

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTAL DECISIONS ON THE
CHOICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FACILITY FOR
THEIR WARDS: A SURVEY OF PARENTS IN ATOMIC HILLS '1'
BASIC SCHOOLS**



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**A dissertation in the Department of Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of
Master of Education
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in the University of Education, Winneba**

AUGUST 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I Akua Kwartemaa Marfo declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

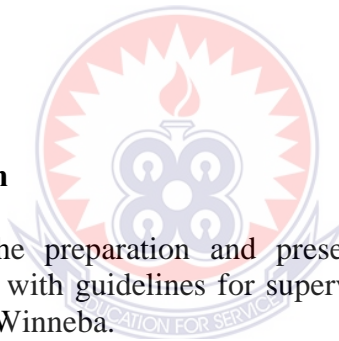
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with guidelines for supervision of theses laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Dr. Richardson Addai-Mununkum

Signature:

Date:



DEDICATION

To my husband Mr. Martin Danso Asumah, My kids; Kwaku Danso-Asunah, Nana Ama Agyemang Danso-Asumah, Akua Yeboaa Danso-Asumah and my Mum, Madam Grace Owusu for their love, support and time.



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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities for their wards at Atomic Hills Basic Schools. The positivist paradigm is informed by the philosophical position of the study. In line with philosophical position, a quantitative approach and descriptive survey research design were used. A sample of one hundred and fifty (150) parents were considered for the study. Questionnaires were used in data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that personal/ideological factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities were schools' environment, school's proximity, school's high enrolments, fewer children in each class, academic performance of pupils, schools' focus on skill development, availability of transportation and security of the facility. It also emerged from the study that economic factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities were level of fees, affordability of fees, fee payment structure (flexibility of payment terms, mode of payment) and value-for-money services. Finally, the study established that there is statistically significant correlation between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities. Inherent factors to parental choice of ward's preschool are multi-faceted. It is recommended that the school authorities should consider parents' whose wards enrol in Atomic Hills schools view in all important management decisions concerning the school and the well-being of the pupils.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the organized practice of educating young children in the early stages of life (birth to age eight). According to National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (2012), the age range spans from birth to age eight (thus from Nursery to Basic three) (Groark et al., 2008). In support, UNESCO International Bureau of Education (2006) acknowledges that children who benefited from ECE are between the ages from birth to eight (8) years old. It is a time of remarkable brain development that lays the very foundation for subsequent learning in the development of human life. According to the Global Monetary Report (2007), ECE includes nursery, kindergarten and the first three years of primary education. Other frequently used terms include pre-school, early years, kindergarten, playgroup, nursery, pre-grade one, preparatory year, 'zero year' (International Bureau of Education, 2006).

Ghana as a country has come up with strategies and policies on Early Childhood Education to help improve the quality of education, the latest of which being the Ghana Education School Programme to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana since 2012. The programme recognised the role of the teacher in quality education as it explicitly states that 'regardless of limited resources and inadequate infrastructure, the right teacher can transform the kindergarten class and learning outcomes of the children in his/her care.'

According to the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (RBEDA, 2010), early childhood education refers to a holistic and integrated approach to health, nutrition, protection, and education needs and services (Regional Bureau for Education in Africa, 2010). The Working Group on Early Childhood Development brings all the key stakeholders including international partners, governments, NGOs, experts and academics officially term early childhood education as Early Childhood Development (ECD).

Ghana is among African countries that gave Early Childhood Development (ECD) program a minimum attention in the past three decades. During this period' the children's early learning and stimulation was informal and unstructured. The absence of the formal Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs made children below eight years invisible in the country's education program, a situation that denied children the opportunity to thrive both academically and socially. In the year 2007, a policy document on Early Childhood Care and Development for Ghana was made operational. The document, forms part of the recommendations of the Government's White Paper on Educational Reforms, makes kindergarten education progressively part of the Universal Free and Compulsory Basic Education (Ghana News Agency May 31, 2005).

Under the policy, all Ghanaian children at the age of four are to receive two years compulsory Early Childhood Development (ECD) education before entering primary one. Early childhood is the period of a child's growth from conception to the first eight years. This was contained in a speech delivered by the then first Lady Mrs. Theresa Kufour when she was opening the International African Conference on Early

Childhood Development in Accra on the theme: “Moving Early Childhood Development Forward in Africa” (GNA May 31, 2005).

In Australia, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services for children below school age are usually referred to as either childcare, children’s services or early childhood services. ECEC therefore includes the range of formal care and education services for children under school age and in the early years of school (Australian Department of Education, 2018). According to the World Bank (2001), early child development includes services designed for the physical and intellectual growth of children in their early years (ages 0-6). These services incorporate day care, pre-school, home visits by trained professionals, health and nutrition services, and parental education. Bowman (2000) states that:

“Early childhood education does not refer to a single entity; rather, the term covers a variety of programmes for young children between birth and age 8. These programmes take place in children's own homes and in public schools, private pre-schools, and child-care homes and centers. Each of these settings may have quite different characteristics (adult/child ratios, group sizes, age ranges, cultural practices, and adult training and teaching styles) that in turn affect what and how children learn.” (p.12)

Based on the statement above, it can be argued that, Early Childhood Education is seen as the kind of education which is geared towards total development of young children regardless of their location and socio economic background. However, the above can be achieved if professionals who handle these children use varied teaching strategies with emphasis on play to impart knowledge to the child.

The UNESCO (2007) indicates that the majority of children in early childhood education are between the ages of three and six years. In Ghana, pre-school education refers to the type of education given to children from ages Zero (0) to five (5) years,

after which they enroll in the formal primary school (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002).

Canada and Bland (2014) said that parents' choice of early childhood education facility for their ward is based on their views of the quality of teaching staff as well as the level of interaction between teachers and children. Canada and Bland (2014) identified six essential indicators of high-quality Early Childhood Educations visible for parents: quality of teachers, retention of teachers within the program or school, multicultural setting, enriched curricula, support for parental engagement and involvement, and safety and security within the ECE facility.

Bauchmuller, Certz, and Rasmussen (2014) outlined another set of indicators of structural quality: staff-child ratio, number of male and female staff members, number of trained staff, proportion of ethnic minority staff members, and level of retention of staff. The strength of these five quality indicators is in their potential for being objectively measurable and comparable across ECCE programs. The current economic downturn has necessitated the demand for couples to work to fulfill the financial obligations of family. Consequently, working mothers are compelled to resume work while their children are still very young. Under such circumstances, the child needs care, and ECCE programs are essential for filling this void. Choosing an ECCE program is a critical task confronting working families with young children (Ahin & Shin, 2013). However, factors that influence the parental decision-making process in selecting ECCE programs are diverse. Limited information about the factors that influence the parental decision-making process for ECCE choices creates a vacuum in the knowledge required by the policy makers for the development of an all-embracing set of childcare policies. Such knowledge is needed to promote policies

that can lead to positive outcomes for families and children through supporting parental choice of programs.

More recent Government policies have been focused on providing childcare to enable parents to work (Good Start Early Learning, 2015). This has resulted in the development of different types of provision, giving parents more options and supporting the notion of personal choice. This consumerist approach to childcare services places a responsibility on parents, as the primary decision makers, to select provision that meets their requirements on what is best for their child, including monitoring and potentially improving the quality of care provided. However, there is only limited information on what influences parental choice of early education and care; especially when levels of satisfaction and understanding of what constitutes high quality care and education are considered. This important area, arguably relevant both to policy and sector developments, remains largely under explored by research or literature. The study considers factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood education facility for their wards using Atomic Hills '1' Basic Schools as a survey.

In Ghana, it is projected that amid 2006 and 2009, the private schools propagated at a rate of 32%, far out-pacing public-school expansion, projected at 20% (IFC, 2015). In 2015, there were estimated 57,543 elementary schools in Ghana and 28,460 of these were private entity, representing 43% of all elementary schools. Private school admission accounts for 21% of the total basic school enrollment (Ministry of Education, 2011a). Recent statistics from Kwabenya district Education Directorate advocates that the number of private basic schools which includes Atomic Hills School has been growing rapidly in an era of fee-free education. Statistics from

Education Directorate (Ghana Education Service) for 2018/2019 academic year indicates that 44% (178 out of 409) of Basic Schools (KG, primary and J.H.S) are privately owned. Therefore, this project work explores the factors influencing demand and supply of private schooling, focusing on Atomic Hills School..

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs in most Sub-Saharan African countries are characterized by a dearth of professionals and poor physical structures (Ighalo, 2015; Oluwafemi et al., 2014). Obiweluzor (2015) and Sooter (2013) cited inadequate resources and lack of conformity with minimum standards as issues common to Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. The primary purpose of traditional pre-schools and nursery schools is to provide early education experiences to 3- and 4-year-olds. These programs are often part-day and part-week, although with increasing numbers of parents working. They are serving children for longer hours and providing wrap around (full-day) care (Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004). Early childhood education has been categorized at various levels usually using parameters such as the age and developmental growth of the child. In Ghana, Pre-school education falls under various levels namely, crèche which is for children aged 0 to 2 years, Day Care (2 to 3 years), Nursery for 3 to 4 years and Kindergarten for children aged between 4 and 5 years (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002).

Early childhood education takes many forms globally depending on the beliefs of the educator or parent. The challenges of early childhood education arose when developmental psychologists and individual experts in the field of early childhood interestingly felt the need to emphasize the uniqueness of zero to eight year old

children and the urgent need to provide them with learning experiences that were appropriate to their level of development (NAEYC, 2009).

There is growing interest by parents in educational experiences provided for wards in early childhood settings. The researcher has observed that, in the Atomic Hills '1' Basic Schools, some parents continue to enroll their children in early childhood education facilities with deficient infrastructure, un conducive school environment, large class size. The questions that begs for answers are what are the factors that influence parents' ECE decision making processes? There are significant cultural variations in the perceived purpose of early childhood education across both low- and middle-income countries, such as Cambodia, Colombia, India, and Germany (Gertler et al., 2014). Gertler et al. (2014) found that while Cambodian parents emphasize interaction with strangers through social pleasantries and other speech conventions, parents in Colombia advocate play, exploration, and arts as basic activities in ECCE.

Yoshikawa (2017) found that urban Indian and German parents emphasize self-maximization together with individual achievement. Rural Indians and the Cameroonian parents consider connectedness, social cohesion, and pro-social behaviors essential components of ECE (Yoshikawa, 2017). However, how these factors and structural factors such as class size and teacher qualifications are weighted and prioritized by parents in the decision-making process is unknown, even though several authors have suggested research is needed to investigate parents' decision-making process for ECE choices (Canada & Bland, 2014; Joshi, 2014; Navarro-Cruz, 2016). Since parents are the key stakeholders in ECE placement decisions, greater understanding of their decision-making processes is necessary in designing programs

to promote more equitable access for children to high quality ECE services (Forry, Simkin, Wheeler, & Bock, 2014; Navarro-Cruz, 2016; Vesley, 2013).

The study provides the basis for more in-depth research to investigate factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood education facility for their ward at Atomic Hills'1' Basic Schools to answer the research question posed in this study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities for their wards at Atomic Hills '1' Basic Schools.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Assess personal/ideological factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities in Atomic Hills Basic School
2. Examine economic factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities.
3. Evaluate the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities.

1.5 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What personal/ideological factors influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities in Atomic Hills Basic School?
2. What economic factors influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities?
3. What is the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study explored factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood education facility for their ward at Atomic Hills '1' Basic School. This study would help gain an understanding of the contribution that parents can make to improve the quality of early education and care within the social context of the provision they choose to use.

