



## PRINCIPALS' SAFETY AND LIBRARY SERVICES AS CORRELATES OF CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

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### Abstract

The study investigated principals' safety and library services as correlates of child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study population comprised all students from the 462 public secondary schools in Delta State. A multistage sampling procedure was used to draw 802 SSS two students. A researcher-developed instruments titled "Principals' Safety and Library Services Questionnaire (PSLSQ)" and "Child-Friendly Environment Scale (CFES)" were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts comprising two lecturers from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and the other a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded overall reliability indices of 0.82 for PSLSQ and 0.79 for CFES, respectively. The instruments were administered by the researcher with the help of five research assistants and a 98% return rate was recorded. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others, that safety services have a strong and significant relationship with a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. It was also found that library services have a moderate and significant relationship with a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among other things, that the Ministry of Education should invest in library infrastructure development through funding for the provision of information resources and annual training of principals to enhance their expertise in providing library services, thereby fostering a child-friendly environment in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Principals, Safety Services, Library Services, Child-Friendly, Environment, Secondary Schools

### 1.1 Introduction

The school is a formal learning institution where children engage in learning activities to develop their skills and knowledge. The school offers opportunities for children to develop their

character and potential, becoming productive members of society. Children can learn best in a supportive and child-friendly environment in educational institutions.

A child-friendly environment (CFE) is a school where the staff are welcoming to children and ensure that their learning needs are satisfactorily met. A CFE is defined by Salindry and Yuniar (2025) as a supportive and protective atmosphere that provides children with a sense of security and comfort during the learning process in an educational institution. In a child-friendly environment, all education is child-centred and the learning process must be supported by positive, healthy and safe social, physical and emotional conditions. Effendi and Supadi (2023) asserted that CFE is designed to create safe, clean, healthy, caring, and cultured environmental conditions. A child-friendly environment is safe, comfortable, and fun for students, which provides them with a fulfilling learning experience. Children are physically secured and emotionally stable in a child-friendly environment. Children are given treatment and learning opportunities in a child-friendly environment. A child-friendly environment is characterised by a protective and welcoming atmosphere. In the same vein, Okafor, Nnebedum and Ugwo (2025) noted that CFE is characterised by basic learning facilities, mutual interpersonal relationships among staff and learners, freedom from harm and bullying, respect of learners' rights, and supportive and inclusive classroom activities. child-centred instructional approaches, cordial relationship between staff and learners.

There are cases of shortages of essential learning facilities and the absence of safety measures that possibly discomfort students in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Some students feel uncomfortable in a learning environment characterised by inadequate facilities, dilapidated buildings, a lack of routine maintenance of school plants, an insecure atmosphere, and unequipped libraries and laboratories in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria (Chukwu, 2025). A child-friendly environment is created by ensuring the safety of learners in secondary schools.

Safety is a state of being free from harm, danger or threats to life and property in an environment. Safety practices are concerned with monitoring and controlling activities to ensure the safety of students and staff and prevent property damage. Abdul'aziz, Obile and Gayus (2025) described safety practices as the strategies, policies, and measures implemented to protect students, staff, and school properties from security threats, including violence, theft, and abductions. Safety practices are measures taken to prevent and reduce risks and threats to individuals in a learning environment. Safety practices are demonstrated through perimeter fencing of school premises, the installation of surveillance and emergency systems, and the recruitment of security personnel, among others. Nwaorgu, Egwunyenga, and Akpotu (2025) posited that safety practices include perimeter fencing of school premises, the installation of surveillance and emergency systems, and the recruitment of security personnel, among others. Safety practices is exhibited through the presence of patrolling security personnel, regular maintenance of school buildings and facilities, enforceable anti-bullying policies, active monitoring of incidents involving physical abuse, promotion of a culture that fosters mutual respect among students, provision of safety awareness programs for students, allocation of resources to implement comprehensive school safety measures, empowerment of students through participatory strategies to enhance school safety,

availability of reliable channels for reporting safety concerns and high levels of disciplinary measures for violations.

