Influence of Gender Discrimination on Students’ Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the influence of gender discrimination on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) objectives of the study, research questions and null hypotheses that guided the conduct of the study. The research design used for the study is a descriptive research design. The population of the study consists of all the SS I and SS II students and the staff in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis with a total population size of 21,900 students and staff. The sampling techniques used for the study are stratified and simple random sampling technique, with a sample size of 400 students and staff. The instrument used for the data collection was self structured questionnaire with 30 items that is patterned towards 4-point rating scale. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis of the data, the findings of the study revealed that societal value system and subject choice influence students’ academic achievement. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that: Government, through the School Management Board should organize awareness and enlightenment campaigns on the gender equalities because gender inequalities has negative influence on the students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools. The School Management Board and society should discourage gender stereotype on senior secondary school students because of its influence on the students’ academic achievement.

Keywords: Influence, Gender Discrimination, Students’ Academic Achievement Senior Secondary Schools, Port Harcourt Metropolis.

INTRODUCTION
Gender discrimination as a social fact, is a global issue, which despite the gender equality campaigns and enlightenments still have a deep root in society. Despite the argument of the American Psychological Association (APA) to eliminate the word gender from our vocabulary in order to accommodate the trans-genders, it does not eliminate the fact that women even in America are still struggling for equality in their treatment in the country, for instance, there has never been a female U.S. president or vice president but only nominees and invitees, like Democrat Geraldine Ferraro in 1984, Republican Sarah Palin in 2008, and Democrat Kamala Harris in 2020. Hence the democrats with a female vice president used it as an advantage over their opponent to win the election. In Nigeria, about 51 percent of women are involved in
voting during elections. Despite these, women are still under represented in both elective and appointive positions. Available statistics revealed that overall political representation in government of Nigeria is less than 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010). This shows that Nigeria has not attained 30 percent affirmative action as prescribed by the Beijing Platform of Action. Nigeria has been recording low participation of women in both elective and appointive positions, this is a growing concern to many Nigerians. However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organizations to increase the level of participation of women in politics, in line, with the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action. However, in Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought for a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which were obvious from pre-colonial era till date. Also in sports an average female footballer can do everything her male counterparts can do, but Nigeria’s women’s football team, the super falcons have been complaining of being often overlooked and underpaid even when they are the only ones still winning trophy for the nation. The effect of gender discrimination is evident in all most all sectors both in religion, political, educational sectors etc. Efforts to bridge the gender gap in educational achievement differences have resulted in several conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. The civil society has tried out numerous interventions to bridge the gender gap in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of women education. Despite several attempts made by the organisations and other interest groups in search of positive actions and sensitisation campaigns, disparities still exist in female educational achievements, and they are quite striking. This is as a result of gender discrimination in the education system.

In addition, Akanbi (2016) explained that the disparity in enrolment between males and females is more pronounced in technical schools which involve workshop practices like plumbing, fabrication, welding, electrical engineering, etc., which have fewer female enrolments till date. While female enrolment outnumbered that of the male in music, fine art, computer studies, commerce, humanities, business studies, typing and shorthand, etc.

Statement of the Problem

In some developed countries sex differences in academic achievement are relatively small. For instance in USA, data on mathematics performance indicates that girls scored a little higher than the boys. In developing countries the achievement development rate is in favour of the male sex. This is as a result of factors like cultural and religious beliefs, value systems and norms. It may take some time to narrow the gap between sex differences in academic achievement in most third world countries. In Rivers State, girls are likely to drop out of secondary school, and they are less likely than boys to make the transition to higher institutions. Poverty, gender norms and traditional practices including early marriage increase the risk of premature school dropout.

