          | Girls         | Total         | Boys          | Girls        | Total         |
| Asa          | 592           | 427           | 1,019         | 587           | 431           | 1,018         | 620           | 498          | 1,118         |
| Baruteen     | 467           | 258           | 725           | 347           | 191           | 538           | 347           | 157          | 504           |
| Edu          | 991           | 452           | 1,443         | 868           | 421           | 1,289         | 922           | 356          | 1,278         |
| Ekiti        | 192           | 190           | 382           | 190           | 154           | 344           | 208           | 195          | 403           |
| Ifelodun     | 826           | 709           | 1,535         | 808           | 646           | 1,454         | 1,021         | 837          | 1,858         |
| Ilorin East  | 1,993         | 1,610         | 3,603         | 1893          | 1,365         | 3,258         | 1,605         | 1,009        | 2,614         |
| Ilorin South | 2,061         | 2,039         | 4,100         | 1,471         | 1,539         | 3,010         | 954           | 1,092        | 2,046         |
| Ilorin West  | 2,481         | 2,520         | 5,001         | 2,617         | 2,226         | 4,843         | 1,591         | 1,741        | 3,332         |
| Irepodun     | 919           | 877           | 1,796         | 1,527         | 828           | 2,355         | 975           | 690          | 1,665         |
| Isin         | 230           | 194           | 424           | 223           | 175           | 398           | 196           | 238          | 434           |
| Kaiama       | 275           | 157           | 432           | 259           | 90            | 349           | 261           | 172          | 433           |
| Moro         | 674           | 440           | 1,114         | 621           | 472           | 1,093         | 584           | 430          | 1,014         |
| Offa         | 845           | 650           | 1,495         | 735           | 617           | 1,352         | 513           | 418          | 931           |
| Oke Ero      | 237           | 220           | 457           | 258           | 192           | 450           | 214           | 180          | 394           |
| Oyun         | 686           | 511           | 1,197         | 630           | 486           | 1,116         | 573           | 453          | 1,026         |
| Patigi       | 530           | 270           | 800           | 474           | 189           | 663           | 432           | 205          | 637           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>13,999</b> | <b>11,524</b> | <b>25,523</b> | <b>13,508</b> | <b>10,022</b> | <b>23,530</b> | <b>11,016</b> | <b>8,671</b> | <b>19,687</b> |

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From Table 4 it is clear that females are still far behind when it comes to the issues of girl child enrolment in schools. The table compared the enrolment rate of boys and girls in senior secondary schools in Kwara State.

**Table 5 : Means, Standard Deviations and t-value on Counsellors Perception on Factors Enhancing Girl-Child Education in Kwara State Based on Gender**

| Gender | N   | Mean  | SD    | Df  | Cal. t-value | Critical t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----|--------------|------------------|---------|
| Male   | 109 | 49.72 | 4.747 | 210 | .235         | 1.96             | .814    |
| Female | 101 | 49.88 | 4.885 |     |              |                  |         |

Table 5 shows a calculated t-value of .235 and critical t-value of 1.96. Since the calculated p-value of .814 is greater than the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the Counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State based on gender.

**Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing Counsellors' Perception on Factors Enhancing Girl-Child Education in Kwara State Based on Years in Service**

| Source         | df  | SS       | Mean Squares | Cal. F-ratio | Crit. F-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|-----|----------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 2   | 13.119   | 6.559        | .282         | 3.00          | .754    |
| Within Groups  | 207 | 4808.481 | 23.229       |              |               |         |
| Total          | 209 | 4821.600 |              |              |               |         |

Table 6 shows a calculated F-ratio of .282 and critical F-ratio of 3.00. Since the p-value of .754 is greater than the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the counsellors' perception on enhancing girl-child education in Kwara state based on years in service.

**Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value on Counsellors Perception on Factors Enhancing Girl-Child Education in Kwara State Based on School Type**

| School  | N   | Mean  | SD    | Df  | Cal. t-value | Critical t-value | p-value |
|---------|-----|-------|-------|-----|--------------|------------------|---------|
| Public  | 125 | 50.15 | 5.080 | 210 | 1.29         | 1.96             | .358    |
| Private | 85  | 49.28 | 4.341 |     |              |                  |         |

Table 7 shows a calculated t-value of 1.29 and critical t-value of 1.96. Since the p-value of .358 is greater than the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05 as such, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the Counsellors' Perception on factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State based on school type.