Libraries is the storehouse of information resources that help to satisfy the teaching and learning needs of students and staff in educational institutions. Library services involve providing information resources in various formats, including print and non-print media, to meet the needs of patrons. Iheagwam (2020) noted that print media are those materials that are in print format, such as fiction, nonfiction, reference books, textbooks, and supportive books, while non-print materials include audiobooks, e-books, compact discs (DVD), realia, games, simulations/teaching instructional material, as well as computers and the internet. Ijeh and Sambo (2025) asserted that the variety of library resources and services that can be made available in school libraries to enhance teaching and learning includes the following: reference services, bibliographic service, internet service, reprographic service, new book display service, translation service, new paper clipping service, orientation service, lending and borrowing, among others. Library services play essential roles in inculcating good reading habit among students by providing a platform for them to engage in independent study.

Some secondary schools across Delta State, Nigeria, face safety and security challenges. Ivwurie and Efe (2025) noted that secondary schools in Delta State are characterised by hostile, offensive, intimidating, distressful, embarrassing, threats to life and property, cyber-bullying, teachers' harassment, cultism activities, rape and sexual assault of teachers, and kidnapping. The authors added that the insecurity breeds fear, property loss, and death, which limits school administration, teacher commitment, and job performance, all of which have an impact on students in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Insecurity disrupts academic activities and causes psychological trauma to staff and students, which affects learning activities in secondary schools. Ijeh and Sambo (2025) noted that school libraries in Delta State, Nigeria, often possess inadequate collections, poor infrastructure, outdated resources, and insufficient funds, resulting in the provision of low-quality services in secondary schools. The authors added that digital-based information and current information in students' books are outdated, unorganized and the library services are offered by non-professional staff in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. These problems prompted this study which focused on principals' safety and library services as correlates of child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between principals' safety and library services as correlates of a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.
2. Relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State?

### 1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

## 2. METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design. The study population comprised all students from the 462 public secondary schools in Delta State. A multistage sampling procedure was used to draw 802 SSS two students. A researcher-developed instruments titled "Principals' Safety and Library Services Questionnaire (PSLSQ)" and "Child-Friendly Environment Scale (CFES)" were used for data collection. PSLSQ consisted of 18 items, divided into two clusters: A and B. Cluster A comprised 10 items related to safety services, while Cluster B, which focused on library services, contained eight items. CFES which was structured to measure a child-friendly environment, contained 25 items. The items of both PSLSQ and CFES are placed on a four-point rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts comprising two lecturers from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and the other a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded overall reliability indices of 0.82 for PSLSQ and 0.79 for CFES, respectively.

The researchers, with the assistance of eight research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Delta State, administered copies of the questionnaires directly to the teachers. Out of 802 copies of the instruments distributed, 789 were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 98% return rate. The copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, duly filled out, and successfully retrieved were used for data analysis. Data collected was analysed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. For the decision on the research questions the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Kahn cited in Wonu, Victor-Edema and Ndimele (2021), as follows

| Coefficient | Relationship           |
|-------------|------------------------|
| .00- .20    | Negligible correlation |

|          |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|
| .21- .40 | Low correlation       |
| .41- .60 | Moderate correlation  |
| .61- .80 | High correlation      |
| .81- .99 | Very high correlation |
| 1        | Perfect               |

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, the p-value and alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was compared to determine whether to retain or reject the null hypotheses tested. When the precise probability value is less than or equal to the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected; but when the exact probability value is more than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 1: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Safety Services and Child-Friendly Environment**

| Variables                   | N   | Principals' Safety Services | Child-Friendly Environment | Remarks                      |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Principals' Safety Services | 789 | 1.00                        | 0.785                      | Strong Positive Relationship |
| Child-Friendly Environment  | 789 | 0.785                       | 1.00                       |                              |

