

A Comparative Study of Opinion of Parents and Care-Givers on the Availability and Implementation of Safety Measures at Public and Private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the opinion of parents and care givers on the availability and implementation of safety measures at public and private Day-Care Centres (DCCs) in Gombe State. A normative survey design was used to collect data which consisted of 340 Day-Care Centres (DCCs) registered under the Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of Gombe State. The study involved, after randomly selecting parents and care givers from the three senatorial districts of Gombe, a population of two hundred and forty (240) respondents. The instrument for data collection was forty-three item test on three forms of multiple representation of (safety measures, availability, and implementation). The study raised three research questions as well as three Null hypotheses. The data was analysed by mean, standard deviation, which resulted to moderately extent and high extent of safety measures availability, adequacy, and implementation in DCCs according to the opinion of both groups. The hypotheses were tested using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that two hypotheses were rejected while one hypothesis was accepted. Some recommendations have been made for onward actions.

Keywords: *Availability, care-givers, implementation, opinion, parents.*

Introduction

Every child have the right to education and safety. Safe environments are essential for preventing injury, enabling children to grow, develop and feel safe. Giving the importance of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) to the overall child development, the 1999 African International Conference in Uganda, Kampala organized by the World Bank created more awareness for Early Child Care Education (ECCE). Murray, (2005) explains that the universal level starts from prenatal stage until symbolic behaviour becomes prominent at two. At this stage infants interact with the environment and thus are influenced by the consequences of their actions, the greater determinant of their behaviour at this stage is their maturing biological nature. This means that the environmental stimuli significantly influence the life of an infant at this stage.

In response to this, the Federal Government of Nigeria through series of recommendations designed a National Minimum Standard on Early Child Care Centres with guidelines for the smooth running of pre-primary schools placing so much emphases the safety of the children. The components of safety in a Day-Care Centre (DCC) were given as Supervision, First Aid, Communication, as well as Hazard Prevention and Maintenance. The Federal Republic of

Nigeria ([FRN], 2004) Policy on Early Child Education popularly called Pre-primary Education describes it as the education given in an educational setting to children of age three (3) to five (5) prior to their entering primary school. Obinaju (2004), points out that safety precaution is the ability to take safety measure before hand and the necessary action before any harm or damage happen. The implementation of the National Policy on Education (federal Republic of Nigeria, [FRN] 2004), and its subsequent provision in the (Universal Basic Education [UBE] 1999), and implementation of the UBE Act (2004) in the country will not only increase the awareness but also make it available for every willing Nigerian to access Day-Care services.

On a general note, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) emphasizes that the location of a Day-Care Centre must be in a safe a secure environment free from chemical and other hazards. Specifically, NERDC also prescribes that the school premises, particularly, the playground should be fenced to prevent outside interference. Implementation of safety measure is given priority in ECCE curriculum. This is based on the fact that children need to be safe for optimum and overall development and kept away from any hazard. Injuries do not just occur, but are caused by hazards. A hazard is any object or situation that has the potential to cause an injury (Kidsafe, 2007). It is assumed that where the safety of a child is threatened, the child will not grow into a healthy individual. The demand for Child Day-Care services and education have become more desirable as parents continue to seek safe places to leave their children while at work. At this stage, one is tempted to find out to what extent are the safety measures of the Day-care Centres observed during the formative stage of these children?

Statement of the Problem

There are a lot of prevailing situations which affect the implementation of safety measures in Day-Care Centres. Many of them have been found not practising in accordance to specifications of providing a safe child care setting especially from the physical aspect. Such amenities as the wash-room, bedroom, playground, to mention but just three. This have caused eyebrow by some parents who feel the Day-Care Centres in Gombe State are not performing up to standard and expectations which have prompted the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to compare the opinions of parents and care-givers on the safety measures, availability, and implementation in Day-Care Centres. Rentzou, (2010) has provided the state of implementation of DCCs in Greek which is regrettable poor. The study specifically seeks to to achieve the following objectives:

- (i.) To determine the safety measures available are adequate in public and private Day-Care Centre in Gombe State;
- (ii.) To determine the implementation of the safety measures in Day-Care Centres in Gombe State; and
- (iii.) To determine what the safety measures are in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- (i.) What are the opinions of parents and care givers on safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe state?
- (ii.) What are the opinions of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe State?