This study is significant because it focused on decision-making processes for choices that set the tone of a child's entire life. In addition, this study may bridge the gap in the literature regarding parental decision-making processes of ECCE choices. Third, factors influencing parents' decision-making processes for ECCE hitherto were under explored, and so ECCE policies have overlooked parental perspectives as a factor in early education choice; this gap in information is resolved by this study. This study revealed this context and provided information about systemic problems associated with the selection of quality ECCE programs and the nature of family priorities and considerations in making ECCE placement decisions. The study also provided an understanding of the decision processes of ECCE choices by parents to the education

stakeholders, which might initiate greater regulatory attention or reform of low quality programs. It is hoped that the study will contribute to social change by generating information that is essential to ECCE policy makers in the country for designing equitable quality programs that will be relevant in providing the foundation for future learning, responsive in supporting parents' participation in the labor force, and realistic in creating a fairer and more equitable society.

1.7 Delimitations

The researcher focused particularly on kindergartens in the Atomic Hills '1' Basic Schools. The researcher primarily focused on the parents regarding factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood education facility. Since parents are the key stakeholders in ECE placement decisions, greater understanding of their decision-making processes is necessary in designing programs to promote more equitable access for children to high quality ECE services

1.8 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following operational definitions have been used in the study:

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): It describes the inseparable nature of care and education in the provision of programs for young children.

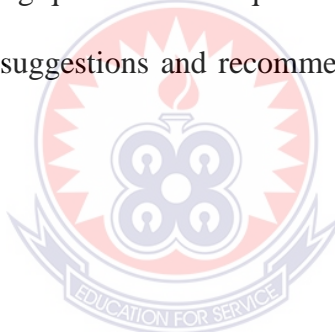
Kindergarten: Kindergarten is used to represent a segment of early childhood education catering for children between four and six years old (4-6yrs).

Early Childhood Education: For this study, Early Childhood Education refers to the total development of the child in pre-school between birth and 8 years of life.

Parental Decision: It involves decisions by parents on the choice of early childhood education facility for their wards.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was developed and put into five major chapters with specific subheadings. The first chapter dwells on the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is devoted to review of related literature. This was done using strands derived from the main research questions. Chapter three looks at the methodology. This included the research design, population sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, pre-testing of instruments, reliability and validity of the instruments, procedure for data collection and procedure for analyzing of data were outlined. The fourth chapter takes a critical look at the analysis and discussion of data using qualitative and quantitative techniques while a summary of findings, conclusions, suggestions and recommendations are provided in the fifth chapter.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the review of related literature concerning the problem under investigation. It is reviewed under the following strands:

1. Theoretical Underpinnings
2. Preschool's Effectiveness and the Importance of Quality
3. How Parents Choose Preschools
4. Parent Involvement in Children Education
5. Personal Ideological factors
6. Parents' Choice on Preschool
7. Parents socio-economic status
8. Strategies for Promoting Parents Involvement in Children's Education

2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings

2.1.1 Rational Choice Theory (RCT)

Rational Choice Theory was developed by Scott in 1945 to explain an individual's decision making and actions. Rational Choice Theory assumes that individuals will choose actions rationally, based on prioritizing preferences and values to maximize benefits or rewards, and minimize costs or risks (Coleman & Fararo, 1992). In educational perspectives, the RCT governs the basic understanding of school choice. The theory follows the belief that all parents make decisions based on preferences that are constricted by real world circumstances. The Rational Choice Theory can be explained as the process of determining what options are available and then choosing the most preferred one according to some consistent criterion. The theory starts with the idea that individuals have preferences and choose according to those criteria. This

theory is relevant to this study because it is used in education literature to understand school selection patterns (Wilson, 2016).

The Rational Choice Theory assumes that parents and students are consumers in education market (Kelly, 2007). Therefore, when there are many schools, parents will desire and then select the highest academic alternative for their children. As this study sought to understand criteria parents use to choose a particular pre-primary school, the RCT governs this study by making preferences and then ends up with the choice of the best preference. Research findings indicate that high quality pre-primary schools' education can make children to be academically well in years ahead. So, most parents choose pre- schools for their children by considering several criteria (Bosetti, 2007).

A study done by Cowen Institute (2011) in America indicated that parents take their children to a pre-primary school after considering criteria like good teachers, strong curriculum, and school safety. Overall, socio-economic status of parents has been discussed as one of the important criteria of choosing pre-primary school for children in developing countries. McEvoy (2003) conducted a study about criteria parents use to choose schools for their children in Ireland. Findings indicated that parental choice of school is closely related to the amount of social, cultural and economic capital parents possess. In Australia, the main factors affecting school choice are proximity of school, academic and religious reasons (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006).

A study done by Bosetti (2007) using Rational Choice Theory to understand how parents selected schools for their children found that many parents desired small class size when selecting non-religious private schools. Parents also ranked shared values when selecting religious schools. They also consider proximity from their home when selecting public schools. Quality academic was also selected when choosing

alternative schools. Chang'ach (2012) found that in Kenya, parents consider availability of competent teachers, type of curriculum, discipline, learning/teaching facilities being the major determinants of school choice.

2.1.2 School choice theory

School choice studies have looked at both decision-making processes and their effects on the quality of the program chosen, showing the influence of factors such as parent education, family income, access to information, and social networks. There is a definite schism between what parents say and what parents do in school choice situations. While most parents cite educational quality as their highest priority, they often end up choosing lower quality schools based on their use of information that provides little evidence of quality. Due to a lack of information on academic quality or a lack of effort to find it, parents often choose based on factors such as racial composition and location of the schools, using these as proxy indicators for quality (Betts & Loveless, 2005). The reliance on these indicators is likely due to the typical information-gathering process of parents in school choice situations.

Ascher, Fruchter, and Berne (1996) allege that “few parents of any social class appear willing to acquire the information necessary to make active and informed educational choices” (Goldring & Rowley, 2006 p. 14). Parents rely on anecdotal or superficial information because it is easier than gathering large amounts of data (Fuller & Elmore, 1996). But the quality of the anecdotal information varies with the type of social network to which the parents have access. Maddaus (1990) writes that “families in low-income neighborhoods tend to be more isolated and have fewer sources of information on child rearing than do families in more affluent neighborhoods” (p. 285). Schneider (1998) even titled these social alliances “networks to nowhere”

because social networks' conversations about education are so segregated by race and class. Parents with higher levels of education (and presumably income) are likely to have large networks of other parents and community members with reliable information about schools, often including "experts" such as school board members or teachers (Schneider, 2000).

Meanwhile, parents with less education find their social networks less useful than their well-educated peers, because they are likely to be small and lacking in expert knowledge. Lareau (2002) found that upper income parents were more likely to have broader, weaker connections that usually include teachers, while lower-income parents have strong connections with a smaller circle of family and friends, less likely to include teachers. This leaves low-income parents to rely on formal sources of information, such as resources from each school and media portrayals of the schools. Obtaining information from the school often requires a great deal of effort in overcoming barriers such as social distance and logistical constraints visiting a school would mean being available during the workday and feeling comfortable around teachers and principals. Additionally, the media conveys very little useful information about individual school performance (Schneider, 2000).

The most available information focuses on surface characteristics such as cost, location, and hours, as opposed to quality measures available on preschools such as test scores. Preschool quality standards, as discussed above, focus on teacher-child ratios and teacher certifications. Only five states have regulations that meet all of NIEER's minimum quality benchmarks described above, which means that parents in other 14 states must research each program's characteristics on their own (Barnett, 2012).

There is a growing number of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) across the states, such as Virginia's Star Quality Initiative, which is a method of identifying quality programs. However, almost all of these are voluntary and include much less than half of all programs. Programs may opt in to be evaluated and assisted in improving quality characteristics (QRIS State Profiles, 2012). Until QRIS becomes more prevalent, parents have no clear source of information on preschool quality. Moreover, accessibility is a key issue. Preschool programs vary in cost and location, and without the vouchers and buses usually supplied in choice programs, I expect that income will constrain parental decisions.

Without banks of formal information in the form of school test scores or media coverage, and without the transportation and resource support common in K-12 choice programs, preschool decisions are likely even more influenced by social networks. The research cited above on childcare decisions verifies this, showing friends and family as the top source for most parents (Forry, 2013). The main substantive sources of information are those with experience with preschool programs – other parents. Additionally, because of the lack of common access, those networks may be distinct from each other in terms of the preschools about which they have any knowledge. Less expensive preschools, or those that take childcare subsidies, may be most discussed in low-income networks, while more expensive programs are most discussed in upper income networks.

2.2 Preschool's Effectiveness

By the time students reach basic one in Ghana, children of low socioeconomic status are, on average, four years behind their wealthier peers in reading and math. The gap does not originate in high school. It is already visible and significant as children begin

kindergarten (Barnett & Brown, 2004). Early intervention through quality preschool has been shown to be effective in closing this early education gap and setting low-income kids on a level playing field with their wealthier peers, allowing for their success throughout the educational process.

Preschool attendees have higher test scores, graduation rates, college attendance rates, and job retention rates, as well as lower incarceration rates and higher lifetime earnings (Barnett & Belfield, 2006). These benefits spill over to society, creating an overall social return on investment rate of between 7 and 10 percent annually for each dollar invested (Heckman, 2010).

A great deal of psychological research has shown that the years before school are formative for the brains of young children, setting up the directions of their educational paths (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). It follows logically that preschool would be an optimal time to positively influence future students – a theory that has been largely supported by research on preschool’s effectiveness. There are hundreds of studies on this topic, many of which focus on the weakly positive but varying effects of Head Start, which is federally funded but locally administered, creating diverse levels of quality across the country (Zigler & Valentine, 1979).

State or local public preschool programs are more likely to have consistent quality, so their effects are more emblematic of what preschool can do (Barnett & Belfield, 2006). High-quality preschool has short-term and long-term effects. The most important analysis of the short-term effects of a public program is a study of the Oklahoma universal preschool program (Barnett & Belfield, 2006).

Gormley and Phillips (2005) found an average of a 16 percent increase in scores on the Early Childhood Skill Inventory after completion of the preschool program,

primarily for students of low-income backgrounds. While several studies show that academic gains may fade (Puma, 2010), long-term studies have found persistent positive results for at-risk children in areas of social and emotional health. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Chicago Child-Parent Center, and the Abecedarian program have each followed high-quality preschool participants for many years and found lower teen parenting, drug use, and criminal activity rates, as well as net earnings gains of over \$30,000 (Barnett & Belfield, 2006).

Quality is key for steady gains for a program's attendants. As a result, much research has focused on which characteristics preschool programs should possess. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) continually synthesizes the most recent research and collects data on state preschool programs in its well-respected, annual "State Preschool Yearbook." This report sets out minimum guidelines for quality "consistent with what research has found to be effective" (Barnett, 2012 p. 11) and evaluates each state on its preschool regulations as well as its public program offerings.

Based on current research, NIEER emphasizes teacher qualifications in four of its ten standards: requiring teachers to have a bachelor's degree; requiring teachers to have a specialization in preschool education; requiring assistant teachers to have a Child Development Associate or equivalent credential; and requiring teachers to complete at least 15 hours of annual professional development. The other standards address teacher-student ratios, minimally capped at 1-to-10; developmentally appropriate curricular standards; and availability of comprehensive health services (Barnett, 2012).

2.3 Factors influencing Parents Decisions on Choice of Preschool

The practice of choosing school for children is one of the important ways parents use to be involved in children's education. A high quality of pre-primary school education can lead children to be successful in academics for years to come (Burchinal et al., 2010). Parents and guardians send their children to Pre-primary schools due to different reasons. Some send children to a certain school because of social, physical and psychological issues. Some parents send their children to preprimary believing that they build good foundation for the child's academic future (Adzima, 2014).

Jonsson and Erikson (2000) demonstrated that resourceful families can send their children to expensive private school and transmit relevant knowledge and skills to their children. Also, the probability of having ever attended a preschool depends significantly on household income. Children of families with a lower household income were found attending early education programmes for a shorter period of time than children from high-income families (Spiess et al. 2008; Schober & Spiess, 2013). Other than this, several factors related to parents' employment such as type of work and its duration, whether single or both the parents work may also affect the preschool decisions (Vesely, 2013; Jonsson & Erikson, 2000; Spiess et al., 2008; Schober & Spiess, 2013).