Lerner (2013) observed that gender discrimination as an issue has very detrimental effects on the academic achievement of students. This stereotype mind-set deeply rooted in the societal values and norms affects the students, teachers, peers relationship, student’s moral and psychological conditions in making academic decisions which in turn affects their academic achievements and their socio-economic status in society. Efforts to narrow the gap in gender disparity in students’ academic achievement have waned in the last years. Available data shows that renewed efforts are urgently needed. We know that educating girls is good for development; girls’ education encourages economic growth, contributes to stable and secure communities, reduces material and child mortality, reduces fertility rates, raise schooling level for the next generation and meets human rights standards. We still have a long way to go to meet the needs of all girls to have access to a basic education, and to bring them to equal academic achievement rate with the males.

The core problem for this research emanates from this background. The problem of gender discrimination influences on the achievements of students academically in Port Harcourt metropolis. This researcher therefore will examine the influence of gender discrimination on academic achievement of senior secondary students in Port Harcourt metropolis.
Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to find out the influence of gender discrimination on the students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:
1. To ascertain the influence of gender stereotype on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. To examine the extent to which societal value system influence student’s academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. To examine the extent to which students’ subject choice influence student’s academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions
The following research questions were formulated to guide this study.
1. To what extent does gender stereotype influence senior secondary school students’ academic achievement in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. To what extent does societal value system influence students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. To what extent does students’ subject choice influence students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses are made:
1. There is no significant influence of gender stereotype on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school students’ in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant influence of societal value system on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant influence of students’ subject choice on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Gender Discrimination
Gender is a specially constructed phenomenon that is brought about as society ascribes different roles, duties, behaviours, and mannerism to the two sexes, (Mangvwait, 2006). Gender according to Lahey (2003) is a psychological experience of being a male or female. It has to do with personality and central component of self-concept. Unlike sex, which is concerned with only the distinction between male and female based on biological characteristics, gender encompasses other personality attributes as roles, orientation and identity based on individual’s conceptualization of self. From this definition, it can be deduced that gender determines the role, which one plays in relation to general educational, political, cultural, social, religious and economic system of the society.

Gender discrimination is any action that specifically denies opportunity, privileges, or rewards to a person (or group) because of gender. The practice of letting a person’s gender become a factor when deciding who receives a job or a promotion, is gender discrimination (https://www.inc.com>encyclopedia). Gender discrimination as defined by Diane (2019) is a prejudice or discrimination based on a person’s sex or gender. It affects both men and women, but primarily women. It is linked to stereotypes and gender roles and may include the belief that one gender is intrinsically superior to another. Gender discrimination is often rooted deeply in socio-cultural traditions and practices and may be embedded in the norms and assumptions that guide decision making and education, career and business behaviour.

Gender discrimination is an unequal, disadvantageous or preferential treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender. It describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male and female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities, (Okeke, 2013). Basically, this discrimination majorly foster an ambivalent form of bias towards women, it is most often expressed toward girls and women. It has been characterized as an "entrenched prejudice against women".
Societal Attitude to Women Education

This section examines the different perspectives on attitudes of people toward women education. The role and status of a woman is affected largely by rules of residence and kinship (societal value system/norms). In general, she is regarded as inferior to the man.

Historically, the most visible difference between men and women is the role each plays in reproduction. In many societies, a woman’s value was measured in her ability to bear children and raising children became the focus of many women’s lives (Norris, 2013). Pippa (2005) states that most Nigeria’s ethnic society preferred their male children to be trained in formal education as they are seen as the future bread winners for the family, and all expenditure on a male child is considered as an investment, while their female children are considered as liabilities and investing on them is seen as a waste. Female child is limited to domestic activities, and they are discouraged from going outside house unaccompanied and from mixing with males. Their being isolated from the society is to protect the repute of the family, their chastity also has to be protected, and for this reason confining them to the house and keeping them under watchful eyes of the family is considered to be very important. That is why most African parents find it hard to send their girl child to school.