- (iii.) What the opinions of parents and care givers on availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$

- (i) There is no significant difference between the mean responses of parents and care-givers on the safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.
- (ii) There is no significant difference between mean responses of parents and care-givers on the implementation of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.
- (iii) There is no significant difference between the mean responses of parents and care-givers on the availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State.

Methodology

The study utilized a normative survey design. Yusuf, (2013) describes normative survey design as a survey that aims primarily at collecting data and systematically describing characteristics or features about a given population. The reason for adopting this design is based on the fact that it is considered as the most appropriate in carrying out the study which seeks the opinion of parents and Day-Care givers.

The population consisted of 340 Day-Care Centres (DCCs) registered under the Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of Gombe State. The study involved 13,837 parents and 880 care givers across the three senatorial districts. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in the selection of the study. The entire population was divided into three clusters each representing a senatorial district of Gombe North, Gombe Central, and Gombe South respectively in the state. In each of the districts, two local governments areas were randomly selected making it six local governments' areas in whole. In each of the local government, ten (10) Day-Care Centres (DCCs) were randomly selected amounting to sixty (60). Each of the sixty DCCs further produced four (4) subjects of two (2) parents and two (2) carers bringing up the population of two hundred and forty (240) respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a designed observational index christened 'Availability and Implementation of Safety Precaution in Day-care Centres' (AISPDC). It was structured using a four-point modified Linker Scale of "Very High Extent" (4 points), "High Extent" (3 points), "Moderate Extent" (2 points), and "Low Extent" (1 point) respectively. The 2.5 and above criterion mean was adopted as the score for accepting statements for items while those with less than 2.5 criterion mean would be rejected. A semi-structured interview was conducted on the the parents and carers. The use of semi-structured interview in this study allowed the participants to express themselves freely without bias.

The collected data was analysed using the mean and standard deviation as well as the t-test statistics of alpha at 0.05.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1

What is the opinion of parents and care givers on safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe state?

Table 1 below shows the mean score and standard deviation of the opinion of parents and care givers on safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state. In the analysis, the result shows the decisions on all items indicated high extent signifying that the mean score values are more than the adopted 2.5 mean score.

Table 1: Opinion of parents and care givers on safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe state?

S/N	Items	Parents N=120		Care givers N=120		Total N=240		Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Classroom meets Federal Govt. Provision.	3.68	.47	3.40	.49	3.54	.50	High Extent
2	Teacher/Pupil meets Fed Govt. provision.	3.28	.45	3.24	.53	3.26	.49	High Extent
3	Classrooms well ventilated.	2.80	.94	3.02	.91	2.91	.93	Moderate Extent
4	Seats suitable to pupils age.	3.34	.48	3.28	.54	3.31	.51	High Extent
5	Side-lockers provided for c/room apparatus.	3.37	.48	3.20	.72	3.28	.62	High Extent
6	Schs located in conducive environment.	3.41	.49	3.37	.62	3.39	.56	High Extent
7	Schs are properly fenced.	3.73	.45	3.51	.50	3.62	.49	High Extent
8	Suitable topography of sch environment	3.25	.43	3.21	.70	3.23	.58	High Extent
9	Available proper drainage system.	3.63	.49	3.55	.71	3.59	.61	High Extent
10	Schools are easily accessed.	3.85	.36	3.75	.43	3.80	.40	High Extent
11	Schools are free from hazards.	3.78	.42	3.64	.62	3.71	.53	High Extent
12	Availability of toilets.	3.78	.42	3.65	.63	3.71	.53	High Extent

Research Question 2

What is the opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe State?

Table 2 below shows the Mean score responses and standard deviation on the availability of safety measures in Day-Care Centres in Gombe State. The results displayed on the table indicates that the responses on each of the items listed on 13 to 30 secured a mean score of more than the targeted mean score of 2.50. This means there was a high extent to which safety measures are implemented in day care centres in the state.

