

School Environment as a Determinant of Parental Choice of School for Children with Hearing Impairment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Francesca Uche-Ezekiel Uko¹, Modupeola A. Olawoyin²

¹Institute of Education, Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

²Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Parents are continually faced with the challenge of making the best decisions regarding choice of school that reflect values of their children with disabilities considering the quality of available inclusive and segregated schools, in a bid to maximize the educational opportunity for their children. Research and experience have demonstrated that despite the global adoption of inclusive education as the most effective means of building solidarity and meeting the learning needs of all children regardless of disability, a large percentage of parents still send their children with hearing loss to special or segregated schools due to dissatisfactory service delivery thereby creating more disintegration in the society. It is against this background that this study was keen on investigating the predictive contribution of certain school factors to parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment. Survey design of correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study was parents of children with hearing impairment. A total sample of 205 respondents was selected for the study. One instrument self-designed and well validated was used for data collection. The formulated hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that there were significant relationship between school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school (Table 1). This shows that parental choice of school has a positive correlation with school facilities ($r=0.611, P < 0.05$), teacher quality ($r=0.802, P < 0.05$), and School safety ($r=0.617, P < 0.05$). The findings give a clarion call and create awareness among schools and proprietors of parental values in the education of children with hearing impairment. Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that Government and schools should ensure that appropriate school facilities are provided both in quality and quantity to promote quality education and development of children with hearing impairment. The scope of the study needs to be expanded beyond Akwa Ibom, Nigeria to give a broader and more generalized picture of school factors as predictors of parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment.

KEYWORDS: School facilities, School environment, teachers' quality, children with hearing impairment, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION:

There is a recent growing concern of parents particularly high class parents over the availability of learning facilities in school. Parents have recognized the benefits of **school facilities** in facilitating their children's learning and fostering their social adjustment. This has attracted robust research on the importance parents place on school facilities and the extent to which this influence their choice of school for their children. Tella (2007) noted that parental preference for schools with the needed facilities for learning is greatly dependent on the income level of the parents. The author noted that though parents prefer schools with the needed facilities, their choice depends on their socioeconomic status. Some parents prefer moderate schools with basic facilities they can afford for their children while

those in lower socioeconomic status prefer schools where such things do not exist or where they have access to free education for their children.

Roseti (2009) noted that school facilities has become essential tool in today's information age, makes a dramatic impact on the lives of people through education, research and development in the global perspective, as a strategy for empowering schools to achieve sustainable development goals for all children especially those with hearing impairment. Roseti stated that it has proven to be catalyst for improving access to quality education with is the mantra of UNESCO. Studies revealed that, over the past decades in the field of Special Education, there has been a concerted

How to cite this paper: Francesca Uche-Ezekiel Uko | Modupeola A. Olawoyin "School Environment as a Determinant of Parental Choice of School for Children with Hearing Impairment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-5 | Issue-1, December 2020, pp.1475-1481, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd38241.pdf



IJTSRD38241

Copyright © 2020 by author (s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



ongoing push and crusade on the provision of quality education through the recognition of the prominent role of facilities to improve the learning outcome of children of hearing impairment (Jedskog, 2005). According to Tella (2007), this is because learning facilities like ICT can be used in kindling these students' interest, enhancing recall of previous learning, providing new stimuli, activating learner's response, and providing systematic and steady feedback, consequently, promoting quality teaching in the classroom. It provides opportunities to stimulate learning and increase motivation that enables teachers and these students to interact productively within the classroom, neighboring communities and global economy in a wider and higher scope.

School environment and its safety have become a critical issue in Nigerian education system with the recent serial national crises and insecurity. These serial crises force many to vacate their homes to safer areas, and have caused great concern to parents regarding their children's education. Hassan and Dura (2017) have stated that transfer of school children from one school to another has greatly increased in recent times particularly in northern part of Nigeria. In affirmation, Assar and Hildar (2017) stated that in attempt to ensure safety of their children, parents are transferring their children from crisis prone areas to places where their children have violence-free and conducive learning environment. Safety is an integral and indispensable component of the teaching and learning process. Indeed, no meaningful teaching and learning can take place in an environment that is unsafe and insecure to both learners and staff. It is, therefore, imperative that educational stakeholders foster safe and secure school environments to facilitate increased learner enrolment, retention and completion and hence attainment and quality education.