Again, parent's education may have a significant role in their preschool decision-making; and studies have already confirmed that parental education is a good indicator of cultural and educational resources in the family. Well-educated parents may possess better strategic knowledge about different educational options available in the market and also help children with the learning of cognitive and other skills that improve their performance and probability of success. Parents with higher education

make sure that their children are exposed to numerous educational opportunities in their communities. There are several plausible ways by which more educated parents reinforce the academic ability of their offspring such as choosing the right option for children and at the right time (Jonsson & Erikson, 2000).

Moreover, the differential preschool decision can also be attributed to the availability of such services and the quality of it. A recent study from India shows that the distance of the preschool from the residence of children was negatively associated with their preschool attendance and higher the distance lower the probability of attending preschool (Ghosh, 2019b). The quality of services provided in the schools may also affect their decision as low-quality services such as lower number of teachers, limited availability of teaching materials, etc., may make a preschool provision less attractive (Jacoby, 1994). The provision of lunch at a day care facility can also be very important for parents to choose a preschool (Spiess et al., 2008). Parents often assess the quality of preschools in terms of health, safety, and caregiver characteristics (Van Horn et al., 2001).

Research findings indicate that high quality pre-primary schools' education can make children to be academically well in years ahead. So, most parents choose pre-schools for their children by considering several criteria (Bosetti, 2007). A study done by Cowen Institute (2011) in America indicated that parents take their children to a pre-primary school after considering criteria like good teachers, strong curriculum, and school safety. Overall socio-economic status of parents has been discussed as one of the important criteria of choosing pre-primary school for children in developing countries.

McEvoy (2003) conducted a study about criteria parents use to choose schools for their children in Ireland. Findings indicated that parental choice of school is closely related to the amount of social, cultural and economic capital parents possess. In Australia, the main factors affecting school choice are proximity of school, academic and religious reasons (Goh & Dolnicar, 2006). A study done by Bosetti (2007) using Rational Choice Theory to understand how parents selected schools for their children found that many parents desired small class size when selecting non-religious private schools. Parents also ranked shared values when selecting religious schools. They also consider proximity from their home when selecting public schools. Quality academic was also selected when choosing alternative schools.

Chang'ach (2012) found that in Kenya, parents consider availability of competent teachers, type of curriculum, discipline, learning/teaching facilities being the major determinants of school choice. Other factors include;

2.6.1 Private and branded preschools

Private and branded pre-school like Smart Readers and Montessori's treat education as business and as a good quality product, it always comes with a price. Consumers perceive that, higher price indicate better quality. Parents who send their children to branded pre-school sometimes want to maintain their social class and that reflect the values of child's family (Halstead, 1994), as parents want their children to be in the group of children who are of equal status and regularly socialize with them (McDaniel, 2006). Aside from well-organized programs, branded pre-schools maintain quality teachers and good facilities.

They also invest on advertisements to be noticed by prospective parents as their customers. The ability of the school to meet the child's individual needs and higher

standard of education is the reason most frequently given by parents for choosing private pre-schools rather than government funded pre-schools (Halstead, 1994).

Other factors why parents choose branded pre-school are because of: a) Branding creates memory. The impact of a good branding strategy on consumer memory can be long lasting and almost permanent. Branded pre-school names like Montessori and Smarts Reader have stuck on the memory of their customers, especially Malaysian parents, so much so that sometimes pre-school are simply referred to as Montessori and Smarts Reader. b) Brand image contributes towards customer loyalty and therefore helps customer retention. Brand image perceptions directly affect customer loyalty, which leads to customer retention (Allen & Rao, 2000). Parents sometimes send their children to same pre-school as their elder children used to attend, because of satisfaction, image and the brand itself.

2.6.2 Educational philosophy

Some pre-schools operate based on specific educational goals and criteria that are determined by a specific approach to early childhood education. This is reflected in the curriculum practiced by the pre-school. Other schools do not have a specific approach but have their own personal "philosophy" (Hoell, 2006). Two examples of educational approaches are the Montessori and Waldorf schools' models. The Montessori's theory of child development involves building the pre-school into a "children's house." The most important belief was that "play" is a child's "work." In a Montessori school, children do not "play," they "work." They do not use "toys", they use "materials." Children are given the freedom to explore their environment independently and choose their daily activities. In contrast, the Waldorf schools base their approach on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. The emphasis is on

daily activities that relate to the "whole child." All teaching is directly connected to life experiences. Waldorf schools place an emphasis on the use of art and nature in the classroom and discourage exposing pre-school children to television and computers (McDaniel, 2006).

2.6.3 Curriculum

If the school does not have a specific approach, parent should ask the director about the school's philosophy of education. The following aspects of a pre-school's curriculum should be considered:

a. Emphasis on academic skills

Some pre-schools emphasize academic skills more than others. Is the learning of letters, numbers, and concepts taught according to a child's interest and readiness, or are these skills methodically taught as a necessary part of the curriculum?

b. Parent involvement

Some pre-schools require a certain amount of parent involvement, while other schools prefer that parents' "sit on the sidelines" unless needed. Parents, who know the effect and the important of their involvement in their children's educational experiences, will choose a school that welcome parents' involvement (Prior & Gerard, 2007). The established pre-school would make extra effort to reach out to parents and developing partnerships with them. If parents do not have time in their schedule to participate in classroom activities and trips, they will make sure this kind of participation will not be required.

c. Program integration

Pre-school education program should be well aligned with the kindergarten program or primary school program that children will eventually attend, so that the transition to

school is successful for children, parent and teacher (Krupicka, 2005). The question that must be considered when evaluating any educational philosophy is not which philosophy is correct. All approaches have valid points. A parent must ask himself or herself which approach will work best for their child. Some children flourish in a school that allows them independence to choose their daily activities. Other children will simply be bored and get lost in the exact same setting.

d. Religious Values

With the emergence of Christian civilization, majority Christians parents would like to have the foundation of Christian knowledge for their children. Therefore, they would prefer to send their children to missionary pre-school. For Muslim parents who are looking for good moral and religious values in their children, they will look for pre-schools that are associated with the Islamic religion. Currently, there are many Islamic Child Care and Tahfiz al-Qur'an centers, which later will cater or integrate with the Islamic private school, Government Islamic School and Islamic Studies at the University. Waddy (1982) felt that teaching children religion is reckoned as one of the most important aspects of family life and is primarily the responsibility of parents. According to Waddy (1982), teaching to children is most effective in story form: tales of brave and generous men and women who did great things for their fellow men, or about rich and poor people who are unequal in possessions and yet are equal before God.

e. Quality

At quality pre-schools, there is a proper development of physical, mind, creativity and moral values of children. High quality pre-school programs require well-trained teachers with a certificate, diploma or a bachelor's degree in early childhood

education. Teacher quality is a powerful and consistent predictor of student achievement. Modern infrastructure and facilities inside and outside the building, good relation between teacher and children, and between teacher and parents create an atmosphere for quality pre-school (Mishra, 2012).

f. Qualified teachers

Parents also take into consideration how qualified teachers are by asking school heads for information on the level of their teachers' training. How many certified teachers or teachers with bachelor degrees and training in early childhood education are there per child? At least half of the staff in any pre-school must be qualified. Parents can also ask about the experience of the teacher assistants. Often, uncertified yet experienced assistants can be marvelous teachers.

g. Quality of teaching

When parents visit a school, they should observe how the teachers interact with the children. Do they approach the children with warmth and care and appear happy while doing their job? Do the teachers sit next to the children and work together with them, or do they supervise the children from a far? Once again, parents must consider their children's needs. Some children respond best to teachers that exhibit a lot of physical warmth, for example kissing and hugging. It is important that teaching and support staff are friendly to young children and treated them like family members.

g. Facilities and infrastructure

Parents will want to consider the physical environment of the school. Are the rooms spacious, airy, clean, well-lit and above all, safe? Parents may want to make sure there are sufficient space for the children and teachers to move around. Are there, a wide variety of materials available for the children to use during the school day? They will

observe how the room is organized, such as specific areas for different forms of play, sometimes referred as activity centers. These areas usually include arts and crafts, dress-up, block play, a reading corner, and activities for children to work on individually or in small groups. Are there grass areas and enough space for the outdoor play area and sufficient space for children to run around? Is there a variety of outdoor play equipment and is the equipment in good condition and set up safely?

h. Hygiene and cleanliness

Another important question and factor that parents look forward, are equipment and building areas cleanliness and hygiene? Hygiene and cleanliness are especially important to ensure children's health and safety. Dirty rooms and compounds can course skin diseases and cases of infected by worms to children. With frequent cases of food poisoning such as cholera at schools because of unhygienic food preparations, dirty eating areas and utensils. Parents would check the cleanliness of pre-school before register their children (Sobayi, 2017).

i. Availability of transportation

Many pre-schools provide transport service to their customers. This is one feature of the pre-school that would be important to working parents and for many parents living in rural or semi-rural areas, as there is in reality, no practical alternative to sending their child to the local pre-school which is very far from their house or village. Sometimes parents settle with pre-school that provide transport to their children because they do not have the time, the mean and most of all, it is safer.

j. Safety and security

Safety and security features of pre-school are becoming important features and factors for parents in deciding the pre-school for their child. Parents are looking for pre-

school which provides a safe and congenial environment for the well-being of their child. Safety features such as how many CCTV inside and outside the building, how many security guards employed and how many are on duty each shifts, are the compound of pre-school fully fence-up.

k. Class size

Small class size is becoming more vital to quality educational program as children prefer more space to move and rest. Most pre-school will provide places between 12 to 24 children and there should be no more than 26 children in one room. Another factor to look at is low teacher-pupil ratio, there should be a limit on the number of students per class and the number of students per teacher. Parents should observe how many adults are in the classroom, in relation to the number of children. There should be one member of staff for every eight children aged 3 to 6 years old.

l. Nutrition

There is a relation between food with the development of child growth and their brains. Studies show that nutrition is one of the factors for bringing up smart kids. Proportionate and rich protein food helps the development of the child's body and internal organs. A healthy body produces a good brain and a balanced mind. Parents will want to inspect the menu or what type of food is served every day in a pre-school and how many times per day, before they decide which school to send their children.

m. Location

Location is a very important factor in parents' choice of pre-schools. Young children should not spend long periods of time in transit. There must be a specific reason for children to travel a significant amount of time to go to pre-school. While driving forty minutes to get to the "best" school, may seem reasonable in theory, in reality, parents

are always hurrying to work, or when another child is sick in the car, most parent may not find it practical. Parents will limit themselves to schools closest to their homes or working place. Some organizations take social responsibility by providing pre-schools in the same building of their working area or department.

n. Hours of operation

Parents may want to check the hours of each program or whether the school has an after-school program. If they need coverage until three o'clock in the afternoon, they will eliminate programs that end at one. Parent should also check what are their options in each location. For parents who are both working, say, working in a bank, they will look for a full-time pre-school or pre-school teachers who are sometimes willing to take care of their children until late evening when they have to work overtime.

o. Costs and affordability

The population of parents at large in Ghana, will send their children to the pre-school at the government primary school or pre-school that is available at the office building or provided by their employer. Middle class parents will look for affordable pre-school nearby their house or office. But some rich parents will purposely send their children to expensive or branded pre-schools because they can afford and see the association or belief of what money can give, the qualities and benefits these branded institutions can give. Parents' socio-demographic background parents socio-economic background is an important factor that determines parents' choice of pre-schools for their children. Rising cost of education and services may force parents to settle for an affordable pre-school rather than one that they would prefer (Cohn, 2013).

2.4 How Parents Choose Preschools

All parents need to make a big decision when their children reached three years old as now is the time to choose their child's first formal educational experience. Parent's decision processes consist of evaluating children's needs, gather or search for information and evaluates all the available alternatives (McDaniel, 2006). What happens to a child's early life has a profound impact on the child's later achievement in life.