**Table 8: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value on Counsellors' Perception on Factors Enhancing Girl-Child Education in Kwara State Based on Educational Level**

| Level               | N   | Mean  | SD    | df  | Cal. t-value | Critical t-value | p-value |
|---------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|--------------|------------------|---------|
| First Degree        | 137 | 49.20 | 4.632 | 210 | 2.49         | 1.96             | .013    |
| Postgraduate Degree | 73  | 50.92 | 4.949 |     |              |                  |         |

Table 8 shows a calculated t-value of 2.49 and the critical t-value of 1.96. Since calculated p-value of .013 is less than the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05, the hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, there is significant difference in the counsellors' perception on factors enhancing girl-child education in Kwara State based on educational level

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study revealed that counselling parents on the need for girl-child education can enhance girl child education in Kwara State. Kwara State is located in the northern part of Nigeria and Mohammed (2016), observed that majority of the indigenous young ladies in Kwara State are hair dressers, fashion designers, tattoo and cosmetic artists, petty traders or meat sellers. Some parents are very primitive when it comes to choosing what is right for their children and with the level of civilization, some parents still prevent their female children from going to school (Tiffin, 2012). The trained counsellor is well equipped to mount an enlightenment programme through workshop and seminars on the importance of girl child education. They can also organise community based counselling. Counselling is a face to face relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee who has a challenge and may lack information in some certain area of life (Umoh, 2004).

Parent's low level of education is one of the major factor militating against girl child education. When parents are illiterate, there is the high tendency that the children might never be educated. Garba (2014) confirmed that some female children are not enrolled in schools because parents who are illiterate do not see the need to educate their female children. The cultural beliefs that educated girls become rebellious and difficult to handle when they are married, makes funding of girls education a less preference to that of boys especially in the northern region (Mangvwat & Abama, 1999). In spite of the affirmative statement on gender

disparity, a lot of female students are denied access to quality education due to various reasons.

Male and female counsellors did not differ in their perception on the factors enhancing girl child education. Ajao (2015) noted that professional counsellors are stake holders in nation building and education. As a result of the various activities they engage in they are likely to develop similar perception on how they can contribute to enhance girl child education. Agwagah and Aguele (2007) opined that gender imbalance in education is the major issue and it is a concern to many stake holders. When legislation law on girl child education is enforced, then it will be easier for the counsellors to stage an outreach programme through the state CASSON in order to locate the at risk girls and get them enrol in schools. Mangvwat (2005) observed that discrimination against women have been so profoundly entrenched in Nigeria culture. For counsellors to make impact, they need to be backed up by law enhancing professionalism.

Looking at the different number of years the counsellors have spent in service, one would have thought that their perception on factors enhancing girl child education will be viewed differently but this was not so. This might be due to the fact that most of the respondents are school counsellors who have dealt with various students for considerable number of years. Alika (2013) believes that irrespective of the years in service, the counsellors can play a central role in enhancing girl child education.

Despite the differences in the respondent's educational qualification they

all agreed in their views. In controlling the quality of counsellors produced, the National University Commission developed a minimum academic standard for counsellors. A recognised counsellor, must have at least a first degree. The counsellor must have gone through basic training and courses required for certification and practice as recommended by N.U.C (Idowu, 2004). Looking at the long period of training and exposure, the educational qualification of counsellors empowers them to serve as human resources personnel in diverse areas. The government and non-governmental agencies can employ the services of a professional counsellor to organise programmes that will enhance girl child education in Nigeria (Alika, 2013). Also, the educational qualification the counsellors have acquired, endows them to skillfully use counselling approaches to enhance girl child education in their communities (Odediran, 1990). In carrying out these functions, it is imperative that the association gets the necessary legislative support from the government. Kolo (1992) explained that due to lack of information over the years, many organizations that need the services of a professional counsellors in Nigeria do not appreciate the services.

### **Implication for Counselling and Recommendation**

Counselling is an helping relationship between the counselor and the client. Olayinka (1999) affirmed that the use of counselling in the national reconstruction and transformation cannot be overemphasized. Since information service is an integral aspect of counselling,

the school counselor should continually give information to female students and their parents on the need for girl child education. This will help to prevent drop out and at the same time enhance girl child education in such community. It is therefore recommended that

- The State CASSON should as a matter of urgency organize programmes that will enhance girl child education in the State
- The government should organize community based enlightenment programme on the importance of the girl child education.
- The government should implement the legislative act already endorsed to combat the practices that discourages girl child participation in formal education.

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