School has always remained one of the safest places, next to the home in a child's life (Daro, 2016). One wonders if this still holds sway in our present society given the ever increasing spate of violence in our schools. Violence in schools is an issue that has become more prominent in the last few years, as news articles about violent deeds within the school setting are now on the increase. Despite the increasing rate of violence in schools, the society still expects that the school should be a safe place for students. Thus, in order to maintain a peaceful and safe school environment, stakeholders in education have tended to concern themselves with the problem of violence in our schools (Aluede, 2011).

Children with hearing impairment are vulnerable to school crises because of their inability to respond swiftly to emergency situations as their hearing counterparts. This is why parents take great caution in choosing schools that are free from crises to ensure safety of these children. To buttress this argument Dwyer and Osher (2015) influence of school safety on parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment. The findings of the research revealed that all parents regardless of socioeconomic classes and educational backgrounds are always poised to ensure that their children with hearing impairment learn in an environment that is safe and offers the most emotional and psychological stability. Parents noted that they worry that their children with hearing impairment are the most vulnerable children and are often victims of school crises

because they are often unaware of impending security issues. As a result of this, parents are always committed to ensuring that these children learn in the safest environment.

Ghali, Dadose and Folake (2015) revealed that many parents fear that their children with hearing impairment may become victims of security issues, therefore they ensure that their choice of school is such that would afford their children a safe learning environment. Presently, the safety of the school child is of primary concern to parents in Nigeria. This is because school insecurity is becoming a nagging problem sweeping across the nation. Parents are worried about their children and wards' protection in the face of terrorists' attacks in Nigeria, especially in the northern part. A terrorist group known as Boko Haram is on the rampage, attacking and bombing public places including schools. They kidnap adults, women, girls, school children and teachers. Majority of the 276 Chibok secondary school girls kidnapped by the Boko haram insurgents in 2014 were yet to be found. Even school assemblies were not spared. Bombs were detonated in school assemblies or around the school. Education has been severely disrupted in the North-eastern part of Nigeria, especially with the regular murder and abduction of innocent students. Such incidents helped in creating fear in the minds of students, teachers and parents; causing withdrawal of students from schools or outright closure of schools for long periods. Also, in different parts of the middle-belt and the North, religious crisis had erupted leading to violent attacks that hindered smooth learning of students in schools. Many Christian students had been withdrawn from Mission schools located within Muslim-dominated areas in Jos (and vice versa) as a result of series of religious attacks. The few Christian students remaining in such schools often carry out their academic activities with hidden fear of the unknown and cautious actions (Ekor, Udoren&Funke, 2015).

In the other parts of Nigeria, other forms of environmental insecurity abound. These include kidnappings, violent attacks and cultism. Kidnapping is growing at an alarming rate in Nigeria. Adults, children, teachers and students are kidnapped for days and ransom demanded. In any education system, peace and tranquility is an antidote for a successful teaching and learning. In recent times, however, millions of school children in Nigeria are caught up in conflicts that result to insecurity not only of their school attendance but to their lives and property (Afore, 2014). Challenges of security in Nigeria have been in the forms of armed militancy, ethno-religious crises, insurgency, terrorism and bombings as manifested in the Niger Delta problem (which seemed to have died down a bit of recent as a result of the Amnesty Programme), Jos ethno-religious killings, Boko Haram massacres and bombings in the Northern parts of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, among others. The picture security challenges (especially with the spate of killings and bombings cum suicide massacres by the members of Boko Haram) in Nigeria give parents an issue of thought in choosing schools for their children with hearing impairment.