Children, who enter school and are not yet ready to learn or not equipped to handle the learning process, will continue to have difficulties later at school if no intervention is taken. Most parents consider children are their most valuable assets. So, pre-school education is seen as parents' investment for their children's future and theirs too. All Parents would like to give the best of everything for their children, including pre-schools. However, there are various factors that may limit a parent's choice when deciding on a pre-school. Identifying these factors will enable parents to make optimal choice and fulfill their needs (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Best, 2007).

As customers of pre-school, what do parents look for when choosing pre-schools for their children? According to Wolfson (2000) there are six areas that parents should consider when choosing a pre-school for their children, which in no particular order of importance are location, hours of operation, educational philosophy, teachers' quality and styles, facilities, and instinct! Parents do not underestimate their instincts.

Parents have the right to make the best decision for their child. Besides parents' rights to make decisions for their children, parents should consider the rights of their children too. Some parents argue that children perception of pre-school should be

considered in choosing pre-school because children have the right to express their views to improve the situation in which parents place them (Ceglowski, 2007).

Parents make decisions in the context of a confusing marketplace of childcare options. In “The Hell of American Day Care,” a sobering piece for the *New Republic* about the lack of childcare regulations in America and the resulting safety issues, Jonathan Cohn writes that “there are no regular surveys of quality” and that based on the evidence we have, “the overall quality is wildly uneven and barely monitored” (Cohn, 2013). Parents have a hard time distinguishing between high and low-quality programs due to a lack of organized information. According to Mead (2013), an expert at Education Week, the system “is difficult for policymakers and the public to make sense of, extremely challenging for families and providers to navigate, far from transparent about its services or costs.

In an economics framework, Vandell and Wolfe (2000) classify the childcare system as having reached “market failure” because parents cannot make decisions based on quality due to lack of information and resources. Even once they experience a program, parents have difficulty correctly identifying its quality level (Grogan, 2011). Without the guidance and information that would be ideal, how do parents choose in the current state of affairs?

Weber (2011) provides a comprehensive overview of the theories behind parental choice of childcare. A diagram from her report, included below, best explains her extrapolation of the current research. It shows family values and beliefs interacting with community features, such as the supply of childcare programs, the information available about them, social networks, and available employment, to produce parental preferences. These preferences then interact with parents’ employments and the

opportunities and constraints perceived by the parent to determine the type of childcare and financial assistance used.

All of these outcomes then influence the next childcare decision. An issue brief published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services outlines the literature on parents' childcare decisions (Forry, 2013), corroborating my own review of the research available. Like my research, the studies the brief describes address parents' decision-making processes and priorities.

On the whole, and especially for those who are low-income, it appears that most parents begin their decision-making processes using information from family and friends, and then make the choice between about one to three options, usually within about two to four weeks (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 1999; Layzer, 2007; Forry, 2013). Parents probably resort to these informal sources of information because of the lack of formal information available, as many report struggling to search for options (Sandstrom, 2012).

Networks not only inform parents of their options but help them choose: Garavuso (2006 as cited in Forry 2013) documented the importance of social networks on parents' evaluations of programs. Studies have found that generally, parents say that they prioritize factors relating to program quality over logistical considerations, and the fixation on quality increases with parental education, income, and work flexibility (Hofferth, 1996; Kim & Fram, 2009) – low-income parents may tend to focus more on practical considerations such as hours, cost, and location.

In terms of ethnic differences, Forry (2013) write, “Associations between ethnicity and child care decision-making preferences are detected in some studies but not in others” (p. 27). For example, black children may be more likely to be taken care of by

relatives (Early & Burchinal, 2001) and Hispanic parents, especially, seem to place high importance on ethnic cultural practices and ensuring that their care arrangements be “racially safe,” prioritizing the matching of class- and ethnic-based beliefs about childcare (Forry, 2013).

Other literature has shown evidence that those who are focused on practicality (usually low-income parents) are more likely to put their children in home-based care (Kim & Fram, 2009; Grogan, 2011). Regardless of preferences, many parents are constrained by lack of time or resources (Sandstrom, 2012). For example, those working for strict employers with demanding schedules, such as flight attendants, need childcare that is reliable in hours, or they are forced to be absent from work or use their sick days strategically (Desrosiers & Emlen, 1997). Those on welfare may undergo even greater struggles when transitioning to being employed, facing obstacles in the confusing “patchwork” of multiple providers, subsidies, and job issues (Scott, 2005). A couple of recent dissertations come the closest to answering my research question.

Grogan (2011), at George State University, interviews and surveys parents of children participating in center-based care, examining the relationships between socioeconomic status and the factors parents consider when choosing childcare, without looking at the quality they receive. She finds that the factors on which parents rely cluster around quality or practicality considerations, and that family characteristics such as progressive or traditional beliefs about childrearing interact with the types of factors used. Grogan’s findings in terms of socioeconomic status mirror the rest of the literature: some indication that more education and higher incomes lead to more emphasis on quality considerations, but not an overwhelmingly

clear trend. At the University of Iowa, Cronin (2013) conducted interviews for a qualitative dissertation on parents' decision-making processes. He identifies themes in parents' desires and information gathering without tracing those themes using socioeconomic status or other identifying characteristics.

2.4.1 Public versus private school

Public school is cheaper than private schools, but its curriculum is strictly overseen by the government resulting in less variety compared to private schools. Nevertheless, the number of enrollment to private pre-elementary has been on a rapid rise across Asia. India is a key example of this, with "43% of children attending private preschool" (Ghosh, 2020). The rise is due to the increase in competition for enrollment into a prestigious elementary school. Indian parents believe private schools can offer a better education-oriented curriculum than public schools resulting in a higher chance of their children's success in enrollment of reputed school later on. Private schools have more lenient control from the government on their curriculum, activity, and facility. The result is a wild variety of selection to choose from in terms of private school. International curriculum, in particular, has become very popular among parents around the world, even more so in Asia.

International school curriculum differs significantly from the traditional curriculum and is known as an operation with a for-profit mindset. International school got its name because its primary teaching language is usually English while locating in a non-English speaking country. International targets wealthy populations since they usually have the highest rate for tuition (Bunnell, 2016). Ghosh (2020) disagrees since he believes parent will go beyond their financial capability to assure their children can obtain the best possible education, wealthy or not. The most significant difference to

traditional schools is the diversity of the cultural mix of children from all around the world. Diversity brings more knowledge and social environment to children; many believe introducing such diversify experience to young children proves to increase their adaptation capability in the future. Hayden (1995) belief that international education can change children knowledge and attitude due to various kind of relationship they can encounter. With such diversify intellectual, cultural, and educational experienced, children will be better prepared for life in the future. The world has become increasingly interdependent, requiring the children to understand the world better and not limited to only their own country.

International curriculum also gives children mutual understanding across nations due to their variety of subjects and content. There are many branded English private schools around the world with a chain like a curriculum, and their name becomes famous, which increases the competitive enrollment environment. The class size of private schools is relatively smaller than a traditional one resulting in a limited enrollment every year. The result is a rapid increase in competition to enroll their children in believing that they can get access to understand the secret behind a developed country's success (Hayden, 1995).

Some do not believe that learning a second language at such a young age is suitable for a child's development, so international preschool is not included in their option. Children can get confused between using two languages and worst if their native language is not as good as their second language. Many types of research have proven the belief to be false since children's brains are at their fastest development capability; learning another language at such a young age does not hinder their native language proficiency. Billak's (2013) research showed that when children are placed at a high-

quality school with the right learning environment, they do not face any difficulty learning. The right environment setting and personnel mindset is vital in children's success and give them the self-confidence they need to succeed in the future.

2.4.2 Parental perception on high quality

Parent perception of high-quality school differs significantly, and it is a result of their past and present experiences (Novarro, 2020). Their experience will be the most critical prediction in which school is chosen for their child. There are mainly ten characteristic parents searched for from the school; "relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of child progress, health, staff competencies, preparation and support, families, community relationships, physical environment" (Novarro, 2020). All research comes to a similar conclusion that the most important factor is safety, environment, curriculum, and staff competency.

Also, parents prefer to have as much knowledge as possible about their children's progress and activity. How to check the safety of a school is mostly done through media and the history of the school reputation. In comparison, the friendliness of staff comes from their experience with the school that makes them feel welcome and appreciated. The environment is more than just the school but the structure in which allow the parent to get the most frequent update on their children wellbeing and progress. Some believe that having real-time access to see their children as most important since it combines all three factors mention previously (Novarro, 2020).

Foot (2000) agreed that curriculum is also one of the most important aspects because the need to develop their child to their best ability and some focus on curiosity. Where do parents get information on school regarding school characteristics? All research concludes that they are mostly done through family and friends. Words of mouth are

the starting point then, they further their research online, but many do not have the time to have a school visit. Not being able to have a real school visit can result in misinformation of the school. The researched result showed that due to insufficient information online with complicated access, parents do not get accurate data regarding the school quality (Foot, 2000; Bassok, 2018). The government and school are encouraged to improve the data available to the public for better transparency so that the parent can choose the best match for their child.

2.5 Parent Involvement in Children Education

Parents of children' are the first and most influential teachers with opportunity and the responsibility to help them navigate their first learning experiences (Parent Engagement Committee, 2011). Parents' involvement is defined as the engagement of parents in home-based and school-based activities aimed at enhancing children's school performance (Halloway et al., 2008). Pate and Andrews (2006) also defined the parent involvement as having an awareness of the interaction between parenting skills and pupils' success in schooling and a commitment to consistent communication with the educators about pupils' progress.

There are two types of parental involvement, namely school-based involvement and home-based involvement. School-based involvement is classified into two types namely school communication which involves contact between parents and school personnel aimed at sharing information on child's progress, establishing good relationships between teachers and parents as well as discussing emergent problems. Also, the school communication involves volunteering for school activities, attending school functions and participation in school governance (Houtenville & Conway,

2008). However, students with parents who were involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioural problems and better academic performance (Alsumaiti, 2012).

Home-based involvement divided into two types, namely home discussion and home supervision (Hoell, 2006). Home discussion, according to Houtenville and Conway (2008) is a parental effort, including how frequently parents discuss activities or events of particular interest to the child or things the child studied in class related to students' achievement. Home supervision involves monitoring the children out of school activities, impacts immensely on student achievement (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003).

Parental involvement has an important role in children's school performance both constructs seem to be positively related. Also, it was noted that when children are surrounded by caring parents who are involved in their school activities and do their homework together, children are more likely to respond positively to extra-curricular activities and have higher performance (Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011). However, the parent involvement in children's education has positive impacts on the children's academic achievement as they prepare children for the benefit of formal literacy instruction through early reading experiences. Also, parental involvement in their child's reading has been found to be the most important determinant of language and emergent literacy (Clark, 2007).

Moreover, parents' involvement influences reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills of pre-primary education (Gest et al., 2004). Parental involvement has the greatest effect in the early years its importance to children's educational and literacy outcomes continues into the teenage and even

adult years (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). The pre-primary education in Newala District found in Mtwara region has a problem of primary school children drop out for instance 3,315 children were registered in standard one in 2010 but only 2,423 (73.1%) sat for PSLE in 2016 and the dropout was 26.9% (Mtwara-Reo, 2017).

Fagbeminiyi (2011) conducted a study aimed at providing solutions to role of parents in early childhood education in Nigeria. It will serve as an eye opener to parents and the society in helping to modify or re-adjust their mode of parental involvement towards achieving a better future for themselves and their children notwithstanding their busy schedules and in some cases, inadequacy of resources. A survey approach was used through self-administered questionnaires, and analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses.

