Perception of Parents to the Vulnerability of Boarding Schools Students' and the risk of Sending their children to School in Nigeria

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Brief Academic Biography of the Author

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Abstract

The study examined perception of parents to the vulnerability of boarding schools students and the risk of sending their children to school in Nigeria. When children are sent to boarding school it can leave them traumatized and disrupt trust leading them to hide their vulnerable selves both in childhood and adulthood. Parents perceived that boarding schools can be too strict and regimented, they also feel that their children are being taken away too soon. Parents also perceived that some children may feel isolated, feeling of loss, adjustment, emotional stress, insecurity of schooling environment, attitude of teachers, managers, toxic schooling environment and fear of being bullied. The descriptive survey design was used. The study population includes 50 boarding schools in Nigeria. The sample and sampling technique used for the study a random sampling technique. A total number of 150 respondents consisting of 50 boarding school heads and 100 teachers were selected from 15 boarding schools from Delta and Edo states. Two states were randomly selected. A questionnaire self - designed and titled "Perception of Parents to the Vulnerability of Boarding Schools Students Questionnaire (PPVBSSQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.84 was used. The research questions raised were answered using simple percentage. It was therefore recommended that the schools should strive to make their boarding schools a conducive environment for the younger children in order to reduce the hostility situation. It is important that government regulates the boarding system and ensure quality control, where good food, friendly/ caring and committed teachers are found. Available resources for the children and everything deemed important to the students are provided. More so, the government should intervene in the situation of boarding schools for the young children, rather than leaving everything to the owners. The government should make policies to regulates the situations in boarding schools for the purpose of improvement rather than leaving everything to the school owners.

Keywords:

Perception of Parents, Vulnerability, Boarding Schools, Nigeria

Introduction

A boarding school is a school in which most or all of the students live during the part of the year that they go to lessons. The word 'boarding' is used in the sense of "bed and board," i.e., lodging and meals (Moris, 2023). The first boarding schools were established in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to educate Native American children and youths according to Euro-American standards. They were first established by Christian missionaries of various denominations, who often started schools on reservations and founded boarding schools to provide opportunities for children who did not have schools nearby, especially in the lightly populated areas of the West (Moris, 2023).

Therefore, the government paid religious societies to provide education to Native American children on reservations. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) founded additional boarding schools based on the assimilation model of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (Moris, 2023). Children were usually immersed in European-American culture through appearance changes with haircuts, children were forbidden to speak their native languages, and traditional names were replaced by new European-American names for the purpose of both civilize and Christianize (Gardner, 2015).

Although boarding schools were established in 1949 to look after war orphans of the civil war, as well as the children of new Communist Party leaders who suddenly found themselves too busy for childcare (Luc, 2015). Many countries, including African countries, later joined and concurred with this idea of boarding schools with many reasons, differing from family to family and probably country to country.

Morris (2023) noticed the experience of the schools was often harsh, especially for the younger children who were separated from their families. This study therefore, seeks to explore the influence of boarding schools to young children. That is the effect boarding schools on young children's social life, academic performance, psychological development, and the views of the teachers and parents on boarding schools.

However, some parents have no choice but to send their children to a boarding school because of their work or lifestyle, while there are other parents who choose a boarding school life for their children because of "the said" benefits of staying at school for the entire term of study. Either way, entering into a life of boarding school means a big change in a child's life. The life turns 360 degrees for the child. The protective arm of the parents is no more around. Children have to learn to be self-reliant at boarding school; they do not have a choice in that matter (Lonetree, 2021).

However, with this self-reliance, they grow more mature than their age which the researcher views as a problem to note. When a child leaves the warmth of his house and comes to live in a community of students and teachers at the boarding school, he goes through a considerable amount of psychological changes. From a feeling of loss of family life to strategically devices ways to survive the practicalities of boarding school life, a child's psychology touches many layers of insecurity. Especially in young children, when they are separated from their cozy family life and put amongst a bunch of strangers, they do not know how to deal with such a big emotional alteration another challenge that the researcher has observed in most boarding students especially the new entrants.