With the adoption of inclusive education and universal basic education in Nigeria as the most appropriate strategies for universalizing education, promoting solidarity and equity in education of all children regardless of individual differences, **teachers' quality** has come into as sharp focus by

educational stakeholders with greater attention drawn by parents of children with disabilities particularly those having children with hearing impairment. Informed parents have always been skeptical of the quality of some teachers recruited to implement inclusive curriculum considering that many of the teachers feel their training was inadequate and feel frustrated and strained in the application of pedagogical skills in transmission of knowledge and skills to children with hearing impairment. There is currently a considerable focus on quality teaching, much of it rooted in the presumption that the improvement of teaching is a key element in improving student learning. In the Nigerian school system, teacher quality could be examined in various ways. It could be examined in terms of teacher's qualification and teachers' competence. It could also be examined in terms of teachers' teaching experience. It could as well be examined in terms of teacher's integrity and teacher's job performance. Teacher quality is a contested term with multiple meanings, often reflecting the perspectives and interest of different writers, researchers and policymakers (Strong 2012). For some it is about academic ability (as indicated by qualifications). For others it is about the quality of classroom practice. For those interested in effectiveness it relates to raising student achievement. As Berliner (2016) noted that quality always requires value judgments about which disagreement abound

The Purpose and hypothesis of Study

This study is aimed at investigating the nexus between school factors (such as school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment in Akwalbom State, Nigeria. We hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between school factors and parental choice of school in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of Study

This research was conducted in Akwalbom State, Nigeria. Akwa Ibom is a state in Nigeria. It is located in the coastal southern part of the country called the Niger Delta, lying between latitudes 4°32'N and 5°33'N, and longitudes 7°25'E and 8°25'E. The state is located in the South-South geopolitical zone, and is bordered on the east by Cross River State, on the west by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the Akwa Ibom is one of Nigeria's 36 states, with a population of over five million people. The state was created in 1987 from the former Cross River State and is currently the highest oil- and gas-producing state in the country. The state's capital is Uyo, with over 500,000 inhabitants. Akwa Ibom has an airport and two major seaports on the Atlantic Ocean with a proposed construction of a world-class seaport Ibaka Seaport at Oron . The state also boasts of a 30,000-seat ultramodern sports complex (Enang, 2018). It is shaped like the Allianz arena stadium and it has modern and world-class facilities. Akwa Ibom state is also home to the Ibom E-Library, a world-class information centre. In addition to English, the main spoken languages are Ibibio, Annang, Eket and Oron southernmost tip of Cross River State. The population of this study consisted of all parents of children with hearing impairment in Akwa IbomState, Nigeria.

Research Design

Survey design of correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study was parents of children

with hearing impairment. A total sample of 205 respondents was selected for the study. One instrument self-designed and well validated was used for data collection. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of percentage and bar chart while the formulated hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. Correlational research design is a type of design that enables the researcher to ascertain the relationship that exists between and among variables. Adeosun and Dada (2012) stated that correlational survey is an approach to research that seeks to tease out the relationship between factors and elements that have some bearing on the phenomena under investigation. This research design is framework for collecting and utilizing data so that desired information can be obtained in order to estimate or determine the extent to which the data for the factors are related. Osuala (2005) asserted that these design involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively described existing phenomena in order to determine the relationship between the variables; this study makes use of this approach to determine the relationship between school factors and parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment. It is the design which is aimed at collecting both large and small samples from a given population in order to examine the distribution, incidence interaction among the phenomenon. This design is preferred because it is more economical and would allow the researcher to use representative sample to make inference of situation abound. It is useful for opinion and attitude studies, it depends basically on questionnaire and interview as means of data collection.

Sampling Technique and Instrument for Data Collection

The sample of this study consisted of two hundred and five (205) participants comprising of parents of children with hearing impairment across special and inclusive schools in Akwa IbomState, Nigeria. This study adopted purposive sampling technique because of the limited number of participants under consideration. The instrument for data collection was a 64 item Likert format questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on School Factors Predicting Parental Choice of School (QSFPPCS). This instrument was used to elicit the opinions of the participants on school factors that predict parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment. This instrument consisted of section A and B. Section A required the participants to supply their demographic information such as sex and number of deaf children while Section B consisted of 64 hypothetical statements requiring the participants to rate their opinions across a 5-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree to allow for better understanding of the situation.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was established through inter-rater validity technique. The instruments were presented to three professionals in Special Education Department and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, University of Calabar, University of Ibadan and University of Uyo all in Nigeria to vet the instruments appropriately. The instrument was finally presented to the supervisor to do the final vetting by making necessary changes before they were pilot tested to establish reliability. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method (internal consistency) was used to establish the reliability of

the instrument for this study. QSFPPCS was administered to 10% of the purposively sample (30) parents of children with hearing impairment in the study area (Nigeria). This population was not part of the population of the study. The instrument was administered and retrieved within two weeks. The responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The analysis of QSFPPCS produced reliability coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.88 respectively

Data Collection and analysis

A letter of introduction was given and approval obtained from Parents Teachers Association (PTA) of each school selected. Also other ethical principles were duly observed.