Based on the findings of this work, parental involvement, that is emotional care and support has a very big influence on early childhood education, particularly the academic performance of the child. More so, it was observed that the extent of parental educational attainment has a significant influence on the age which the child is being sent to school. This implies that the extent or level of the parental educational attainment and exposure determines the age at which the child is being enrolled to school. It was also discovered that, the residential setting of the parents (respondents) has nothing to do with the educational performance of the child. On the whole, parental involvement is very essential in early childhood education and this helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships, and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Fagbeminiyi, 2011).

Mishra (2012) did a study that aims at providing solutions to the parental involvement in early childhood care education centres in Orissa. It will serve as an eye opener to

parents and the society in helping to modify or re-adjust their mode of parental involvement towards achieving a better future for themselves and their children notwithstanding their busy schedules and in some cases, inadequacy of resources. A survey approach was used through self-administered questionnaires, and analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses. Based on the findings of this work, parental involvement, that is emotional care and support has a very big influence on early childhood education, particularly the academic performance of the child.

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Sobayi (2017) examined the role of parents and pre-primary education in the development of early numeracy skills in Dar es Salaam, drawing on a sample of 80 respondents including 36 pre-primary children, 10 pre-primary teachers, six primary school head teachers and 28 parents of pre-primary school children. Data were collected through interviews, observation of indoor and outdoor learning activities and documentary review. The findings revealed that the majority of the parents (92.8%) did not guide children to learn through home activities related to numeracy for different reasons including being too busy. It was also established that learning

activities provided in most pre-primary education were inappropriate for the children, since the level of number activities stipulated in the syllabus were below children's level of number function and development.

Overcrowded classes and poorly arranged sitting plans made teachers fail to interact closely with individual children. Learning materials relevant to the basic pre-counting skills were also lacking in most pre-primary classes. Children were generally taught counting instead of how to count. The study recommend that parents should learn how to create supportive children's learning environment at home; participate actively in children's learning activities and providing relevant learning materials to their children. The pre-primary education teachers should attend proper training to improve teaching and learning methodology for pre-primary learning. The pre-primary education should reinforce the teacher-parent relationship through school-parent meetings, parents day class visit and close communication with parents.

2.5.1 Socio-economic status of parents and children education

The concept of socioeconomic status also highlighted as the conditions in the family that are concerned with or related to the interaction of social and economic factors (Soanes, 2006). Social factors are factors that relate to society or its organization relating to the rank and status in a society (Soanes, 2006). The socio-economic status has been measured in many ways, including educational and occupational attainment, exposure to poverty, income and exposure to adverse life events such as unemployment or mono-parental families (Furgusson, 2008). The socioeconomic status may vary greatly from country to country. Countries that tend to have large differences in the socio-economic status also have differences in school achievement (Teodor, 2012).

However, the socio-economic status influences the quality of education as well as the ability of education to improve life circumstances. Low socioeconomic status and its correlates such as lower education, poverty, and unemployment, ultimately affect a society as a whole (Gabriel, et al., 2016). Families and individual with low socioeconomic status suffer from high incidence when it comes to psychological characteristics being hostile and having low self-esteem (Blacksher, 2002). Socioeconomic status is a powerful predictor of many facets of a child's personality (Deckers et al., 2015). The students with a low socioeconomic status underestimate themselves because of the socioeconomic status inherited from the parents and the performance characteristics of the schools (Delaney et al., 2010).

According to the report presented by Mtwara-Reo in January 2017 in the education stakeholders meeting conducted in Mtwara highlighted the problems facing education sector in a particular region including the low quality of building in some pre-primary and primary schools, shortage of 2141 teachers' houses, 326 classrooms, and 1178 latrines. Also, Davis-Kean (2005) highlighted how the sociocultural factors affect the children education. Therefore, this study was determined the socio-economic status of parents and the influence on the children academic achievement, quality of school infrastructures and services offered to pre-primary children.

2.5.2 Parents level of education and involvement in children's education

Parents' education level is considered by various researchers as a major factor influencing their involvement in their children's education. Goni and Bello (2016) highlighted that parents' with high education level are most likely to engage in activities that would develop their intellectual potentials in their children and pave the way for the children to perform satisfactorily in school. Ghatti (2011), also insisted

that the highly educated parents are most likely to give their children the necessary high-quality reading materials and nutrition to enable them to perform well in the school. Also, the students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than whose parents are not educated.

Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work activities and the information taught at school (Azhar et al., 2013). However, the parent's education influence parents skill, values, and knowledge of the educational system, which in turn influence their educational practices at home and the skills children have to model, as well as the parent's ability to intervene in the education system on their children on behalf (Davis-Kean, 2005). Kainwa and Yusuf (2013) explained the existence of a difference between children of educated parents and students with parents completed only primary school or not. They further stated that fathers with a university degree, their children perform considerably well and get the highest scores in the examination.

Moreover, Azhar (2014) state that parents education qualification is linked with their language competence, which has significant influence in the manner in which parents communicate with their children. This explains the point that parental education possesses a key influence on children academic achievement. However, as the mother shares a closer bond with her children than the father some others education is more important.

Mutoddi (2014) insisted that educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their work and participate at school. Gratz (2006) asserts that because of the involvement with the children educated parents

strongly affects their children academic success and less educated parents has unmanaged stress in their lives.

However, the educated parents are more likely to encourage their children to do well in school, and have higher quality verbal interaction, provide a cognitive stimulating learning environment and literacy activities in the home and are more comfortable and involved with their children's education teachers and educational institutions (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents with a lower level of education may not feel comfortable with assisting their children or playing a role in their academic life as they may not understand the material or feel comfortable with their abilities (Hill, 2002).

In contrast, studies show that some parents with a lower level of education become involved because of a desire of their children to have upward mobility in the world and so their child achieves things they themselves could not (Hill, 2002). Also, the parents with limited or no education may have no help to their children but are constrained because they are convinced that they are incapacitated by their limited school education to help their children with their learning (Siririka, 2007).

For the purpose of this study the parents' education level is considered an important factor influencing children academic achievement as the educated parents are conversant with educational physical and psychological needs. This study considered physical needs as teaching-learning materials, meals, and school basic facilities and psychological need as communication skills, teaching styles, their expectation of their children and involvement in school activities.

2.6 Parents' Choice on Preschool

Preschool providers need to pay attention to parental choice and demand to meet parents' and children's expectations of a quality preschool to stay competitive within

the ECCE industry. Gorard (1997) found that in a competitive market, educational providers will attempt to improve their standards and service to meet consumers' criteria. Therefore, introducing parental choice plans to educational market is one of the ways to promote competition and increase accountability of schools to parents (Maddaus, 1990). Students' performance can also be improved (Maddaus, 1990).

Inadequate sources of information, difficulty in measuring educational quality and the infrequency of educational choices appear in the process of parental choice and need to be considered by policy analysts (Maddaus, 1990; Gamba, 2017). In Ghana, preschool education is not compulsory and the Ministry of Education (MOE) aims to increase preschool enrolment from 67 percent in 2016 to 87 percent by the year 2030. The provision of preschools in Ghana is diverse and parents can choose different teaching approaches or physical facilities according to their preferences, having the right to freedom to decide on choice of preschool for their children. With various choices in the process of decision making, parental preferences and expectations of preschool education may influence the kind of preschools they choose in the available market and may shape preschool provision and affect the preschool quality in Ghana.

2.6.1 Parents' preferences

Research by MORI (2004) found that parents rate good staff, warm and caring atmosphere, quality buildings and health and safety as priorities. Highest criteria ranked by parents is trust (Speight, 2009; Ghanney, 2018). Parents using childminders have cited trust as the principle determinant in choosing a childcare centre (Hadebe & Khumalo, 2018). Care and safety have emerged as the most important factors to parents' preference of preschool followed by educational progression and the quality of a preschool setting. Convenience such as travelling distance, cost and convenient

hours thus attention to parents' needs such as provision for under 3's or parental involvement were the least important amongst the criteria (Foot et al., 2000).

However, parents who place a high value on education and convenience as well as needs were found to likely have their children in a nursery than in other kind of provision, especially when both parents are working. Parents from the rural areas were found to value education as much as parents in the urban areas. Lower usage of preschool in the rural areas was found due to a paucity of preschool or nursery provision in rural areas (Foot, 2000; Hamza & Kommers, 2018).

2.6.2 Parents' satisfaction

Smith (2007) defined satisfaction as a measure to see how well a company's service or product meet or exceeds customers' expectation, an overall psychological evaluation that is based on customers' lifetime of product or service experience. Leonard (2002) refined 10 dimensions of satisfaction which includes: quality, value, timeliness, efficiency, ease of access, environment, inter-departmental teamwork, front line service behaviours, commitment to the customer and innovation. The gap between customers' expectation of performance and their perceived experience of performance measures customers' satisfaction of a service received or a product used.

Parents' evaluation concerning the perceived benefits of preschool provision which was evaluated primarily by parents' reactions on 7 key functions of staff in relation to parents showed that 'parents' views considered', 'face to face communication' and 'making special arrangements for parents in choosing a preschool' are the three most important factors that will contribute to parents' satisfaction (Hassan & Kommers 2018; Afthanorhan et al., 2019).

Parents' feeling of satisfaction revolved around their contact and communication with teachers and staff which is the central to parents' thinking. While parents' expectation and satisfaction related to their child's physical and emotional needs, indicated that parents' thoughts are focused upon their children's general wellbeing and adjustment to new classmates, new teachers and new environment preparing them for primary school, helping the children to settle into standard one. Social interaction and learning a routine or discipline is also featured by parents as the most important benefits of preschool education to prepare the child as transition into primary school (Foot et al., 2000).

Hsieh (2008) through her research has found that parents in Taiwan will be satisfied with the preschool provision if their children enjoy going and being in school, improved in socialisation and increased their independence where children begin to be able to express their emotions effectively, have improved powers of expression and demonstrate good sleeping and eating habits. Parents aim in sending their children to preschool is seen as being to improve their children's behaviour, becoming independent and obeying adults' order or obedience thus the preference is for a teacher with good discipline.

2.6.3 Parents and social network

Parents are also influenced by social networks in the decision-making process such as choice of preschool for their children when selecting the best childcare provision. There are two types of social networks to gain information about their children's childcare centre or preschool. Firstly, information can be gathered from people they know and trust either from their neighbourhood or other social groups which are identified as "Interpersonal networks". The second source of information are called

the “formal networks” where parents rely on publicly available information such as published results of test scores by school, school and district websites, public meetings, brochures and pamphlets etc. (Goldring & Rawley, 2006).

According to Foot et al. (2000), parents need social support to reinforce their beliefs which affect and influence their decision-making behaviour (Fatula, 2018). Thus, through his research, they found that family and friends and less markedly, professional resources such as health visitors and doctors are influential in guiding parents’ decision making on choice of preschool provision. Parental beliefs about preschool reputation, the advantages and disadvantages of any specific type of provision are guided by these sources most probably because of their uncertainty or unawareness about other sources of information (Sanchez, 2018).

2.7 Strategies for Promoting Parents Involvement in Children’s Education

The school should offer the programmes, events, and activities related to encouraging parent involvement. The various programmes can be established such as Programs to encourage English for speakers of other languages parents to become involved with their child's education. Also, the schools should plan sessions with parents to help them develop strategies for supporting their child's success inside and outside the classroom. However, the different school events should be offered at varying times during the day, evening and weekend hours in recognition of families diverse schedules (Virginia Common Wealth University, 2010).

2.7.1 School-parents communication

The schools have to communicate with parents frequently, using a variety of methods so as to develop and use a home to school or school-home communication system, using methods that work best for specific parents and teachers such as mail, email,

and communication notebooks. Also, to deliver weekly reports of progress and suggested home flow-up to parents of students receiving speech, physical or occupational therapy services. The schools have to conduct home visits by special educators and administration when necessary and encourage regular use of school and classroom newsletters, web pages, blogs and monthly calendar of events (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010).

According to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2007), the communication facilitates regular two-way and meaningful communication between home and school by providing professional development on effective communication skills including skills for effective verbal engagement, active listening, and empathetic responding. Communication also encourages a sense of care and concern for physical and emotional safety and the health and well-being of students, staff, and parents.