They either act out or become a recluse and slowly come up with ways to deal with such a permanent variation in their lives. There are so many other effects of sending off children to boarding schools, some of these are positive while others are negative. One should carefully consider these effects because once a child is set off into boarding school life, his/her whole life will be shaped differently from there basing on the school environment and the general behaviors of the students he or she is going to associate with.

Every choice made in his/her life or every relationship that he/she has or will be influenced by such a big change faced in the early, growing up years of his/her life. Here in this article, the researcher has tried to put together the probable effects of boarding schools on children's psycho social adjustments. Martin (2016) investigation on the effects of boarding school in found that while stronger students benefit from excellent study conditions, the effects of being away from home prevent weaker children from thriving.

The disruption of boarding has a negative impact on these students, who reported lower levels of wellbeing to researchers is a likely explanation for their lack of academic progress. In his article, "Ready for boarding?" The effects of a boarding school for disadvantaged students, are evident in their day to day behavioral change that leads to poor performance in class, A number of programs have recently been implemented in the US, in France, and in the UK to provide places at boarding schools for disadvantaged children. "Policy makers seem to believe that sending disadvantaged students away from their home environments will increase their academic performance. Investigation shows it's not quite as straightforward as that," (Martin, 2016). Together with fellow scholars Luc and Marc (2016) from the Paris School of Economics, he followed 395 children from low-performing French schools, who all applied for places at one of the country's internets d'excellence, or 'boarding schools of excellence', in Paris which teaches students from poor families for free.

However, parents were of the view that, boarding school for toddlers is not totally good, but there are different issues that force parents to send their young kids to boarding school, thinking that the boarding school is better sometimes than the situation that the child goes through. Participating parents regretted also for some schools that allow bad habits, including child abuse, to happen to their younger children. Parents also reiterated that governments should intervene to provide the necessary requirements rather than just leaving the whole burden to the sponsors (Balogun, 2023). According to Balogun (2023) parents perceived that boarding schools can be too strict and regimented, they also feel that their children are being taken away too soon. Parents also perceived that some children may feel isolated, insecurity of schooling environment, attitude of teachers, managers, location of school and bullied. For instance, the bullied Lead British International School Abuja, Namtira Bwala was slapped repeatedly after being forced into a corner in the school cafeteria. She said Maryam slapped her as she questioned her, Namtira added that a staff saw them but did nothing about it (Punch News, 2024).

Duffell (2024) explains this dynamic life style as to be dangerous to student's academic performance. He describe it as "the strategic survival personality". As a successful lawyer of personality constructed to protect the vulnerable child sent off to boarding school, similarly, while Elias (2012) suggests that some ex-boarders have survived boarding school well, while others have suffered the complex history of trauma and poor mental health, there has been uncontrollably increasing moral discipline which inculcate in poor academic performance.

Martin (2016) found that while stronger students benefit from excellent study conditions, the effects of being away from home prevent weaker children from thriving. The disruption of boarding has a negative impact on these students, who reported lower levels of wellbeing to researchers is a likely explanation for their lack of academic progress. In his article, "Ready for boarding?" The effects of a boarding school for disadvantaged students, are evident in their day to day behavioral change that leads to poor performance in class Martin (2016) found that while stronger students benefit from excellent study conditions, the effects of being away from home prevent weaker children from thriving.

Statement to the Problem

It is presumed that boarding schools are the best performing schools and suitable for students' academic excellence. Boarding schools have risen a good reputation in Nigeria when it comes to fostering students' academic success. In fact most best performing students have included boarding section. However, it is still a mystery why most students change behavior after experiencing boarding school. Research shows that students develop sort of unruly behavior while in boarding section. This could be as a result of being isolated, feeling of loss, adjustment, emotional stress, insecurity of schooling environment, attitude of teachers, managers, toxic schooling environment and fear of being bullied.

Research Questions

1. How do parents perceived the vulnerability of boarding school students and the risk of sending their children to school in Nigeria?
2. How parents do perceived the psychological effects of boarding schools students and the risk of sending their children to school in Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies that can be adopted to reduce vulnerability of boarding school students?