Table 2: Opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures in public and private Day-care Centres in Gombe State

S/N	Items	Parents N=120		Care givers N=120		Total N=240		Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
13	Adequacy of toilets.	3.78	.42	3.67	.63	3.72	.53	High Extent
14	Toilets are gender friendly.	3.93	.26	4.00	.00	3.96	.43	High Extent
15	Toilets are well maintained.	3.24	.43	3.24	.43	3.24	.43	High Extent
16	Availability wash-basins.	3.58	.50	3.72	.45	3.65	.48	High Extent
17	Availability of First-Aid box.	3.79	.41	3.84	.37	3.82	.39	High Extent
18	Availability of sick bay with beds.	3.70	.46	3.83	.38	3.76	.43	High Extent
19	Availability of mattress.	2.93	.25	2.96	.27	2.95	.26	Moderate Extent
20	Availability of fire extinguisher.	2.98	.20	2.95	.25	2.96	.23	Moderate Extent
21	Good evacuation rules.	3.07	.25	3.07	.25	3.07	.25	High Extent
22	Availability of refuse disposal facilities.	3.15	.36	3.05	.36	3.10	.36	High Extent
23	Periodic safe trainings for staff.	3.07	.25	3.02	.34	3.04	.30	High Extent
24	Apparatus and equipments properly kept.	2.93	.25	2.81	.44	2.87	.36	Moderate Extent
25	Identification of pupils' collectors after school.	2.98	.22	2.83	.44	2.91	.35	Moderate Extent
26	Proper storage of cleaning agents.	3.07	.25	3.05	.22	3.06	.23	High Extent
27	Regular lunch supervision of pupils.	3.07	.25	2.87	.45	2.97	.38	Moderate Extent
28	Availability of play ground.	3.16	.37	3.00	.34	3.08	.36	High Extent
29	Adequate play ground.	2.93	.25	3.00	.34	2.94	.26	Moderate Extent
30	Adequate playing space for children.	2.98	.20	2.98	.33	2.98	.27	Moderate Extent

Research Question 3

What is the opinion of parents and care givers on availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State?

Table 3 below shows the Mean score responses and standard deviation on the opinion of parents and care givers on the availability of safety measures in Day-Care Centres in the state. The results displayed on the table shows the Mean score of each item is more than the targeted accepted Mean score of 2.50 indicating a high and moderate extent level of acceptance.

Table 3 Opinions of parents and care givers on availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State

S/N	Items	Parents N=120		Care givers N=120		Total N=240		Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
31	Playground free from harmful objects.	3.07	.25	3.08	.26	3.07	.26	High Extent
32	Availability of play facilities.	3.07	.25	3.03	.35	3.05	.31	High Extent
33	Adequate play facilities.	3.17	.37	2.97	.37	3.07	.38	High Extent
34	Facilities are maintained.	2.93	.25	2.88	.32	2.91	.29	Moderate Extent
35	Availability of running water.	2.98	.22	2.89	.34	2.94	.29	Moderate Extent
36	Adequacy of running water.	3.07	.25	3.04	.20	3.05	.23	High Extent
37	Availability of light.	3.07	.25	3.00	.29	3.03	.27	High Extent
38	Adequacy of light	3.17	.37	3.01	.33	3.09	.36	High Extent
39	Availability of school bus.	2.93	.25	2.97	.29	2.95	.27	Moderate Extent
40	Adequacy of school bus.	2.98	.22	2.98	.30	2.98	.27	Moderate Extent
41	Registered, insured, and roadworthy sch. bus.	3.09	.29	3.08	.26	2.98	.28	High Extent

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses on opinion of parents and care-givers on the safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.

Table 4 below shows the t-test result on the mean responses on the opinion of parents and care givers. The table revealed the mean scores of 3.49 and standard deviation of 0.9 for care givers while the mean score of parents is 3.40 and standard deviation of 0.5 respectively. The

t-Critical value of 2.20 is below the t-Stat value of 2.52 and the p-value of 0.03 is less than the alpha value at 0.05 level of significance indicates that the result is statistically significant hence the refusal to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 4: t-test on Mean responses of opinion of parents and care givers on safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.

Respondents	N	Mean	δ	r^2	df	t-Stat	$P(T \leq t)$	t-Critical	Decision
Care Givers	120	3.49	.09	.94	138	2.52	.03	2.20	Rejected
Parents	120	3.40	.05						

δ = Variance

r = Pearson Correlation

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between mean responses on opinion of parents and care-givers on the implementation of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.