A woman is considered a total failure and becomes the talk of the town when she fails to marry or give birth, her qualifications and achievements notwithstanding (Odu, 2006). Many writers on this issue agree that women have over time been forced to accept their second fiddle status that society imposed on them and they are often regarded as dummies. Marcel (2015), states that most parents are reluctant to invest on their daughter’s education because they are not permanent members of the family, and mostly they hardly contribute in the household economy even if they are working. His findings enumerate reasons for male preference in formal education. To him, parents expect more help from boys than girls since they are more likely to bring the highest and surest dividends. Furthermore, girls are not considered as members of their families as they quietly relinquish family name on getting married and most times end up as house wife. Any money or income they earn goes to the husband’s family. Mower (2014) asserts that the effects of culture on and other sociological factors on a woman are indeed very great. It reflects on her modes of thought, perception and conceptual habits, her moral habits, gestures and emotional responses. They contend that women’s whole perception of the physical world is affected by culture. Ross (2005) in her writing about Nigeria women discussed at length about the high bride price paid to parents when their daughters are given in marriage. This is a further demonstration that girls are treated as “goods” for sale rather than humans with feelings. She also identified the attitude of marrying off girls at their first opportunity regardless of their feelings because of the fear that girls who wait too long may not find suitable husbands.

Educated girls are dreaded by many people especially husbands. Odu (2016) argues that the average Nigerian considers an attempt by a female to assume Male authority with great distaste. In some quarters, the attitude that prevails is that an educated girl does not make a good wife and may have less interest in her home. It is also argued that educated females may be more extravagant than their uneducated counterparts. Chibogu (2000), stresses that education has given the key to equal opportunity for male and female and that men are directly responsible for the general welfare of the children including their education. He contended that women are help mates and for a woman to provide all the assistance in her matrimonial home, she requires a good job which will provide her the money; and in a way of securing a good job, and adequate education becomes a necessity. Following the powerful forces discriminating against women education rooted in socio-cultural institution of most countries of the third world, the United Nations proclaimed its opposition to these conditions.

There are various reasons for the positive attitude towards female education at all levels. Some of the reasons are, poverty reduction, sustainable development, financial independence, political representation, quality child upbringing, increase literacy, etc. When people start seeing that educated women are healthier and earn higher incomes that can lift their households out of poverty and the benefits are transferred to their children, who receive better health care (Cassandra, 2019). According to Orioma (2017) parents are fast accepting female education as veritable and desirable thing for family and societal advancement, although some still see it as a threat. Orforiji (2006) argues that women are fast becoming...
an indispensable workforce. According to him, if Nigeria desires to leap forward in terms of economic industrial development, she should take her women more seriously and ensure that women should be encouraged to participate on equal level with men. The country is fully aware of women’s contribution to development and it is hoped that this would not be overlooked at any given time Bassey (2015) observes in a study that enlightened parents exhibit a positive attitude to their daughter’s education, while illiterate parents have negative attitude, because they were of the opinion that formal education doesn’t prepare girls for marriage, which is a requisite for any woman. In a related study conducted in Sagbama Local Government Area in Bayelsa State, Kasarachi (2017), found that parental attitude is beginning to change positively as both males and females are given equal educational opportunities. He concluded that society is being affected by education to changing their stereotype ideas about women.

Influence of Gender Stereotype on Students’ Academic Achievement: The review findings in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis according to Oluomachi, (2016) indicate that young adolescents, across cultural settings, commonly express stereotypical or inequitable gender attitudes, and such attitudes seems to vary by individual socio-demographic characteristics (sex, race/ethnicity, religion and immigration, social class, and age). His researches have shown that course enrolment and subject preference of male and female students follow the stereotype perception of academic discipline. Some subjects/courses have consistently been stereotyped as masculine and feminine, and this has influenced the students’ self concept. For example, Weineich-haste, (2019) in her questionnaire, she asked secondary school students to rate subjects on several scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Useless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated</td>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that academic subject like physics and mathematics were rated and perceived as masculine while social studies and English as feminine subjects. There is a clear association in the perception of masculine and feminine subjects with traditional division of labour between male and female. This erroneous belief that subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Technical drawing, Metal and woodworking are difficult and are meant for boys while subjects like Home economics, Literature, Biology, English etc are for girls. This is why we have very few girls in technical schools. The implication of her study stated that societies where the female gender is considered not fit enough to enrol in science related courses, development is bound to be a major challenge. Thus there is direct link between the societal attitude towards women and women’s’ self concept that shape their education aspirations. Thus gender stereotype influence students’ self concept and their academic aspiration and achievement.

