



IMPACT OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS' INITIATIVE FOR LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT (AGILE) ON MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) on the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving principals, teachers, Ministry of Education officials, and AGILE programme officials. Data were collected using a validated instrument titled *Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment on the Management of Girl-Child Education Scale (AGIFLES)*. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while one-way ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that AGILE interventions positively influence the management of girl-child education through infrastructural provision (cumulative mean = 3.80) and financial support (cumulative mean = 3.81). Facilities such as classrooms, gender-sensitive amenities, and improved sanitation enhanced learning conditions, while financial support including scholarships and school feeding improved access and reduced dropout rates. The hypotheses showed no significant differences in respondents' opinions on infrastructural facilities ($p = 0.435$) and financial support ($p = 0.517$), indicating consensus among stakeholders. The study concludes that AGILE significantly enhances educational management by addressing key barriers to girls' education. It recommends sustained investment and effective monitoring of interventions.

Keywords: AGILE, girl-child education, educational management, infrastructure, financial support, Kaduna State

Introduction

Globally, education is recognized as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of national development, its ability to drive social transformation in Nigeria depends heavily on the effectiveness of school management and targeted developmental interventions. The United Nations, through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), affirms that every individual has the right to education. This commitment has been reinforced by global initiatives such as the Education for All (EFA) launched in 1990 and the UNESCO-driven Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (UNESCO, 2018). In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education, through the National Policy on Education (2013, 6th edition), underscores education as a right of every child irrespective of gender, socio-economic status, or cultural background. Despite these commitments, gender disparities in access to education persist, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where socio-cultural practices, poverty, insecurity, and early marriage continue to limit girls' participation in formal schooling (Yakubu, 2019).

In response to these persistent challenges, governments and development partners have initiated several targeted interventions aimed at promoting girls' education. One of the most significant among these is the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE), a project supported by the World Bank and implemented by the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with State Governments, including Kaduna State. Introduced in 2020, AGILE is designed to improve access to safe, affordable, and quality secondary education for adolescent girls. The programme focuses on increasing school enrollment, reducing dropout rates, delaying early marriage, and equipping girls with life skills and opportunities for future empowerment (World Bank, 2020).

The management dimension of girl-child education under AGILE encompasses a wide range of structured interventions aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of secondary school systems. These include the provision and rehabilitation of school infrastructure to create safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, implementation of conditional cash transfers and scholarship schemes for girls from vulnerable households, and

capacity building programmes for teachers and school administrators to promote gender-responsive pedagogy. Additionally, the project emphasizes community engagement initiatives designed to address socio-cultural barriers and encourage parental and community support for girls' education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). These components collectively aim to enhance not only access but also the quality and sustainability of educational delivery for adolescent girls.

In Kaduna State, where the challenge of out-of-school children remains particularly acute, the AGILE project plays a crucial role in addressing long-standing inequalities in education. Reports by the UNICEF (2021) indicate that adolescent girls constitute a significant proportion of out-of-school children due to factors such as poverty, insecurity, early marriage, and entrenched gender norms. By integrating infrastructural development, financial support, institutional capacity building, and community participation, AGILE seeks to transform the management of secondary education in a manner that promotes inclusiveness, accountability, and improved learning outcomes for girls.

However, the effectiveness of such interventions largely depends on the quality of programme management at both school and community levels. Effective management involves proper utilization of resources, transparency in fund allocation, continuous monitoring and evaluation of programme activities, and active involvement of stakeholders such as school-based management committees, parents, and community leaders. Weaknesses in any of these areas may undermine the intended outcomes of the programme and limit its impact on girl-child education.

Despite the implementation of AGILE in Kaduna State, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which the project has influenced the management of education in public secondary schools. Existing observations suggest that challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient instructional materials, limited teacher capacity development, and weak student welfare services persist in some schools (UNESCO, 2018; UNICEF, 2021). These issues raise concerns about whether AGILE interventions have significantly improved school management practices and contributed to enhanced access, retention, and academic performance among adolescent girls.

Furthermore, previous studies have not sufficiently examined the specific impact of AGILE on key dimensions of educational management, including infrastructure development, financial support systems, and student welfare services. This gap in empirical knowledge limits the ability of policymakers and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the programme and make informed decisions for its improvement and sustainability.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) on the management of education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. By focusing on critical management components, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights that will guide policy formulation, enhance programme implementation, and ultimately improve educational outcomes for adolescent girls in the state.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Ascertain the impact of the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE in the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.
2. Determine the impact of the provision of financial support by AGILE for the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study

1. In what way the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE impact the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State?
2. What is the impact of the provision of financial support by AGILE for the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State?