2.7.2 Warm school, respectful and welcoming environment

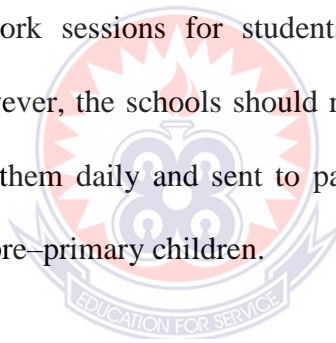
Schools have to create a warm, respectful and welcoming school environment that encourages parents to assist in classrooms and become involved with school teams. Also, offering the support for parents through the guidance department or school administration when necessary. Other strategies are supporting parents' involvement in policy decision making, such as dress codes and dress codes and grading, having special events with teachers, administrators, and counselors to offer parents the comfort and confidence to participate in activities at school (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010).

2.7.3 Advocacy and decision making

The parents or caregivers of pre-primary school should be included in decision making that affect children and their families and train staff and parents in leadership, problem-solving, conflict resolution and decision-making skills. Also, the schools should develop networks to link all families with school or district parent representatives and coordinators. However, the active parent organizations have to set goals for the outcomes of their programmes aligned to school goals.

2.7.4 Supporting parents to help their children at home

The schools should support parents in helping their children at home by offering a training session for parents on how to help their child with homework, coordinating remediation and homework sessions for students in neighbourhoods within the school's boundaries. However, the schools should recommend the parents encourage their children to read to them daily and sent to parents the information concerning learning process of their pre-primary children.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Upon the review of relevant literature, this chapter details out the methodology for conducting the study. It brings to bare the decisions regarding the choice of methods with justifications. Here more light is thrown on the research approach, research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative approach was employed for the study. This approach quantifies behaviours, opinions, attitudes and other variables and makes generalizations from a larger population using scientific inquiry which relies on data that are observed or measured to examine questions about the sample population. It tends to establish the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable (Barbie, 2010). Quantitative research designs aid researchers in generating numerical data or information that can be transformed into utilizable statistics (Wyse, 2011). Quantitative approaches also focus on the provision of description about the phenomenon under study among a larger population which aids in the summary of characteristics of a phenomenon across a group or relationships (Rhodes, 2014).

3.2 Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the research. This was deemed appropriate as the study sought to investigate factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities for their wards at Atomic Hills Basic Schools. Again, as discussed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007), the survey strategy is perceived as authoritative by people in general and is both comparatively easy to explain and to understand. Data obtained through the survey with a questionnaire (when it is used as data collection instrument) are standardized, allowing for easy comparison. It is also simple and flexible and it makes it possible to evaluate a programme or project that has been implemented. The researcher employed the correlational study design because the study sought to identify any relationship between a set of variables (dependent and independent) as well as determine the best predictor(s) of the dependent variable from independent variables of the study.

3.3 Population of the Study

Kusi (2012) defined population as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) see population as a group of elements or causes, whether individuals or objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalize the results of the research. The target population of 150 for the study was all of parents who have enrolled their wards in early childhood education facility at Atomic Hills Basic Schools.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

According to Ravitch and Riggan (2017), a sample comprises the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. A sample of one hundred and

fifty (150) parents were considered for the study using a criterion of parents who have enrolled their wards for at least one year. Based on a situational and contextual analysis (Goldkuhl, 2012), purposive sampling was done in a non-random manner, based on member characteristics and specific criteria relevant to the research problem (Rallis, & Rossman, 2014). Purposive sampling as pointed out by Mcmillan and Schumacher (2010) is a sample chosen on the basis of some characteristics possessed by the subjects and deemed important for the research based on the judgment of the researcher. Parents were selected because they serve the purpose of the study.

3.5 Instrumentation

Questionnaires were used in data collection. Questionnaires have many uses most notably to discover what the masses are thinking. These include market research, political polling, customer service feedback, evaluations, opinion polls, and social science research (O'Leary, 2014). Using the research questions as the basis, the researcher designed the questionnaire for the survey. The questionnaires were used to elicit information from the parents about factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood education facility for their ward at Atomic Hills Basic Schools. The questionnaire consisted of items related to the three research questions. Closed ended questions were used in the questionnaire to allow the study gather vital information. Again, Likert scale type questions were used. The choice of the instrument was because the nature of data needed for the study do not involve or require time series over several monitoring rounds of data. It involves collection of information from a sample that had been drawn from a predetermined population at one point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2013).

The questionnaire for the parents consisted of four (4) sections i.e. sections A, B, C and D covering various relevant areas such as Section A gathered information on demographic information, Section B focused on personal/ideological factors influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities at Atomic Hills Basic Schools. Section C focused on economic factors influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities at Atomic Hills Basic Schools. Lastly Section D collected data on the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities at Atomic Hills Basic Schools.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity is concerned with accuracy of measurement. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. The purpose of validity is to ascertain the degree the measure is accurate for specific purpose (Agyedu, Donkor, & Obeng, 2013). It is also a means of ascertaining the accuracy of the instruments by establishing whether the instruments focus on the information they are intended to collect. Kothari (2008) pointed out that validity measures the accuracy of the instruments in obtaining the anticipated data which can meet the objectives of the study.

3.6.1 Face validity

Face validity is a measure of how representative a research project is 'at face value,' and whether it appears to be a good project. Face Validity refers to the appearance of validity to test users, examiners, and especially and the examinees. Bryman (2012) opined that face validity might be established by asking other people whether the measure seems to be getting at the concept that is the focus of attention. In other words, people, possibly those with experience or expertise in a field, might be asked

to act as judges to determine whether on the face of it the measure seems to reflect the concept concerned (Bryman, 2012). In order to ascertain face validity, the researcher presented the instruments constructed to her colleague for constructive criticisms.

3.6.2 Content validity

Content validity is the extent that a research instrument covers the content that it is intended to measure. It also refers to whether an instrument provides adequate coverage of a topic. Expert opinions, literature searches, and pretesting of open-ended questions help to establish content validity (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Creswell (2014) stated, "It is the extent to which the questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions represent all possible questions that could be asked about the content or skill" (p. 21). The researcher prepared the instruments in close consultation with his supervisor ensured that the items in the questionnaire cover all the areas under investigation. De Vaus, (2013), pointed out that content validity of the research instruments is enhanced through expert judgment. The researcher's supervisor and lecturers, as experts, helped to assess the validity of the instruments.

3.6.3 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects (Agyedu, Donkor, & Obeng, 2013). The purpose of reliability is to assess the instrument's ability to measure the same way in each administration to the same sample. To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, a pre-test, was conducted, the researcher established the reliability of the instruments. The results obtained were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formulae. The more the

correlation coefficient was closer to 1.00 the more reliable the instrument was. A score of 0.84 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction from the University of Education, Winneba granted me the permission to first collect data for the study. The letter assisted to introduce myself, established rapport with the respondents and sought permission from all the respondents before the due date to administer the questionnaire. The researcher visited the selected preschools during their parents and teachers association meetings and with the assistance of the school heads, parents were informed about the purpose of the study. The researcher addressed all requests for clarification on the questionnaire. The respondents were comfortable in responding to the questionnaire because they were assured of strict confidentiality. Some of the parents who could read and write were given questionnaire to answer. Those who could not read and write were assisted by their ward's teacher. The questionnaires were collected soon after completion.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Upon the collection of data from the participants, data collected was reduced to numerical values. Quantitative analysis involved getting total scores for each participant in the study and presentation of statistical data in the form of tables using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data for the various research questions were analysed using means and standard deviation obtained to show the distribution of opinions and perceptions of respondents. The analysis of the data commenced with editing and inspection of the pieces of data in order to identify simple mistakes, items that were wrongly responded to and any blank space left unfilled by the respondents. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to process all the

responses from the questionnaire. Based on the data gathered from the field, results were analyzed and findings of the study were discussed and reported. This was done by making meaning of the findings through the comparison of the findings with the literature reviewed. This ended in the confirmation of existing literature as well as a divergence from such. The findings and results were presented and discussed in a report (see chapter 4).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

There is a need to engage in ethical practices in all the stages of the research process from the beginning of the study through to its final completion and even dissemination of findings. (Creswell, 2012) emphasized the data collection, reporting and distribution of reports as key areas in research that required a critical consideration of ethics. This study therefore addressed ethical issues at the data collection and reporting stages. The issues are discussed in the sections below.

3.9.1 Access

It is of great importance to show respect to the location where the research takes place (Creswell, 2012). In showing such respect, the researcher gained access by obtaining permission to the study area and individuals for data collection. The researcher negotiated with those persons who could facilitate access to the study area. Thus, the gatekeepers to the study area and individuals were consulted. Request for permission to enter the sample schools was sought from the appropriate authorities. Again, because of the new normal lifestyle due to the covid-19 pandemic, all Covid -19 protocols such as wearing of nose masks, social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing were duly observed before gaining access to the research participants.

3.9.2 Informed consent

On arrival, the researcher made a formal introduction to the authorities in order to have access to the participants. The researcher explained to participants their rights not to participate after understanding the purpose of the research. The consent of the participants was sought before engaging them. In doing this, the researcher informed the participants about the nature of their participation, how it will be conducted, the kind of data to collect from them and how this will be used. Upon knowing such information, the participants willingly agreed to participate in the study.

3.9.3 Privacy

After addressing the ethical issues of access and informed consent, participants were assured that the research will not intrude their privacy. The privacy of participants is the right they preserve. For this reason, the researcher ensured privacy by giving participants the opportunity to withhold information they deemed sensitive and personal. They were given the right to decide which personal information to be given under which circumstances that could be provided. Again, the researcher made sure that their dignity, status and self-esteem were not threatened through their participation by asking less sensitive questions.

3.9.4 Confidentiality

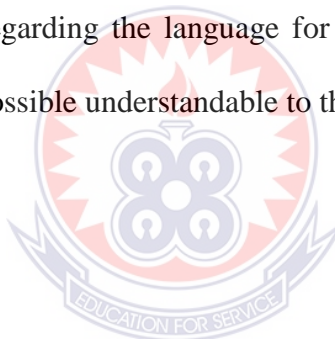
In ensuring confidentiality, information given by participants remained protected by not sharing it with any other user. Again, confidentiality was ensured by using the information provided by participants for the purpose for which it was collected. Also, the researcher did not involve any assistant, thereby guiding against the possibility of having participant`s information exposed to a third party.

3.9.5 Anonymity

Anonymity was also another ethical issue that was considered in conducting the study. Here, the researcher ensured that identities of participants were not identified from the information they provided. In doing so, the personality of respondents was detached from the findings by providing no form of trace to the specific sources of information. Again, the names of participants were not contained in the report.

3.9.6 Reporting

In terms of data reporting, respect was again showed to the audience that would read and use information from the research. In this wise, data gathered from participants was reported honestly without altering the findings to satisfy certain interest groups or preconceived notions. Regarding the language for reporting, the report was free of jargons and as much as possible understandable to those being studied.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the discussion of findings of the research questions, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the research participants. It is divided into two Sections; A and B. Section A presents the personal information of the respondents, Section B presents quantitative analysis of the research questions.

4.1 Respondents Personal Information

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	66	44
Female	84	56
Total	150	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be verified from the data in Table 4.1 that out of the 150 respondents, 66 of them are males representing 44% whilst 84 are females representing 56%. This suggests that the number of females in the study outnumber the males. As such, the findings generated by the study is likely to reflect more on females' perspectives as opposed to males.