RESULTS

Result from the study revealed that there were significant relationship between school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school (Table 1). This shows that parental choice of school has a positive correlation with school facilities (r=0.611, P < 0.05), teacher quality (r=0.802, P < 0.05), and School safety(r=0.617, P < 0.05). Since P-value was lesser than 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The researcher personally with the help of research assistants administered the instrument to participants. However, online completion of the questionnaire by parents who could not be reached was done with the help of email. The researcher personally move from one selected to community to another to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics of bar chart and percentage were used to analyse the demographic data of the participants, while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to determine the significant relationship in the stated research questions. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was also used to determine whether the independent variables predicted the dependent variable at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Correlation between school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Parental choice of school	12.04	4.24	205	4	-	-	-
School facilities	10.81	3.11			.611*	.000	Sig.
Teacher quality	9.91	3.41			.802*	.000	Sig.
School safety	11.03	4.13			.617*	.000	Sig.

* Correlation Significant at 0.05 level

When we performed a multiple regression analysis showing the joint contribution of school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school, the study shows a coefficient of multiple correlation (R) of 0.899 and a multiple R Square of 0.802 (Table 2). This means that 79% (Adj. R² = 0.790) of the variance in the parental choice of school is accounted by school factors, when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at p<0.05 using the F-ratio at the degree of freedom (df = 4/204). The result also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F-ratio of 806.308 (sig. at 0.05 level).

Table 2: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the joint contribution of school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.899	0.802	0.790	1.551			
SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA						
	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	P	Remark
Regression	3911.829	4	678.006	806.308	.000	Sig.
Residual	2831.643	200	487.102			
Total	6743.472	204				

Furthermore, the study reveals that there is a significant relative contribution of the school factors to the parental choice of school expressed as beta weights (Table 3). School factors such as school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety make significant relative contribution to parental choice of school. Using the standardised regression coefficient to determine the relative contribution of the independent variables, school safety (β = 0.397, t=28.123, p<0.05) contribute most to the prediction, followed by teacher quality (β = 0.351, t=26.238, p<0.05) and school facilities (β = 0.310, t=25.249, p<0.05) makes the least contribution to parental choice of school.

Table 3: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing relative contribution of school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school

Variable	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
Model	(B)	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	21.331	.546	-	24.577	.000
School facilities	.678	.038	.310	25.249	.000
Teacher quality	.711	.043	.351	26.238	.000
School safety	.813	.054	.397	28.123	.000

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Direct relationship exists between school factors (such as school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school. The findings of this study corroborate the work of Roseti (2009) which supported that parents of children are insisting on quality learning in the classroom through the provision of facilities. This is because school facilities have become essential tool in today's information age, and makes a dramatic impact on the lives of people through education, research and development in the global perspective, as a strategy for empowering schools to achieve sustainable development goals for all children especially those with hearing impairment. School facilities have proven to be catalyst for improving access to quality education and as language tool for children with hearing impairment. Thus, over the past decades in the field of Special Education, parents of these children have been crusading on the use of language assisted technology in education of children with hearing impairment because of the recognition of its prominent role in facilitating the acquisition of language of language by these children. For instance, Use of pictures, language games, graphic representation in language teaching and learning has become a common phenomenon at present. These devices are effective additional aids in language classroom for hearing impaired children. Using different relevant language technologies in classrooms makes the class interesting and interactive. It helps the learners to visualize the content of the classroom. Also, it makes the learners more attentive and deaf engaged in tasks. When pictorial language technologies are used to introduce any concepts to the learners, it becomes more real and contextualized. These learners get an overview of the lesson and can generate ideas better. It improves the learner comprehension ability. Therefore, the availability of language facilities in a school has become a key in index parents use to assess the quality of school and it strongly influence their choice of school for their children with hearing impairment.