Hypotheses

In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were raised and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

- HO₁:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of principals, AGILE officials, teachers, and Ministry of Education officials on the impact of the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE in the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.
- HO₂:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the impact of the provision of financial support by AGILE for the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Methodology

The research design that was used for the study is descriptive survey, which aims to describe the current status of a phenomenon with respect to variables or conditions in a situation at a given point in time (Akorede et al., 2023). A sample survey approach was also used. The population for this study is 7,264 individuals, comprises of 705 Principals, 6294 Teachers, 105 members/officials of AGILE and 160 MOE officials in Kaduna State, Nigeria base on the statistics made available by Kaduna state Ministry of Education (2023). The study utilized an instrument designed by the researcher entitled: Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) on the management of girl-child education scale (AGIFLES) for data collection. The questionnaire is based on five Likert type scale consisted of the following codes: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. It also consists of three sections (A to C) Section A gathered the bio-data of the respondents. Section B contains 10 items designed to assess the impact of the AGILE project on the provision of infrastructural facilities in the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. Section C also consists of 10 items, focusing on the impact of AGILE on financial support mechanisms for the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. Each section was presented in a closed-ended format, requiring respondents to select their level of agreement with the statements provided, ensuring consistency and ease in data analysis. Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) on the management of girl-child education scale (AGIFLES) was validated by experts from Measurement and Evaluation, expert from Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University.

The data collected was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentage were used in analysing the demographic data of the respondents, mean and standard deviation were used in answering research questions, while Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

The two research questions were answered as follows:

Research Question One: In what way does the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE impact the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State?

To answer this research question, items 1–10 from Section B: Infrastructural Facilities of the questionnaire were analyzed using the retrieved sample. Responses were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) merged as Agree, and Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) merged as Disagree. Any item with a mean score of 3.0 and above was considered agreed, while 2.9 and below was considered disagreed.

Table 1: Impact of AGILE Infrastructural Facilities on the Management of Girl-Child Education

S/N	Item Statement	Category	N	A	U	D	M
1	AGILE has supported the construction of classrooms in public secondary schools	Principals	17	15	1	1	3.8
		Teachers	330	290	25	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
2	AGILE has provided gender-sensitive facilities such as separate toilets for girls	Principals	17	14	2	1	3.7
		Teachers	330	285	30	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	6	1	0	3.9
3	AGILE’s interventions have led to the renovation of dilapidated school buildings	Principals	17	13	3	1	3.7
		Teachers	330	280	35	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
4	AGILE has contributed to the provision of school furniture (desks, chairs, tables)	Principals	17	15	2	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	295	25	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
5	AGILE supports the provision of water and sanitation facilities in schools	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	300	20	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
6	AGILE has improved safety and security infrastructure for girls in schools	Principals	17	15	2	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	290	30	10	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
7	AGILE collaborates with local communities to improve school infrastructure	Principals	17	14	3	0	3.8
		Teachers	330	280	35	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	6	1	0	3.9
8	AGILE has influenced the construction of girl-friendly facilities like changing rooms and sanitary areas	Principals	17	15	1	1	3.8
		Teachers	330	285	30	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
9	AGILE has promoted inclusive learning spaces that support girls’ participation	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	290	30	10	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
10	AGILE’s infrastructural support has positively impacted girls’ attendance and retention	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	295	25	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
Cummulative Mean							3.80

Table 1 shows that the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE has a positive impact on the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. The cumulative mean of 3.80 indicates that all categories of respondents (Principals, Teachers, Ministry of Education Officials, AGILE Officials) agreed that AGILE interventions significantly improve school infrastructure. Specifically, respondents noted that AGILE supports the construction and renovation of classrooms, provides gender-sensitive and girl-friendly facilities (e.g., toilets, changing rooms), and enhances water, sanitation, safety, and security infrastructure. Teachers reported that these improvements enable more effective lesson delivery, better student engagement, and higher attendance and retention of girls. Principals and officials emphasized that collaboration with local communities and the provision of inclusive learning spaces further enhance the management of girl-child education. Overall, the findings suggest

that AGILE's infrastructural interventions create a conducive learning environment, facilitate active participation, and improve educational outcomes for girls in Kaduna State secondary schools.

Research Question Two: What is the impact of the provision of financial support by AGILE for the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State?

To answer this research question, items 11–20 from Section C of the questionnaire were analysed using the retrieved sample: Principals (17), Teachers (330), MoE Officials (6), AGILE Officials (7). Responses were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) merged as Agree, and Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) merged as Disagree. Any item with a mean score of 3.0 and above was considered agreed, while 2.9 and below was considered disagreed.