Table 4.2: Marital status of respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	31	20.7
Married	82	54.7
Divorced	28	18.6
Widowed	9	6.0
Total	150	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022)

From the data in Table 4.2, it can be verified that out of the 150 respondents, 31 of them representing 20.7% are single, 82 of them representing 54.7% are married, whereas 28 of them illustrating 18.6% had divorced. Finally, the remaining 6 representing 6% are widowed. This suggests that majority of parents involved in the study are married. Two parents' homes can provide more support towards a child's needs than single parents' homes. Two parents can monitor one another's parenting, as well as relieve one another when they find that parenting is becoming difficult or tiresome. On average, two parents are able to devote more time, affection, and monitoring to their children than single-parents. Consequently, the overall quality of parenting tends to be higher in two-parent families, compared with single-parent families (Ham, 2004).

Table 4.3: Number of children/wards

Number of Children/Wards	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	14	9.33
2	30	20
3	24	16.0
4	50	33.3
5+	32	21.33
Total	150	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022)

From the data in Table 4.3, it can be verified that out of the 150 respondents, 14 of them representing 9.33% have only one child, 30 of them representing 20% have 2 children/wards, whereas 24 of them illustrating 16% have 3 children/wards. Again 50 of them representing 33.3% have 4 children/wards. Finally, 32 of them representing 21.33% have 5 or more children/wards.

Table 4.4: Relationship with ward

Relationship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guardian	28	18.67
Parent	122	81.33
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be verified from the data in Table 4.4 that out of the 150 respondents, 28 of them representing 18.67% of them are the wards guardian whilst 122 of them representing 81.33% of them are the wards biological parents. This suggests that the number of biological parents outnumber the guardian.

Table 4.5: Number of children in early childhood facility

Number of Children/Wards	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	108	72.0
2	23	15.33
3	19	12.67
4	-	-
5+	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

From the data in Table 4.5, it can be verified that out of the 150 respondents, 108 of them representing 72.0% have only one child in early childhood facility. 23 of them representing 15.33% have 2 children/wards in early childhood facility, whereas the remaining 19 of them illustrating 12.67% have 3 children/wards in early childhood facility. None of them have 4 or more children/ward in early childhood facility. This means that majority of the parents have only one child/ward attending a preschool.

For the purpose of this study the researcher considered large family size as a family with five or more siblings. Parents with low socio economic status who have from five to ten children may not have adequate resources to cater for educational and other needs of all the children. Studies have shown that parents who cannot provide the basic needs of their wards are found in the lower class. Children from these families lack love and affection which leads to negative cognitive development. This is because as explained by Seigal (2007) parental attention by parents declines as the number of siblings increases. According to Shema (1999) the size of the family also determines the academic performance in school. The family size from which students come has a negative correlation to the academic performance of the children, which implies that the more the children are in the family the less the performance of the students.

Table 4.6: Type of early childhood facility your wards/children attend

Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Private	62	41.33
Public	81	54
Mission Private	7	4.67
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be deduced from the data in Table 4.6 that out of the total number of 150 respondents, 62 of them representing 41.33% have their wards attending a private early childhood facility. 81 of them representing 54.0% have their wards attending a public early childhood facility while the remaining 7 of them representing 4.67% have their wards attending a mission private early childhood facility. The data suggest that majority of the parents' wards are attending a public early childhood facility.

Ghosh (2020) report that Indian parents believe private schools can offer a better education-oriented curriculum than public schools resulting in a higher chance of their children's success in enrollment of reputed school later on. Private schools have more lenient control from the government on their curriculum, activity, and facility. The result is a wild variety of selection to choose from in terms of private school. International curriculum, in particular, has become very popular among parents around the world, even more so in Asia.

In Ghana research shows that private schools perform better than public schools especially at the basic level. In view of this parents who can afford prefer to send their wards to private schools instead of public schools. Jonsson and Erikson (2000) demonstrated that resourceful families can send their children to expensive private school and transmit relevant knowledge and skills to their children.

Table 4.7: Age distribution of respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-25years	10	6.67
26-30 years	27	18.0
31-35 years	18	12.0
36-40 years	42	28.0
41-45 years	34	22.6
46-50 years	1	0.67
50 and above	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be deduced from the data in Table 4.7 that out of the total number of 150 respondents, 10 of them representing 6.67% are between the ages 20-25. Ages between 26–30, constituted 27 of them representing 18% of the population. In addition, ages between 31-35 were 18 in number representing 12%. 42 of them

representing 28% are between the ages 36-40, ages between 41–45 also constituted 34 of them representing 22.6% of the population. Again, ages between 46-50 were also 18 in number representing 12%. Only one respondent was 50 years and above.

Table 4.8: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public Servant	41	27.3
Civil Servant	3	2.0
Security Services	9	6.0
Private Sector	72	48
Self-employed	25	16.7
Other (please specify)	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

From the data in Table 4.8, it can be verified that out of the 150 respondents, 41 of them representing 27.3% are public servant. Three of them representing 2% are civil servant, whereas 9 of them representing 6.0% are in security services. Again 72 representing 48% work in the private sector and 25 of them representing 16.7% are self-employed.

Table 4.9: Average monthly income level

Income level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GHC 200 – 500	15	10.0
GHC 501 – 1000	50	33.33
GHC1001 – 2000	70	46.67
GHC 2000 – 4000	15	10.0
GHC4001 – 10,000	-	-
GHC 10,000+	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

From the data in Table 4.9, it can be verified that out of the 150 respondents, 15 of them representing 10.0% earn between GHC 200 – 500. 50 of them representing 33.33% earn between GHC501 – 1000, whereas the 70 of them representing 46.67% also earn between GHC1001 – 2000 and 15 of them representing 10.0% earn between GHC 2000 – 4000. None of the parents earn GHC4001 or more. Lareau (2002) found that upper income parents were more likely to have broader, weaker connections that usually include teachers, while lower-income parents have strong connections with a smaller circle of family and friends, less likely to include teachers. This leaves low-income parents to rely on formal sources of information, such as resources from each school and media portrayals of the schools. Hofferth (1994) found that income differences continued to be a strong predictor of enrollment disparities even after controlling for a variety of other factors, including race and maternal education. I expect that income will constrain parental decisions.

Table 4.10: Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	125	83.33
Islam	25	16.67
Traditional	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

It can be deduced from the data in Table 4.10 that out of the total number of 150 respondents, 125 of them representing 83.33% are Christians while 25 of them representing 16.67% are Muslims none of them was a traditionalist. This means that majority of the respondents are Christians. With the emergence of Christian civilization, majority of Christian parents would like to have the foundation of Christian knowledge for their children. Therefore, they would prefer to send their

children to missionary pre-school. For Muslim parents who are looking for good moral and religious values in their children, will look for pre-schools that are associated with the Islamic religion.

Table 4.11: Educational level of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic Education	11	7.3
Secondary	74	49.33
Diploma	44	29.33
First Degree	21	14.00
Postgraduate Degree	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork Data (2022)

From Table 4.11, it can be verified that, out of the 150 respondents, 11 of them representing 7.3% had obtained Basic Education, 74 of them representing 49.33% had obtained Secondary education, 44 representing 29.33% had obtained Diploma while 21 of them representing 14.0% were first degree holders and none had a Postgraduate Degree. It implies that majority of the respondents are secondary school leavers. Krashen (2005) asserts that students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. The level of education of parents had a direct and positive relationship on the academic achievement of their children (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The relationship between the levels of education of parents had an impact on their children's academic performance (Pamela and Kean 2010). Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their work and participate at school.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

4.2.1 Research question one

What Personal/Ideological factors influence Parental Decisions on the Choice of Early Childhood Facilities?

Research question one sought to find out personal/ideological factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities? In order to establish that, means and standard deviations were computed using participants responses and is indicated in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Parental personal/ideological factors and their choice of early childhood facilities

Premise	M	SD
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the environment of school	3.72	1.08
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the school's proximity	3.96	0.87
My choice of early childhood facility depends the school's high enrollments	3.46	1.77
My choice of early childhood facility depends on fewer children in each class	3.79	0.98
Accessibility of feeding options for children (Bringing food from home)	3.51	1.79
Accessibility of feeding options for children. Canteen services (children buy)	3.23	1.91
Accessibility of feeding options for children. Canteen services (free)	4.65	0.45
Accessibility of feeding options for children. Canteen services (parents' pay periodically)	3.49	1.81
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the academic performance of pupils	4.86	0.42
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the schools' focus on skill development (examples: learning how to play musical instruments, cadet etc.)	4.74	0.46
My choice of early childhood facility depends on availability of transportation	4.51	0.54
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the beauty and style of school uniforms	3.12	1.91
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the extra services they offer (example, bathing, brushing of teeth, weekend-in etc.)	4.13	0.79
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the security of the facility	4.66	0.43
Valid N (list wise)		

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022)

M=Mean SD=Standard Deviation

Data from Table 4.12 verifies that respondents view concerning the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the environment of school resulted in ($M=3.72$, $SD=1.07$). It suggests that majority of the respondents did agree that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the environment of school. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameter of a student’s learning experience. School environment play important role in teaching and learning. A conducive environment promotes teaching and learning. Depending on the environment a student can either close or open the doors that leads to academic achievement. A learning environment that has barriers, or obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollutions and so on can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect or reduce the student concentration or conceptual focus to learning (Basil, 2007). Watkins (2000) affirms that the school physical environment reassures parents about the safety and performance of their children at the place of learning hence, its influence on the school enrolment rates.

In addition, respondents’ views on “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the school’s proximity” yielded ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.87$) makes it evident that majority of the respondents agree that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the school’s proximity. It can be inferred from the results that parents take into consideration distance from home to school before deciding on the school their wards should attend. If children will have to walk several kilometers to school, they will get tired and may even be late which would mean that, they will miss contact hours in the morning or morning periods. Long distances from home to school will not encourage children to be regular in school and this has the likelihood of affecting the academic performance negatively. Bosetti (2007) using rational choice theory, found that parents consider proximity from their home when selecting public schools.

It was also revealed by Table 4.12 that the assertion “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the school’s high enrollments” produced ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.77$) suggests that majority of the respondents agree that their choice of early childhood facility depends the school’s high enrollment.

Moreover, on respondents’ view with regards to the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on fewer children in each class” resulted in ($M=3.79$, $SD=0.98$) depicts clearly that majority of the respondents verified that their choice of early childhood facility depends on fewer children in each class. A study done by Bosetti (2007) using Rational Choice Theory to understand how parents selected schools for their children found that many parents desired small class size when selecting non-religious private schools.

On “Accessibility of feeding options for children (Bringing food from home)” responses from the respondents ended up with ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.79$) points that majority of the respondents confirmed that accessibility of feeding options for children (Bringing food from home) is key.

Furthermore, the statement “Accessibility of feeding options for children (Canteen services (children buy))” opinions from respondents came out with ($M=3.23$, $SD=1.91$) signals that majority of the respondents consider accessibility of feeding options for children (Canteen services (children buy) when selecting an early childhood facility.

It was further discovered that respondents view on the statement “Accessibility of feeding options for children (Canteen services free)” yielded ($M=4.65$, $SD=0.45$) establishes the fact that respondents consider “accessibility of feeding options for children (Canteen services free)” when selecting an early childhood facility.

Again, respondents' ideas about the statement "Accessibility of feeding options for children (Canteen services (parents' pay periodically))" produced ($M=3.49$, $SD=1.81$) suggests that majority of the respondents confirmed that they consider "accessibility of feeding options for children (parents' pay periodically)" when selecting an early childhood facility.

It also emerged from Table 4.12 that the assertion "My choice of early childhood facility depends on the academic performance of pupils" produced ($M=4.86$, $SD=0.42$) suggests that majority of the respondents strongly agree that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the academic performance of pupils. According to Alsumaiti (2012), students with parents who were involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioural problems and better academic performance. Parental involvement, that is emotional care and support has a very big influence on early childhood education, particularly the academic performance of the child.

Moreover, on respondents' view with regards to the statement "My choice of early childhood facility depends on the schools' focus on skill development (examples: learning how to play musical instruments, cadet etc.)" resulted in ($M=4.74$, $SD=0.46$) depicts clearly that majority of the respondents strongly agree that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the schools' focus on skill development (examples: learning how to play musical instruments, cadet etc.)"