Also in line with Quar (2005), individuals with hearing impairment utilize a variety of facilities that provide them with improved accessibility in numerous environments. Most devices either provide amplified sound or alternate ways to access information through vision and/or vibration. The availability of these devices plays a key role in the choice of school for them. The reason is the overall goal of all of these devices is to facilitate language acquisition by these children. Depending on their needs in specific situations, hearing impaired children may require these facilities. While many parents who are well to do in the society consider availability of these facilities when choosing schools for their children those who are financially incapable may opt against these schools. The author noted that either way, availability of facilities in a school is a factor parents consider before choosing schools for their children. The availability of facilities like assistive learning devices (ALD) often attracts high class parents and repulses those from low class owing to the financial implications. These devices typically are used to improve the signal-to-noise ratio in any given situation. In addition to increased volume, ALDs provide the listener with a direct connection to the sound source and help minimize the effects of background noise, distance and room acoustics.

The availability of these facilities provides parents with a range of opportunities to choose from for their children

which is a reflection of their income level. Some parents are of the view that a great deal of language can be acquired through the sense of sight in the case of the deaf (Anderson, 2012). In the light of the above, the use of learning facilities that appeal to the sense of sight becomes justifiable in language programmes for hearing impaired children because as result of their defective auditory channel, they are made to be visual learners. Teaching language is not an easy task and it needs to be interesting enough to remove the abstractness and arbitrariness of language as well as the anxiety of the learners. Teaching language to hearing impaired children becomes monotonous when the language teachers are compelled to rely on abstract explanation and text books as the only source of language input. For this reason, language teachers tend to adapt different resources to teach language more effectively and more interestingly. Some parents in the current study noted that when these facilities are not available then such a school should not admit children with hearing impairment that rely solely on visual facilities for learning. Thus, for well informed and capable parents, school facilities are considered as prerequisite for the enrollment of their children with hearing impairment in any school.

The current study is also in congruent with Nwagwu (2018) and Ogunsaju (2017) who reported that school facilities influence parental choice and stated that parents maintained that their choice of school for their children bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of learning facilities and overall atmosphere in which learning takes place. Facilities such as educational games and other ICT facilities and facilitate learning in key in language development of a deaf child. Also, equipment such as, hearing aids, computers, internet, projectors, reading, math, writing devices, tape recorders audio books and other standalone and integrated educational resources use bridge the gap between their potentials and expected achievement. These facilities play pivotal role in the actualization of the educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students of the school.

In the current study 81 percent of the sample is of the opinion that school facilities influence their choice of school for children with hearing impairment while 19 percent suppose otherwise. It is realized that the preference for facility driven schools is greatly determined by the socioeconomic status of the parents. Thus, the findings of study also corroborate Gbenga, (2017) who found that school facilities strongly correlated with parental choice of school of children with hearing impairment. Gbenga noted that although learning facilities give good opportunities in terms of learning efficiency and quality teaching, they are not meant for all classes of children and are not accessible to all classes of parents. All parents would have preferred and give their children with hearing impairment the opportunity to access quality schools that have adequate facilities that aid their children's learning and development, many parents because of their financial standings would choose schools without these facilities to ensure that their children stay in school graduate. Though these facilities provide opportunities for greater flexibility, interactivity and accessibility for engaging teaching and learning at the individual level, (which all parents always desire for their children), many parents ignore these important qualities and choose for their children schools without these facilities, to

ensure that their children complete school. Anderson (2002) similarly, reported many parents acknowledged that even parents from all socioeconomic classes, geographical location, belief system agreed that schools with good facilities strongly influence their decision when choosing schools for their children whether they have what it takes or not. While those who cannot afford the bills of such school noted that they consider that because they cannot send their children to schools they cannot pay their children's tuition and ensure that he/she completes school. They agreed that school facilities also influence their decision every parents desire that the child has uninterrupted schooling and complete when peers graduate. It is great responsibility to know what facilities a school has and the financial implication and match that with your financial status before enrolling your child in such a school so that you do not build frustration in their life as he/she is been kept of school for inability to pay tuition fees.