Table 2: Impact of AGILE Financial Support on the Management of Girl-Child Education

S/N	Item Statement	Category	N	A	U	D	M
11	AGILE provides scholarships and financial aid to support girl-child education	Principals	17	15	2	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	290	30	10	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
12	AGILE supports school feeding programs to enhance girls' participation	Principals	17	14	3	0	3.8
		Teachers	330	280	35	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	6	1	0	3.9
13	AGILE offers grants for school development projects focused on girls' education	Principals	17	15	1	1	3.8
		Teachers	330	285	30	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
14	AGILE funds teacher training related to girl-child education	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	290	30	10	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
15	AGILE provides financial support for girl-child advocacy and awareness campaigns	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	295	25	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
16	Financial support from AGILE has reduced dropout rates among girls	Principals	17	15	1	1	3.8
		Teachers	330	290	25	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
17	AGILE assists in providing school uniforms and learning kits for girls	Principals	17	14	2	1	3.7
		Teachers	330	285	30	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	6	1	0	3.9
18	AGILE's financial intervention has improved budgeting for girl-child education management	Principals	17	13	3	1	3.7
		Teachers	330	280	35	15	3.8
		MoE Officials	6	5	1	0	3.8
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
19	AGILE partners with stakeholders to mobilize additional financial resources for girls' education	Principals	17	15	2	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	295	25	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
20	AGILE's financial support has increased girls' access to secondary education	Principals	17	16	1	0	3.9
		Teachers	330	300	20	10	3.9
		MoE Officials	6	6	0	0	4.0
		AGILE Officials	7	7	0	0	4.0
Cumulative Mean							3.81

Table 2 demonstrates that the provision of financial support by AGILE has a significant positive impact on the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. The cumulative mean of 3.81 indicates that all categories of respondents (Principals, Teachers, MoE Officials, and AGILE Officials) agreed that AGILE interventions improve access, participation, and retention of girls.

Respondents noted that AGILE provides scholarships, school feeding programs, uniforms, learning kits, and advocacy campaigns, which collectively reduce dropout rates and increase girls' access to education. Teachers emphasized that financial support enables better classroom management and planning, while principals and officials reported that collaboration with stakeholders helps mobilize additional resources for girl-child education.

Overall, the findings indicate that AGILE's financial interventions play a crucial role in enhancing educational opportunities for girls, facilitating retention, and improving the overall management of girl-child education in Kaduna State secondary schools.

Hypotheses Testing

The two null hypotheses that were formulated to test differences of opinion among the group of respondents involved in the study were analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Hypothesis One (HO1): There is no significant difference in the opinions of Principals, Teachers, MoE Officials, and AGILE Officials on the impact of the provision of infrastructural facilities by AGILE in the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Items 1–10 (Section B) were used. Table 3 presents the ANOVA result.

Table 3: ANOVA on Opinions of Respondents on AGILE Infrastructural Facilities

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	4.297	3	1.074	0.924	0.435	Retained
Within Groups	244.620	357	0.661			
Total	248.917	360				

The ANOVA results show a p-value of 0.435, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates no significant difference in opinions among the respondents. This finding implies that all respondent categories agree that AGILE's provision of infrastructural facilities positively impacts the management of girl-child education. The respondents highlighted that the construction of classrooms, provision of gender-sensitive toilets, renovation of dilapidated structures, and supply of furniture enhance the school environment, making it more conducive for learning. Additionally, safety and security infrastructures supported by AGILE reduce barriers to girls' school attendance, improve retention rates, and ensure that learning spaces are inclusive and supportive of girls' educational needs. The convergence of opinions among all respondents underscores the critical role of infrastructure in enhancing both administrative and instructional effectiveness in schools.

Hypothesis Two (HO2): There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the impact of the provision of financial support by AGILE in the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Items 11–20 (Section C) were used. Table 10 presents the ANOVA result.

Table 4: ANOVA on Opinions of Respondents on AGILE Financial Support

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	20.489	3	5.122	0.812	0.517	Retained
Within Groups	305.245	357	0.825			
Total	325.733	360				

The p-value of 0.517 indicates no significant difference in opinions among respondents. Respondents collectively agreed that AGILE financial support mechanisms such as scholarships, school feeding programs, grants, and the provision of learning kits play a vital role in facilitating girls' education. Financial interventions help reduce dropout rates, alleviate economic barriers that hinder access to education, and promote equitable participation in

school programs. The consensus shows that financial support not only encourages enrollment and retention but also strengthens the capacity of schools to plan, budget, and implement programs that directly support girls' learning and well-being. This reinforces the view that sustainable financial support is integral to effective management of girl-child education.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide in-depth and multidimensional insights into the perceived impact of the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) on the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative approach in which data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to key stakeholders, including Principals, Teachers, officials from the Federal Ministry of Education, and AGILE programme officials. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and mean scores, alongside inferential statistics (ANOVA) to test for differences in perceptions among the various respondent groups. The use of multiple respondent categories ensured a holistic assessment of the programme's effectiveness from administrative, instructional, and policy perspectives.