Influence of Societal Value System on Students’ Academic Achievement: According to Amara (2011) her study on ‘The Factors That Influence Educational Outcome of Students’ states that some of the factors influencing the academic achievement of students have been traced back to parents/family or societal value system and norms. Family are influenced by societal value system and norms, them being the primary platform on which leaning not only begins but is nurtured, encouraged and developed a child’s self concept which later influences student’s academic achievements. This study explores these factors through the review of relevant literatures and also investigates ‘The Influence of Societal Value System and Norms on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria’. The data collection was done through interviews and the use of well structured questionnaires administered to 100 students within the target local government. This was statistically analysed and findings highlighted that interpersonal influences (family and peers) are central influences that shapes young adolescents’ ideology of gender attitudes, and these gender socialization processes differ for boys and girls.
Nwokoma and Mercy (2014) assert that student’s whole perception of the gender norms and roles is affected by his/her culture. The model he employed in her study, Gender Discrimination Against Female Students in Science Subjects in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of six coeducational secondary schools in the local government area was selected for this research. The sample comprised 300 students, 150 males and 150 females. The data for the study were collected by means of questionnaires, then Pearson correlation and repression were utilized for the analysis of the study, and the result showed that societal values and norms shapes teachers stereotype mindset on gender, which gives rise to gender discrimination against female students in some science related subjects and affects their academic achievement in turn. He argues that culture and societal norms have a very great influence on gender discrimination. That is societal perception and conceptual habits, moral habits, gestures and emotional responses system, norms and their belief towards women is deep rooted in the fabric of their culture and this explains how women are being treated and valued in every society. The study indicated that societal value system and norms students’ influence students’ academic performance and achievement in senior secondary schools.

Influence of Students’ Subject Choice on Their Academic Achievement: According to Oduche (2014) in her research work, The Influence of Gender Discrimination on Students’ Academic Enrolment of Secondary School Students. Two research questions such as; what is the influence of gender discrimination on student’s academic enrolment in science subjects, and the influence of disparities on enrolment in the academic achievement of male and female students. Null hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance. The population of this study comprised of 3,479 senior secondary school students selected from all the secondary schools in Abakaliki urban of Ebonyi State. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires, data were analysed using mean and standard deviation for all research questions, and analysis of co-variance was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The finding of the study reveals that disparities on the enrolment of female students in science subjects like Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics etc. usually play a major role on their low academic achievements in these subjects. The disparities on enrolment influence their decision on choice of subjects or courses in school. The researcher also states that the role of community factors; e.g. media, school, movies, and religious centre, etc. is not fully ascertained though there are some evidences that they reinforce stereotypical gender attitudes among young adolescents and society at large which in turn influence students’ aspiration in enrolling into certain subjects in school because through movies and media gender norms are unconsciously endorsed. Also disparities on enrolment in certain subjects endorsed gender norms and foster gender inequality/discrimination which affect students’ academic achievement and their placement in society in future. The stereotypical masculinity images in most science subject textbooks suggest male dominance in those subjects, which lowers female interest and commitment in them. Also male students shy away in some subjects they perceived to be female subjects which also affects their academic performance in those subjects. Students often are under pressure to conform to stereotypical norms in society. Disparities on enrolment restrict the opportunities in closing the gender gaps in academic achievement of certain subjects or courses. In his recommendation, he suggests that there should be equal quota on enrolment of students in all subjects or courses. This will increase the aspiration of both and female students to enrol in any subjects without any guilt of going against societal stereotypical norms.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study: The research design that was employed is descriptive survey research design. This research is directed toward determining the nature of situation as it exists at the time of the study. It is an observational study which describes a population, situation or phenomenon that is being studied. This gives proper understanding of what the research problem is about before investigating why it exists in the first place. Its goal is to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. This descriptive survey design gave a clear picture of the subject matter, “Influence of Gender Discrimination on Students’ Academic Achievement”, and it will serve as a basis for most researchers in
assessing the situation as a prerequisite for drawing conclusion. It attempts to describe or document current conditions or attitudes, that is, to explain what exists at the moment (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This design was adopted because of its ability to ensure a representative outlook and provide a sample approach to the study of opinion, attitudes and values of individuals.