The findings of the current study also support the work of Berliner (2016) which supported teachers' quality plays a crucial role in parental choice of schools for their children with hearing impairment. In the current study, parents are with the perception that many inclusive teachers are not adequately prepared for the challenges of educating students with hearing impairment— who, contrary to some misconceptions, can achieve in any classroom whether segregated or inclusive classrooms. It is important to note that parents who are educated and are committed to investing quality resources in their children's education primarily consider how effective teachers in a particular school are before opting to enroll their child. This is because these parents have their expectations and standards they set for schools. Teachers' quality has generally been recognized as playing an important role in ensuring that teachers are part of a skilled and up-to-date profession to promote competency and ensure effective instructional delivery that is outcome-oriented. Educated parents are of the view that Universal Basic Education teachers as a matter of fact have to learn how to teach well before being given full responsibility for an inclusive classroom characterized by diversity. The knowledge and skills teachers require in addressing the complex cases of hearing impairment manifested in the classroom are myriad and must ensure that they possess the requisite knowledge before handing the responsibility of teaching a class with hearing impaired students.

It is realized that parents' ability to assess the quality of teachers also depends on educational level of the parents. As in the case of the current study, many parents are unable to assess the quality of teachers, and thus, do not consider the quality of teachers in their choice of school for their children. As supported by Roten and Eszar (2013), the authors buttress the findings of this study by reporting that illiterate parents had no consideration for quality of teachers in their choice of school. When parents are not educated they lack the ability to evaluate teacher's quality in meeting the learning needs of their children with hearing impairment. Thus, it is not uncommon to observe that such parents are of the belief that all teachers possess the same quality and are capable of ensuring quality instructional delivery. It is in line with this that the quality of teachers in the nation has been the subject of sharp critiques, and so have many preparation programmes that dissect the cases of hearing impairment in

the classroom. Numerous studies have reported that many UBE teachers in Nigeria do not feel prepared to teach the diversity of students in their classrooms effectively as well as complicated cases manifested by children with hearing impairment and this gives educated parents point to consider in their decisions for their children's school. However, the participants in this study noted that they do not have knowledge of teachers' effectiveness in meeting the learning needs of their children rather they enroll their children in any available school.

With increase in security challenge in Nigeria, the safety of school children especially those with hearing loss has become a huge concern to parents and teachers. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Hassan and Dura (2017) which revealed that transfer of school children from one school to another has greatly increased in recent times particularly in northern part of Nigeria in attempt to ensure safety of their children. As a result of security factor, parents in the current study noted that they transfer their children from crisis prone areas to places where their children have violence-free and conducive learning environment. Thus, it is, therefore, imperative that educational stakeholders foster safe and secure school environments to facilitate increased learner enrolment, retention and completion and hence attainment and quality education. In corroboration, Hassan and Dura (2017) stated that school safety has become imperative to parents and a critical factor of consideration in choice of school for their children with hearing impairment because of the recent hike in security cases and schools need to undertake measures to either minimize or eliminate risky conditions or threats that may cause accidents, bodily injury as well as emotional and psychological distress to these children. Accidents can lead to disability or death while emotional and psychological trauma can result in lack of self-esteem and ultimately lead to poor performance of tasks and responsibilities. Creating a school safe zone does not only mean ensuring an accident free school environment. Rather, it is the responsibility taken by learners, staff, parents and stakeholders to foster all-round safe living within school premises.

In the same line, Adoni and Fira, (2015) buttressed that because children with hearing impairment may lack the facility to access emergency information such as an impending crisis, parents take great precaution in their choice of school. This situation gives parents a great source worries, and are often cautious to ensuring that their children with hearing impairment are not exposed to the risk of such crises. The security situation in Nigeria today has led to increased preparation and protocols for emergency situations. Schools are expected to have plans in place, know that there are different emergency situations that call for different responses, and practice for these eventualities each semester. Professionals who understand the needs and abilities of students who are deaf and hard of hearing can be instrumental in the hands-on preparation of students to ensure they are not at risk during emergency situations. Thus, the safety of a child within the school is of utmost important to participants in the present study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study found that there is significant relationship between school factors (school facilities, teacher quality, and school safety) and parental choice of school. The study

further confirmed that there is significant composite contribution of the independent variables (school factors) to the dependent variable (parental choice of school). The study also revealed that school safety, teachers' quality, and school facilities have a correlation with parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment in this order. The result also show that while school factors have strong relationship with parental school choice, school safety makes the most potent contribution to parental choice of school while, teachers' quality and school facilities followed in the contribution order.