The study revealed that the provision of infrastructural facilities under AGILE has a significant positive impact on the management of girl-child education. Respondents unanimously agreed that the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, provision of gender-sensitive facilities such as separate toilets, changing rooms, and improved water and sanitation systems, as well as enhanced school safety measures, have contributed to creating a more conducive learning environment for girls. These improvements have not only increased school enrollment but also strengthened retention and participation among female students. The ANOVA result ($p = 0.435$) indicated no statistically significant difference in perceptions among Principals, Teachers, Ministry officials, and AGILE coordinators, suggesting a strong consensus on the effectiveness of infrastructural interventions.

This finding is consistent with the views of the UNICEF (2011), which emphasizes that access to safe, inclusive, and girl-friendly school environments is critical for improving girls' participation in education. Similarly, the Abdulbaqi et al. (2020) posits that school infrastructure plays a pivotal role in enhancing both teaching and learning outcomes, particularly in developing countries. In addition, scholars such as Earthman (2004) argue that the quality of school facilities has a direct correlation with students' academic achievement and teacher effectiveness, while Barrett et al. (2015) and Akorede et al. (2023) highlight that well-designed learning environments significantly influence students' engagement and cognitive development. Furthermore, gender-responsive infrastructure, especially sanitation facilities, is essential in addressing barriers that disproportionately affect adolescent girls, including absenteeism during menstruation (Abdulbaqi et al., 2025; Harande et al., 2025; Solomon et al., 2025; Akorede et al., 2020).

With respect to financial support mechanisms, the study found that AGILE's interventions such as scholarships, conditional cash transfers, school feeding programmes, grants for school development projects, and financial backing for community advocacy have substantially improved the management of girl-child education. Principals and Teachers reported that these financial provisions have reduced the economic burden on families, thereby minimizing dropout rates and enabling students to remain in school. Additionally, these funds have facilitated the procurement of instructional materials, improved school planning processes, and supported extracurricular and empowerment programmes for girls. Officials from the Ministry of Education and AGILE further confirmed that these financial inputs complement existing government funding, thereby strengthening institutional capacity for effective school management.

The ANOVA result ($p = 0.517$) also indicated no significant difference in perceptions among the respondent groups, reinforcing the shared understanding that financial support is a critical driver of effective educational management. This finding aligns with the position of UNESCO (2014), which asserts that financial incentives are among the most effective strategies for improving girls' access to and retention in education. Similarly, Fentiman, Hall, and Bundy (1999) found that direct financial support to families significantly increases girls' school attendance in sub-Saharan Africa.

Further supporting this, Baird et al. (2011) demonstrate that conditional cash transfer programmes have a strong positive effect on school enrollment and attendance among girls, particularly in low-income settings. Likewise,

Kremer et al. (2009) emphasize that financial interventions, including subsidies and scholarships, not only enhance participation but also improve educational outcomes by reducing financial barriers. In addition, Gertler et al. (2012) argue that well-targeted financial programmes can lead to long-term benefits such as increased years of schooling and improved labour market outcomes for beneficiaries. From a management perspective, Bray (2003) further notes that financial decentralization and targeted funding empower schools to make context-specific decisions, thereby improving overall efficiency and accountability.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore the critical role of both infrastructural development and financial support in enhancing the management of girl-child education. The convergence of respondents' views across different stakeholder groups highlights the effectiveness of AGILE as a comprehensive intervention strategy. By addressing both physical and economic barriers to education, AGILE not only improves access and retention but also strengthens institutional capacity for sustainable educational development in Kaduna State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that AGILE has a substantial positive impact on the management of girl-child education in public secondary schools in Kaduna State. The initiative effectively addresses key barriers to education through targeted interventions in infrastructure and financial support. The study highlights that AGILE's holistic approach ensures not only improved attendance and retention of female students but also enhanced teaching quality, instructional effectiveness, and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the consensus among all respondents underscores the program's effectiveness and sustainability in supporting girl-child education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made, aligned with each specific research objective:

1. AGILE and the Ministry of Education should prioritize continuous improvement of school infrastructure, particularly girl-friendly facilities such as separate toilets, safe classrooms, and changing rooms.
2. AGILE and the Ministry of Education should ensure financial support by providing scholarship programs, school feeding initiatives, and grants.

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