As shown in Table 1, a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.785 was obtained. This shows that there is a high positive relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. This indicated that an improvement on principals' safety services will highly increase child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 2: Pearson (r) on Relationship Principals' Library Services and Child-Friendly Environment**

Table 2 indicates that a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.538 was obtained. This shows

| Variables                    | N   | Principals' Library Services | Child-Friendly Environment | Remarks                      |
|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Principals' Library Services | 789 | 1.00                         | 0.538                      | Strong Positive Relationship |
| Child-Friendly Environment   | 789 | 0.538                        | 1.00                       |                              |

that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. This indicated that an enhancement of principals' library services will moderately improve child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 3: Pearson (p-value) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Safety Services and Child-Friendly Environment**

| Variables                   | N   | Principals' Safety Services | Child-Friendly Environment | P-value | $\alpha$ | Remarks  |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Principals' Safety Services | 789 | 1.00                        | 0.785                      | 0.000   | .05      | Rejected |
| Child-Friendly Environment  | 789 | 0.785                       | 1.00                       |         |          |          |

Table 3 revealed that the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the  $p$ -value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 4: Pearson (p-value) on the Significant Relationship between Principals' Library Services and Child-Friendly Environment**

| Variables                    | N   | Principals' Library Services | Child-Friendly Environment | P-value | $\alpha$ | Remarks  |
|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Principals' Library Services | 789 | 1.00                         | 0.538                      | 0.000   | .05      | Rejected |
| Child-Friendly Environment   | 789 | 0.538                        | 1.00                       |         |          |          |

Result in Table 4 revealed that the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the  $p$ -value is less the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

#### 4. Discussion

The study's results showed a high positive relationship between principals' safety services and a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. An explanation for this finding is that safety services provided by principals protect staff and students from harm, threats, and violent situations, which may contribute to a strong relationship with a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. This finding aligns with that of Young, Williamson, and Egan (2016), which showed a strong relationship between safety and a learner-friendly environment in schools. The agreement between the findings could be attributed to the similarity in educational institutions in which the studies were conducted. The study's findings could be explained by the fact that principals' safety services prevent physical attack by intruders, accidents from the collapse of school buildings and effectively respond to crises such as fire outbreaks or natural disasters, which can make staff and students less fearful and more comfortable in public secondary schools in Delta State. Further results showed a significant relationship between principals' safety services and child-friendly environments in public secondary schools in Delta State. This finding supported the result of Williamson and Egan (2016), which showed a significant relationship between safety and a learner-friendly environment in schools. The principals' safety services ensure that staff and students with injuries receive immediate medical care, contributing to a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State.

The study's findings revealed a moderate positive relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environments in public secondary schools in Delta State. The possible reason for this finding is that principals' library services ensure that students have access to a vast

range of information resources to enrich their learning experience, which thereby moderately leads to a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. This finding aligns with the report by Merga (2021), which showed that library services as a support had a high relationship with a child-friendly environment in schools. Principals' library services offer a calm atmosphere and child-friendly environment for studying in public secondary schools in Delta State. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between principals' library services and child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. The finding aligns with that of Merga (2021), which demonstrated a significant relationship between the library as a support service and a child-friendly environment in schools. Principals' library services significantly support a child-friendly environment by providing a quiet building for recreation among students in public secondary schools in Delta State.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it is concluded that principals' safety and library services are positively associated with a child-friendly environment in public secondary schools in Delta State. Students feel secure and supported in meeting their learning needs in secondary schools where principals provide safety and library services.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education should engage in routine sensitisation of principals to keep them abreast with skills and knowledge that will further improve and sustain the safety services for creating a child-friendly environment in secondary schools.
2. The Ministry of Education should invest in library infrastructure development by providing funding for the acquisition of information resources and offering annual training for principals to enhance their expertise in delivering library services, thereby fostering a child-friendly environment in secondary schools.

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