Concerning "My choice of early childhood facility depends on availability of transportation" responses from the respondents ended up with ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.54$) points that majority of the respondents agree that choice of early childhood facility depends on availability of transportation. Sometimes parents settle with pre-schools

that provide transport to their children because they do not have the time, the means and most of all, it is safer.

Furthermore, the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the beauty and style of school uniforms” opinions from respondents came out with (M=3.1, SD=1.91) signals that majority of the respondents were not sure their choice of early childhood facility depends on the beauty and style of school uniforms.

Furthermore, the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the extra services they offer (example, bathing, brushing of teeth, weekend-in etc.)” opinions from respondents came out with (M=4.13, SD=0.79) signals that majority of the respondents agreed that they consider extra services they offer (example, bathing, brushing of teeth, weekend-in etc.)” when selecting an early childhood facility.

Finally, it was further discovered that respondents view on the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the security of the facility” yielded (M=4.66, SD=0.43) establishes the fact that respondents consider security of the facility when selecting an early childhood facility. Safety and security features of pre-school are becoming important features and factors for parents in deciding the pre-school for their child. Parents are looking for pre- school which provides a safe and congenial environment for the well-being of their child.

4.2.2 Research questions two

What Economic Factors Influence Parental Decisions on the Choice of Early Childhood Facilities?

Research question two sought to find out what economic factors influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities. In order to ascertain the fact,

means and standard deviations were employed to compute their responses as indicated in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Economic factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities

Premise	M	SD
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the low level of fees	4.10	.81
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the high level of fees	2.30	1.99
My choice of early childhood facility depends on affordability of fees	4.48	.71
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (Flexibility of payment terms)	4.42	.67
My choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (Mode of payment (Momo, bank, countertop etc.)	4.42	.70
I choose an early childhood facility that will provide value-for-money services	4.34	.72

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022) M=Mean SD=Standard Deviation

In Table 4.13, the data show that the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the low level of fees (M=4.10, SD=0.81). This makes it evident that majority of the respondents attest to the fact that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the low level of fees.

In addition, the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the high level of fees” resulted in (M=2.30, SD=1.98) points that majority of the respondents disagreed that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the high level of fees.

It is further revealed by the data that the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on affordability of fees” came out with (M=4.48, SD=0.71). It suggests that majority of the respondents' agreed that their choice of early childhood

facility depends on affordability of fees. It is reasonable for every parent to consider the amount of fees a school charges and check if his or her income can afford before enrolling their wards in the school. The finding agrees with Brennan (2015) who suggested that affordability still looms large when parents have to decide on the pre-primary school of their children. This finding is also similar to what Beavis (2004) found in Australia that parents considered affordably of school fees when selecting schools for their children.

The data again show that respondents view concerning the assertion “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (Flexibility of payment terms)” yielded ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.67$). This implies that majority of the respondents confirmed that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (flexibility of payment terms)

Furthermore, the statement “My choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (Mode of payment (Momo, bank, countertop etc.))” ended up with ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.76$). It confirms that majority of the respondents appreciate that their choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure (Mode of payment (Momo, bank, countertop etc.))

Finally, the statement “I choose an early childhood facility that will provide value-for-money services” yielded ($M=4.34$, $SD=0.72$) illustrates that majority of the respondents acknowledged that they will choose an early childhood facility that will provide value-for-money services. In the views of UNESCO (2015) and Watkins (2010), expansion in educational facilities improves the social, economic and political benefits for children. Besides that, parents are motivated to invest in the education of

their wards because it offers them high knowledge, reasoning abilities, skills and the cherished values that they need.

4.3.3 Research question three

What is the Relationship Between Parents' Socio-Economic Status and their Choice of Early Childhood Facilities?

The primary intent of this research question was to find out from the respondents concerning the relationship between their socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities? In order to determine it, means and standard deviation analysis was carried out using participant's responses as presented in Table 4.14.

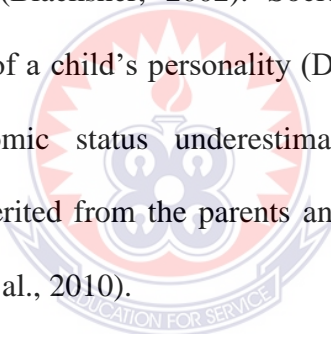
Table 4.14: Correlation between parents' socio-economic status and choice of early childhood facilities

	Socio-Economic Status	Choice of Early Childhood Facilities
Pearson Correlation	1	0.698**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	150	150

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork Data (2022) ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

A product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities. Table 4.14 shows a Pearson moment correlation analysis between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities. Table 4.14 depicts a positive correlation between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities ($r = 0.698^{**}$, $N = 150$, $\text{Sig} = 0.000$ $p < 0.01$). Therefore, there is statistically significant correlation between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities.

Socio-economic status of parents has been discussed as one of the important criteria of choosing pre-primary school for children in developing countries. McEvoy (2003) conducted a study about criteria parents use to choose schools for their children in Ireland. Findings indicated that parental choice of school is closely related to the amount of social, cultural and economic capital parents possess. Socio-economic status influences the quality of education as well as the ability of education to improve life circumstances. Low socioeconomic status and its correlates such as lower education, poverty, and unemployment, ultimately affect a society as a whole (Gabriel, et al., 2016). Families and individual with low socioeconomic status suffer from high incidence when it comes to psychological characteristics being hostile and having low self-esteem (Blacksher, 2002). Socioeconomic status is a powerful predictor of many facets of a child's personality (Deckers et al., 2015). The students with a low socioeconomic status underestimate themselves because of the socioeconomic status inherited from the parents and the performance characteristics of the schools (Delaney et al., 2010).



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study and its key findings, conclusions, recommendations based on the results, and other suggested areas to be studied.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study investigated the factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities for their wards at Atomic Hills Basic Schools.

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Assess personal/ideological factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities
2. Examine economic factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities?
3. Examine the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities?

The study adopted the Rational Choice Theory which was developed by Scott in 1945. The positivist paradigm is informed by the philosophical position of the study. In line with philosophical position, a quantitative approach and descriptive survey research design were used. The target population of the study was all of parents who have enrolled their wards in early childhood education facility at Atomic Hills '1' Basic School. A sample of one hundred and fifty (150) parents were considered for the study. Questionnaires were used in data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

5.2 Key Findings

1. The study revealed that personal/ideological factors that influence parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities were schools' environment, school's proximity, school's high enrolments, fewer children in each class, academic performance of pupils, schools' focus on skill development, availability of transportation and security of the facility.
2. It also emerged from the study that economic factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facilities were level of fees, affordability of fees, fee payment structure (flexibility of payment terms, mode of payment) and value-for-money services.
3. Finally, the study established that there is statistically significant correlation between parents' socio-economic status and their choice of early childhood facilities.

5.3 Conclusions

Factors influencing parental decisions on the choice of early childhood facility are multi-faceted. This means that any attempt to choose early childhood facility for their children should emanate from different angles. Decisions are made based on both practical considerations, reflecting on the requirement for care and educational standards that meet parents' expectations for their children. This is in the context of consideration for their children's academic progression.

Parents acknowledge early childhood facility environment and accessibility as having impact on children's well-being and influencing parent's impressions of quality. The care of children are key aspects of parental satisfaction or complaints and the importance of the children's activities and their need for stimulation and variety are

highlighted as affecting their children's well-being or happiness. It was also noted that parents' choice of early childhood facility do not depend on the beauty and style of school uniforms.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Inherent factors to parental choice of ward's preschool are multi-faceted. It is recommended that the school authorities should consider parents' whose wards enrol in Atomic Hills schools view in all important management decisions concerning the school and the well-being of the pupils. For this reason, parents should understand that they are partners of the school and that their involvement is needed and valued.
2. Parents whose wards attend Atomic Hills School should continue to play their roles effectively, such as attending PTA meetings, visiting the school to find out the progress of their children, including challenges and prospects. This will help to promote the academic performance of their children.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Future studies should consider using mixed method approaches (both quantitative and qualitative methods) of data collection in order to obtain comprehensive results from parents especially in making decisions about early childhood facilities for their wards.
3. Future studies should also be conducted to assess the quality of early childhood care and education in public schools in Ghana.

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APPENDIX**QUESTIONNAIRE****UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION – WINNEBA****FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES****RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear parent,

As part of my postgraduate studies at University of Education, Winneba, I am conducting a research study and request that you participate. I am researching factors influencing parental decision on the choice of early childhood facility for their wards. You have been selected because you are parent. Your participation involves answering this questionnaire which will require approximately 15minutes of your time. Your honest response to all the questions is very important to this research. I do not expect any negative side-effect to participating in this study. To protect you, do not write your name or any personal details that can identify you on this questionnaire. Moreover, the responses you provide here will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to opt out at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, you may reach my supervisor who is the principal investigators at adesuafo@gmail.com, 055-597-1000.

Do you consent to voluntarily participating in this study? Yes [] No []

Background Data

- X1. Gender: Male [] Female []
- X2. Marital status: Single [] Married [] Divorced [] Widowed []
- X3. Number of children/wards
1 [] 2 [] 3 [] 4 [] 5+ []
- X4. Relationship with ward Guardian [] Parent []
- X5. Number of Children in early childhood facility
0 [] 1 [] 2 [] 3 [] 4 [] 5+ []
- X6. Type of early childhood facility your wards/children attend
Private [] Public [] Mission Private []
- X7. Age range: 20 – 25 [] 26 – 30 [] 31 – 35 []
36 – 40 [] 40 – 45 [] 46 – 50 [] 50 + []
- X8. Occupation Public Servant [] Civil Servant []
Security Services [] Private Sector []
Self-employed [] Other (please specify)

.....

X9. Average monthly income level

- GHC 200 – 500 [] GHC 501 – 1000 []
 GHC1001 – 2000 [] GHC 2000 – 4000 []
 GHC4001 – 10,000 [] GHC 10,000+ []

X10. Religion

- Christianity [] Islam [] Traditional []
 Other (please specify)

X11. Level of education

- Basic education [] Secondary [] Diploma []
 First degree [] postgraduate degree(s) []

Factors: Personal/ideological

For each of the following statements, indicate your level of (dis)agreement by choosing from the options: **Strongly Agree (SA)** **Agree (A)** **Not Sure (NS)** **Disagree (D)** **Strongly Disagree (SD)**, & checking (✓) in the right box

	Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	NS (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
A1	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the environment of school					
A2	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the school's proximity					
A3	My choice of early childhood facility depends the school's high enrollments					
A4	My choice of early childhood facility depends fewer children in each class					
A5	Accessibility of feeding options for children:					
A5i	Bringing food from home					
A5ii	Canteen services (children buy)					
A5iii	Canteen services (free)					
A5iv	Canteen services (parents' pay periodically)					
A6	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the academic performance of pupils					
A7	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the schools' focus on skill development (examples: learning how to play musical instruments, cadet etc)					
A8	My choice of early childhood facility depends					

	on availability of transportation					
A9	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the beauty and style of school uniforms					
A10	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the extra services they offer (example, bathing, brushing of teeth, weekend-in etc)					
A11	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the security of the facility					

Factors: Economic Factors

For each of the following statements, indicate your level of (dis)agreement by choosing from the options: **Strongly Agree (SA)** **Agree (A)** **Not Sure (NS)** **Disagree (D)** **Strongly Disagree (SD)**, & checking (✓) in the right box

	Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	NS (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
B1	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the low level of fees					
B2	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the high level of fees					
B3	My choice of early childhood facility depends on affordability of fees					
B4	My choice of early childhood facility depends on the fee payment structure					
	Flexibility of payment terms					
	Mode of payment (Momo, bank, countertop etc)					
B5	I choose an early childhood facility that will provide value-for-money services					