**Population of the Study:** The population of the study consists of senior secondary school one and two (SS 1 – SS 2) students in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis Rivers State, as well as teachers and non academic staff. The students and staff are the typical subjects of this research, because they are the people who can give an insight into gender discrimination in schools as male and female academic and non academic staff had a fair chance of being taken. However, the total population of the study is 21,900 students and staff, i.e., 19,400 students, and 2,500 staff making it total of 21,900 (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2020).

**Sample and Sampling Techniques:** The research study used stratified random sampling technique. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), stratified random sampling technique is a type of sampling method in which the total population of the study (Port Harcourt metropolis) is divided into smaller groups or strata to complete the sampling process (students and staff). The strata (students and staff) are formed based on some common characteristics in the population data. However, the strata are formed based on members’ shared attributes or characteristics such as status as a students and staff, age, income, educational attainment, grade, level of position in the office. This sampling technique was adopted because it ensures that sub-groups (strata) of a given population are each adequately represented within the whole sample population of a research study. Therefore, the total sample size of the study is four hundred (400), i.e., 280 students and 120 staff, making it 400 students and staff. This figure was generated using Taro Yamane formula.

**Research Instrument:** The instrument that was used for data collection for the study is a structured researcher made questionnaire, which consisted of the respondents’ ideas on the influence of gender discrimination and students’ academic achievement. It was rated on modified 4-point Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE)-4 points, High Extent (HE) – 3 points, Low Extent (LE)- 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE)- 1 point.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

The responses (data collected) were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for accepting each item was based on real limits, where any mean from 2.50 and above is accepted, while the mean below 2.50 is rejected.
RESULTS
Data Presentation