The findings give a clarion call and create awareness among schools and proprietors of parental values in the education of children with hearing impairment. This ensures that these children are enrolled in schools that match parents' interest. Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that: (i) Government and schools should ensure that appropriate school facilities are provided both in quality and quantity to promote quality education and development of children with hearing impairment. (ii) The school community should improve their attitudes towards children with hearing impairment to promote comprehensive inclusion of these children in the mainstream of the school. (iii) Government and schools should put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety. The scope of the study needs to be expanded beyond Akwa Ibom, Nigeria to give a broader and more generalized picture of school factors as predictors of parental choice of school for children with hearing impairment.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adeosun, A. and Dada, G. (2012). *Research methods in education*. Ibadan: Gloryland
- [2] Adoni, E. and Fira, D.G. (2015). Predicting perceptions of fear at school and going to and from school for Nigerian students: The effects of school security measures. *Youth & Society, 43*, 705–726.
- [3] Afore, C. (2014). Authoritative school discipline: High school practices associated with lower student bullying and victimization. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*, 483–496.
- [4] Anderson, W. (2012). Do parents like technologically driven classroom? *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education 4 (1)* 118-120
- [5] Assar, E. T. and Hildar, N. (2017). Cops and cameras: Public school security as a policy response to Columbine. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 1424–1446.
- [6] Berliner, D. E. (2016). *How the best performing school systems come out on top*. London: McKinsey & Co.
- [7] Daro, F. J. (2016). The “worst of both worlds”: School security and the disappearing Fourth Amendment rights of students. *Criminal Justice Review, 28*, 336–354.
- [8] Dwyer, H. and Osher, I. O. (2015). Low-level violence in schools: Is there an association between school safety measures and peer victimization? *Journal of School Health, 81*, 107–113.
- [9] Ekor, A., Udoren, N. G. and Funke, C. G. (2015). School safety technology in America: Current use and perceived effectiveness. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 14*, 30–54.
- [10] Enang, E. A. (2018). Akwa Ibom State: How far. *Journal of Culture 12 (3)* 90-92
- [11] Fakolade, R. and Adelodun, N. G. (2016). Adolescent trust in teachers: Implications for behavior in the high school classroom. *School Psychology Review, 37*, 337–353.
- [12] Ghali, E. F., Dadose, N. and Folake, V. (2015). *Selling us the fortress: The promotion of techno-security equipment in schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- [13] Gbenga, (2017). Effective use of technology in today's classroom. *The School Journal 13 (3)* 99-113
- [14] Hassan, J. and Dura B. (2017). Crisis response in the public schools: A survey of school psychologists' experiences and perceptions. *Psychology in the Schools, 44*, 749–764.
- [15] Hassan, T. (2009). School facilities, materials, and parental choice of school. *The Gifted Quarterly, 4 (2)* 78-88.
- [16] Jedeskog, R. (2005). Resource provision and utilization, mathematics ability and learning environment as prediction of learning outcome in undergraduate practical geography. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- [17] Nwagwu, G. Y. (2018). Relationship of student achievement and characteristics in two selected school facility environmental settings. *Journal of Learning 3(4)* 78-84
- [18] Ogunsaju, D. G. (2017). A study of the relationship between school building condition and student achievement and behavior. Blacksburg, Va.: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- [19] Osuala, R. (2005). The atypical population in special education research. *Journal of Educational Research 7 (4)* 67-72
- [20] Quar, C.V. (2005). The influence of school type and location on resource availability and pupils learning outcome in primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Educational Thought, 5(1)*: 170-176.
- [21] Roseti, J. (2009). The Need for Effective Facility Management in Schools in Nigeria. *In New York Science Journal. 1(2)*:10-21.
- [22] Roten, G. and Eszar, M. (2013). Econometrics for educational policy: the use of value-added measures of teacher performance. Massey University Centre for Public Policy Evaluation. Issues Paper No. 16. Available: <http://cppe.massey.aac.nz/papers/cpeip16/cppeip16.pdf>
- [23] Strong, E. G. (2012). *Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers*. Briefing Paper. Economic Policy Institute 27B, August 29.
- [24] Tella S. D. (2007). *Introduction to Management of Change in Education: A book of readings (eds)*. Choba: Pam Unique Publishers and Mbu Press Limited.