Review

The boarding schools changed through the decades with legal and social change from different countries, governments and of course family wise (Stout, 2012). This reveals that boarding schools for young children developed from nations/countries and keep on changing accordingly. It is from this point of view that younger boarders are a system in almost all parts of the world to serve some purposes which cannot be circumvented. The new emphasis for boarding schools for younger children is as a result of the working mothers.

However, the care and love of the mothers for younger children influenced even boarding schools for young children to employ more teacher mothers to take care of the young boarders (Baynton, 2016). This is because women were seen as being suited to this newly defined role of the teacher in caring the younger children from three (3) years of age as compared to men because of the very young children who are taken to boarding school. Ellen (2023) was of the view that the suitable age for the children to boarding school is that of ten (10) years of age. She said, "… that the children could not go to school till they were ten years old, I wanted to tell you that… when the light was given to me that the children should not attend school until they were old enough to be instructed (p. 17)".

These boarding schools have both advantages and disadvantages on the young children. Behaghely (2015) states, boarders enjoy better studying conditions than control students. However, they start beating control students in mathematics, only two years after admission, and this effect mostly comes from strong students. He adds that after one year levels of well-being are lower among boarders, but in their second year, students adjust; the well-being catches-up. This suggests that substituting school to home is disruptive; only strong students benefit from the boarding schools, once they have managed to adapt to their new environment. But also aged students who understand themselves, from 12 years of age can manage to be in boarding schools.

Although boarding schools have their advantages and disadvantages in the child's life experience towards personality development, parents provide many reasons as to why they have to send their children to boarding school at their tender age. One of the parents Xu Jing, in Maris (2013) study says: - "I think it's good for the children because it helps promote self-independence. Other parents don't have time or energy to look after their kids". Moris (2023) adds that it is a very

different business as China's wealthy business elite send off their babies in an attempt to establish their independence earlier than most, hoping to set them up with life skills from a very tender age.

However, other parents values the time they have with their children at home. They think it is inhuman having children and then, not taking the responsibility of raising them up that the biggest loser in the end is the child (Michael, 2014). The child was thus in the position of infant Oedipus; as shown in Paton (2011). This shows that children may develop a traumatic situation which might affect his/her personality and develop mistrust to the parents, which is felt as inhuman to the growing child.

Reasons for Boarding Schools

Amongst the reasons for boarding schools for young learners during the first world war was increased orphans due the death of the parents and prolonged illness (Piccard, 2013, Paton, 2011; Kamerman, 2017; Luc Behaghely, 2015 and Reparations and American Indian Boarding Schools:, 2010). Other reasons are the communities that did not have a primary school nearby, children were sent away to boarding school from as early as age 5 (Luc, 2015). Additionally, the Wrangell Institute enrolled children roughly from ages 5 to 15. While Wrangell served children who were orphans or who had been removed from families due to problems, it also served many children who were taken away from healthy families living in communities that did not have primary schools (Sharp & Hirshberg, 2015). With few exceptions, students were forced to go away to school to have space and enjoy; this would encourage developing traumatic situations in the child to feel neglected by the parents where Oedipus developed (Michael, 2014; Grier, 2013).

In this view, Michael insisted that the parents should understand their roles which cannot be replaced by boarding schools. Zirima (2012) argues that as much as what boarding schools might provide as solutions to unsettled families, as stated by Damon and Lerner (2016), child abuse in home and change in behavior when they are left with relatives; they may not completely replace the role of parents, especially at this tender age. Sometimes, the child's family may be dealing with complex situations such as severe mental illness, physical disability, illness, drug or alcohol problems, domestic violence, homelessness, acute financial hardship, instability, and may be on the verge of breakdown (Roby, 2011; Cameron, 2014; Grier, 2013). On the other hand, the child may be cared for by siblings, grandparents, aunties or uncles, or other extended family members because of the death of their parents, or the inability of their own parents to care well and safely for them. Some other reasons cited are divorce, single parents, mistreatment of babysitters and lack of the same people in home; as significant for the boarding schools for younger children (Stout, 2012; Adams & DeLuzio, 2012; Yuli, Haningsih, & Adikrishna, 2011). Further, Coleman (2023) has argued that the negative effects of moving for children may be due to the loss of social capital in the short-term after moving.