Table 5 below shows the t-test on the mean responses on the opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures in the Day-Care Centres in the state. The results highlighted the mean score of 3.24 and standard deviation 0.12 for care givers while the mean score of 3.21 and standard deviation 0.16 for parents respectively. It also shows that the t-Critical value of 2.11 is higher than the t-Stat value of 1.24. The p-value of 0.23 is higher than the alpha value of 0.05 level of significance, therefore, it is not statistically significant and indicates strong evidence for null hypothesis hence we fail to reject it.

Table 5: t-test on Mean responses of opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.

Respondents	N	Mean	δ	r^2	df	t-Stat	$P(T \leq t)$	t-Critical	Decision
Care Givers	120	3.24	.12	.98	138	1.24	.23	2.11	Accepted
Parents	120	3.21	.16						

δ = Variance

r = Pearson Correlation

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean responses on opinion of parents and care-givers on the availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe State.

Table 6 below shows t-test on the mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.01 for care givers and mean score of 2.99 and standard deviation 0.00. The t-Stat value is 2.49 while that of t-Critical is 2.23. The p-value is 0.03 which is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance hence the hypothesis is rejected which means that there is significant difference in the

opinion of the two groups on availability and adequacy of safety measures in day-Care Centres.

Table 6: t-test on Mean responses of opinion of parents and care givers on the availability and adequacy of safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres in Gombe state.

Respondents	N	Mean	δ	r^2	df	t-Stat	$P(T \leq t)$	t-Critical	Decision
Care Givers	120	3.05	.01	.55	138	2.49	.03	2.23	Rejected
Parents	120	2.99	.00						

δ = Variance

r = Pearson Correlation

Discussion of Findings

It was evident from the data collected on the opinion of parents and care givers that the Day-Care Centres in Gombe State has instituted safety measures which indicated high extent and moderately extent on all the items of availability, implementation, as well as adequacy. These findings agree with that of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECCD) 1999 and the African International Conference with the objective of raising public awareness and advocate for ECCD and Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) reported by Ekaete, (2004). The extent of which schools and child care centres are located at conducive environments, accessibility, and the presence of toilets and other facilities free from hazards was highly moderate. Generally they were the facilities that aids teaching and learning. Rentzou's study of (2010) examined the significant growth of interest in ensuring that childcare provision for children is of high quality affirming this study.

The opinion of parents and care givers was based on the expectation that the children have the right to education as stipulated in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Article 26 of the document states that everyone has the right to education and that education should be at least at elementary and fundamental stages so that the child will be developed in his human personality as ascribed by UN,1948:10.

Tables 2 and 5 specifically revealed the results on the opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures at all the three senatorial zones of the state. Decision on items 13 to 30 were of high extent, moderately extent, and even very high extent at some point. The mean score of parents to that of care givers was 3.40 and 3.49 respectively while the p-value was 0.03 at 0.05 alpha level of significance indicating that there was a relationship in the opinion of parents and care givers on the implementation of safety measures in all the DCCs across the three senatorial districts in Gombe State.

The results on tables 3 with items 31 to 41 and 6 with the t-test statistics indicate that there was high extent to which safety measures were observed in the three senatorial districts of the state. Although the r^2 representing Pearson Correlation revealed 0.94 indicating a reasonable degree of association on the opinion of parents and care givers on the availability and adequacy of safety measures, the p-value at alpha significance level of 0.05 is 0.05 which is statistically significant and has proven support for our research hypothesis, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis.

Conclusion

The result shows that there are safety measures in public and private Day-Care Centres across the state and that the level of implementation, availability and adequacy is of high standard. The outcome of the opinion of parents and care givers has clearly indicated high level of safety measures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) The Federal Ministry of Education should provide monitoring committee to monitor and enforce the policies of the provision of safety measures set by the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) on both public and private Day-Care Centres (DCCs);
- (ii) The State Ministry of Education should encourage proprietors of private Day-Care Centres (DCCs) to employ qualified care givers for proper and adequate enforcement of safety measures.

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