Research Question 1: To what extent does gender stereotype influence students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Extent Gender Stereotype Influence of Students’ academic achievement in Senior Secondary School in Port Harcourt Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Staff 120</th>
<th>Student 280</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Remark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Erroneous stereotype perception of subjects as masculine and feminine subjects influence students’ academic achievement</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ character and interactions among themselves and as well as with their teachers in the classroom.</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ academic goal in STEM subjects.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Teachers treat students in classroom based on their stereotype mindset of gender</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gender stereotyping is the reason we have less female students in technical schools.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gender stereotype expectations are the major causes of disparity in students’ academic achievement.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Stereotypic expectations of parents, teachers and the society have major influence on student subject choice in senior secondary schools.</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis in table 1 above indicated that the respondents agreed that erroneous stereotype perception of subjects as masculine and feminine subjects influence students’ academic achievement. The respondents still accepted that expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ character and interactions among themselves and as well as with their teachers in the classroom. The analysis also showed that the respondents agreed that expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ academic goal in STEM subjects. It was still observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the point that teachers treat the students in classroom based on their stereotypic mindset on gender. The table also revealed that the respondents agreed that gender stereotyping is the reason we have less female students in technical schools or courses. It was still noticed in the table that the respondents accepted that gender stereotype expectations are the major causes of disparities in students’ academic achievement. The analysis in table 4.2 showed that the respondents agreed that stereotypic expectations of parents, teachers, and the society have major influence on students’ subject interest in senior secondary schools.
**Research Question 2:** To what extent do societal value system influence students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 2** Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Extent to which Societal Value System Influence Students’ Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Mean $\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
<th>Mean $\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Societal norms and values promote gender discrimination in senior secondary schools.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A student whole perception of gender norms and roles are being influenced by her culture or ethnic background.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Societal value system affects the interest and perception of female students in science related subject and male dominated activities/sports</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Societal norms and value system influence the disparities on students’ academic achievement.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Societal value system influence teacher’s gender bias in correcting disciplining and instructing students in classroom.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Societal value system influence the low representation of female students in technical school.</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The process of socialization influence students’ perception of their expected roles in society and their academic achievement.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Societal values have a very great influence on gender discrimination in school environment.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Movies have both positive and negative influence on students' self concept and their academic aspiration.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.80</strong></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.90</strong></td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis in table 2 above showed that the respondents accepted the view that societal norms and values promote gender discrimination in senior secondary schools. The table still revealed that the respondents agreed that a student whole perception of gender norms and roles are being influenced by his /her culture or ethnic background. It was also observed from the table that the respondents supported the point that societal value system affects the interest and perception of female students in science related subject and male dominated activities /sport. The analysis still indicated that societal norms and value system influence the disparities on students’ academic achievement. The analysis that societal value system influence teachers’ gender bias in correcting, disciplining and instructing students in classroom.
The analysis also showed that the respondents accepted that societal value system influence the low representation of female students in technical school. It also observed from the table that the respondents agreed that the process of socialization influence students’ perception of their expected roles in society and their academic achievement. Still showed in the analysis is that the respondents accepted that societal values have a very great influence on gender discrimination in school environment. The table indicated that the respondents agreed that movies have both positive and negative influence on students’ self concept and their academic aspiration.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does students’ subject choice influence students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the extent to which Students’ Subject choice influence students’ academic achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Mean $\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
<th>Mean $\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The enrolment and performance of female students in science subjects can be attributed to some discriminatory cultural belief.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Gender disparities on subject selection results to unequal gender academic achievement in STEM subjects.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Societal perception on gender influence students’ subject choice.</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>The pressure to conform to societal expectation influence student’s subject selection and academic achievement.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Societal perceptions of the girl child influence their subject choice and their career aspiration.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Gender disparities on subject selection and students’ academic achievement can be influence by movies, peer pressure (group) and social media.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Staff 120</th>
<th>Student 280</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis in table 3 above revealed that the respondents accepted that the enrolment and performance of female students in science subjects can be attributed to some discriminatory cultural belief. The analysis still showed that the respondents agreed that gender disparities on subject selection results to unequal gender academic achievement in STEM subjects. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted that societal perception on gender influence students’ subject choice. The analysis in the table still indicated that the respondents agreed that the pressure to conform to societal expectation influence student’s subject selection and academic achievement. The table also showed that the respondents accepted that societal perceptions of the girl child influence their career aspiration and their academic achievement. The analysis in the table still revealed that the respondents agreed that gender
disparities on subject selection and students’ academic achievement can be influenced by movies, peer pressure (group) and social media.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of gender stereotype on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt metropolis.

**Table 4:** Z-test Analysis of Significant Influence of Gender Stereotype on Students’ Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary School Students’ in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (X̄)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis on Table 4 indicates that the z-cal of 0.16 is greater than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant influence of gender stereotype on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt metropolis.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of societal value system on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis.

**Table 5:** Z-test Analysis of Significant Influence of Societal Value System on Students’ Academic achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (X̄)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis on Table 5 shows that the z-cal of 0.18 is greater than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 3 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant influence of societal value system on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant influence of students’ subject choice on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt metropolis.