Risk Boarding Schools Pose on Students

Boarding schools pose serious threat to both parents and children. However, If parents are aware of the vulnerability posed to their children, how come they still take the risk of sending them to boarding schools without considering the adverse effect? This is because boarding school for most parents sees it as an escape from the responsibility of forming their children and shifting that to the perceive discipline by the institution. According to Balogun (2023) noted that sending children to boarding school can pose several risks for parents to consider:

1. **Emotional distress**: Separation from family and familiar surroundings can lead to homesickness, anxiety, and depression in children.
2. **Loss of parental involvement**: Boarding schools may limit parental involvement in children's daily lives, making it challenging to monitor their well-being and academic progress.

3. **Bullying and social struggles**: Boarding schools can be breeding grounds for bullying, social cliques, and peer pressure, which can negatively impact children's mental health and self-esteem.
4. **Limited communication**: Parents may have limited opportunities for regular communication with their children, making it difficult to address issues promptly.
5. **Dependence on school resources**: Parents may rely heavily on the school for their child's care, education, and development, which can be a concern if the school fails to meet expectations.
6. **Financial burden**: Boarding schools can be expensive, placing a significant financial strain on parents.
7. **Risk of abuse or neglect**: There is a risk of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect, in some boarding schools.
8. **Impact on family dynamics**: Sending a child to boarding school can alter family dynamics and create feelings of guilt, anxiety, or abandonment among siblings and parents.
9. **Academic pressure**: Boarding schools often have high academic expectations, which can lead to stress and burnout in children.
10. **Lack of personal freedom**: Boarding schools typically have strict rules and regulations, limiting children's autonomy and personal freedom.

It's crucial for parents to carefully weigh these risks against the potential benefits of boarding school education and consider alternative options that prioritize their child's well-being and development.

Parents' perception of Boarding School Vulnerability:

Parents' perception of boarding school vulnerability may include:

1. **Fear of abuse or neglect**: Concerns about staff misconduct, bullying, or inadequate supervision.
2. **Emotional distress**: Worries about children's mental health, homesickness, and emotional well-being.
3. **Lack of parental involvement**: Concerns about limited opportunities for parental engagement and oversight.
4. **Inadequate care and support**: Fears about insufficient attention to children's physical, emotional, and academic needs.
5. **Peer pressure and influence**: Concerns about negative peer influences, substance abuse, and risky behaviors.
6. **Safety and security risks**: Fears about physical harm, accidents, or criminal activity on campus.
7. **Academic pressure and stress**: Concerns about excessive academic demands and potential burnout.
8. **Limited communication and transparency**: Frustration with inadequate communication from school administrators or staff.
9. **Bullying and social struggles**: Worries about social dynamics, cliques, and bullying.
10. **Long-term effects on family relationships**: Concerns about the impact on family bonds and dynamics.

Parents may also worry about their child's vulnerability due to:

-   Being away from family and familiar surroundings
-   Lack of parental supervision and guidance
-   Exposure to new and unfamiliar environments
-   Increased independence and responsibility

-         Potential for negative influences or role models

These concerns can vary depending on individual circumstances, cultural background, and personal experiences (Duffell, 2024). These concerns can vary depending on individual circumstances, cultural background, and personal experiences.

Psychological Effect of Boarding Schools on Children

Various authors have written about the effect of being sent away to boarding school on the development of the child (Lonetree (Ho-Chunk), 2011, Cameron, 2014, Schaverien, 2015, and Paton, 2011). Children develop their social skills from their very younger age, as they interact with parents, relatives, teachers and other fellows. This interaction plays a major role in personality development of the child. As in traditional Chinese culture, many grandparents live with the family, and because of China's one child policy, sometimes there are four grandparents, two parents and just one child in a home. Some parents worry that the grandparents will spoil the child, so they send them to boarding schools (Paton, 2011, Moris, 2023).