**Table 6:** Z-test Analysis of Significant Influence of Students’ Subject Choice on Students’ Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary School in Port Harcourt Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (X̄)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis on Table 6 reveals that the z-cal of 0.22 is greater than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 4 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is a significant influence of students’ subject choice on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary school in Port Harcourt metropolis.
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
The study in research question one indicated that the respondents agreed that erroneous stereotype perception of subjects as masculine and feminine subjects influence students’ academic achievement. The respondents still accepted the view that expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ character and interactions among themselves and as well as with their teachers in the classroom. The analysis also showed that the respondents accepted the point that expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ self conception and teachers’ interaction in classroom. It was still observed from the analysis that the respondents accepted the point that the expectation of stereotypic gender norms influence students’ academic goal in STEM subjects. The table also revealed that the respondents agreed the fact that teachers treat students in classroom based on their stereotype mindset of gender. The table also revealed that the respondents agreed the fact that gender stereotyping is the reason we have less female students in technical schools or courses. It was still noticed in the table that the respondents accepted the point that gender stereotype expectations are the major causes of disparities in students’ academic achievement. The findings is in line with Kelly (2013) who observed that stereotypic expectations of parents, teachers, and the society have major influence on students’ subject choice in senior secondary schools.

The finding in research question two showed that the respondents accepted the view that societal values promote gender discrimination in senior secondary schools. The table still revealed that the respondents agreed that a student whole perception of gender norms and roles are being influenced by his/her culture or ethnic background. It was also observed from the table that the respondents supported the point that societal value system affects the interest and perception of female students in science related subject and male dominated activities/sport. The analysis still indicated that societal norms and value system influence the disparities on students’ academic achievement. This study is in the same view with Mower (2013) who asserts that societal value system influence teachers’ gender bias in correcting, disciplining and instructing students in classroom. The analysis also showed that the respondents accepted the fact societal value system influence the low representation of female students in technical school. It also observed from the table that the respondents agreed that the process of socialization influence students’ perception of their expected roles in society and their academic achievement. Still showed in the analysis is that the respondents accepted the view that societal values have a very great influence on gender discrimination in school environment. The finding also indicated that the respondents agreed on the point that movies have positive and negative influence on students’ self concept their academic aspiration.

The study in research question three revealed that the respondents accepted the point that the enrolment and performance of female students in science subjects can be attributed to some discriminatory cultural belief. The analysis still showed that the respondents agreed the view that gender disparities on students’ subject selection results to unequal gender academic achievement in STEM subjects. It was also observed from the table that the respondents accepted the fact that societal perception on gender influence students’ subject choice. The analysis in the table still indicated that the respondents agreed the point that the pressure to conform to societal expectation influence student’s subject selection and academic achievement. This finding is in collaboration with Lahey (2013) who opined that societal perceptions of the girl child influence their career aspiration and their academic achievement. The analysis in the table still revealed that the respondents agreed the fact that gender disparities on subject selection and students’ academic achievement can be influence by movies, peer pressure (group) and social media.

CONCLUSION
The influence of gender discrimination on the students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis cannot be over emphasized. The study concludes that gender discrimination has negative influence on students’ academic achievement in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The researcher also deduces that there is negative influence of gender stereotype on senior secondary school students’ academic achievement in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study still concludes that societal value has influence on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The researcher also infer that there is a negative influence of gender on disparities
in students’ subject choice on students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby put forward to ensure that this study achieve its objectives.
1. The School Management Board and society should confront the danger of the influence of gender stereotype on senior secondary school students, because of its adverse influence on the students’ academic achievement.
2. Communities in collaboration with government should initiate processes that would bring about change in societal value system on gender discrimination since it has negative influence on the students’ academic achievement in senior secondary schools.
3. Government should enact a legislation that will discourage gender disparities in students’ subject choice because of its influence on the students’ academic achievement in mostly science related subjects in senior secondary schools.

REFERENCES


WAEC (2015). Chief Examiner’s reports for May/June WASSCE. Lagos: WAEC.