In contrary, Duffell, (2024) observes that children who board are forced to survive psychologically to their great cost. Duffell (2024) insists that "in order to cope with their loss of family and to adapt to their school environment, children unconsciously construct a strategic survival personality and that such personality structure invariably becomes counter-productive in adult life". Also, these younger children experience bullying and sexual abuse from the grown up children. As Piccard (2013), Smith (2014) and Duffell (2024) emphasize "sexual abuse is the jewel in the crown of double-binding the message the abuser implicitly imparts to his victim: You are special to me but you are nothing, your reality doesn't count. As usual, such double messages are crazy-making" (Duffell, 2024). This shows a bad experience that boarding schools bring to the life of these younger children.

However, the boarding school experience is not uniform; it is multidimensional and students who lived through boarding schools tell astonishing stories of courage, resistance and adaptation (Stout, 2012). Further, boarding offers opportunities to form, and explore in depth, a wide variety of social networks and relationships. Friendship, civility, fairness, justice, loyalty, and cooperation (McGinley & Varchevker, 2013). One parent gave this narrative of her child: At first we missed her so much , but we think the world is more global, sooner or later she will leave us, so we have taken her to the boarding for trial; after few weeks she liked her space and said she want to stay at boarding. (Moris, 2023). Another testimony in the study by Cameron (2014) , one of the respondents said this:- "At the beginning I missed home, but the food was very good, and the environment was lovely, with lots of trees," she says. Similarly, another child says; "I think that now, compared to other people of my age, I am more independent and more responsible; but I also cherish my relationship with my parents more than my peers do" (Adams & DeLuzio, 2012). These sentiments suggest that although the food, environment, peer interaction and freedom help the child to stay in the boarding school, it will never replace the parental love and relationship to the child.

Cameron (2014) highlighted some social and psychological effect of boarding schools on children:

Feeling of Loss: 'When children are left at the boarding school, one of the first emotions they start to feel is the feeling of loss and abandonment. They remain nostalgic for a long period of time, feeling lonely and uncared for. With their overworking delicate psychology, they convince themselves that they are being forsaken because they are not wanted by their parents. This feeling of desertedness and lonesomeness stays for the rest of the life. This is the reason why these individuals face a hard time forming healthy relationships since they think that they are not worthy of it. This psychological trauma can have a long term effect on a person's life.

Stress: Staying at a boarding school means spending all of the time at school. It can never have an environment of casualness like home. This would bring intense periods of stress for children. There

are no emotional comforts at boarding school. Therefore, children cannot get personal attention and little emotional validations like care, concern or pampering. Kids are always told to toughen up at boarding school. There are children with much sensitive and emotional nature who never quite adjust to such structured environment and rules and regulations. These types of children suffer at boarding school; always feeling out of place.

Adjustment: Some children find it very hard to adjust with the boarding school life since they are always missing the home life. When these children grow up they find it difficult to adjust with the home life, feeling like they are not given as much independence as they had at the boarding school. This paradox makes it difficult for the child to understand where he/she actually belongs. The parent child relationship is also affected since the child starts to learn how to be self-reliant and he/she finds it impossible to confide in his/her parents as their equation never really developed. Even parents start to feel that they have missed out a lot and experience problems in adjusting with their children.

Bullying: Children might suffer with bullying or abuse and parents will not be able to do anything about it, since these kids will not confide in their parents. Often senior students or even teachers force power and abuse little children in many ways. These children themselves cannot do anything about it and since they are already feeling abandoned and alone, they consider quietly bearing it as the only way to survive it. This can really alter a child's psychology and affect the rest of his/her life.

Insecurity: Refers to a state of uncertainty, vulnerability or fear about one's physical, emotional or psychological well-being. In the context of Nigeria, insecurity has become a pressing issue with various forms of violent, crime and terrorism affecting different parts of the country. Some of the key aspects of insecurity in Nigeria includes; Boko Haram insurgency, Banditry and kidnapping, Herdsmen farmers conflicts, Militancy and piracy, cultism and gang violence, political thuggery and electoral violence, cybercrime and online fraud, drug trafficking and substance abuse, sexual and gender based violence, communal and ethnic clashes (King, 2023).

Strategies that can be Adopted to Reduce Boarding School Vulnerability

King (2023) highlighted strategies to be consider to reduce boarding school vulnerability:

1. **Improved communication**: Regular updates from school administrators and teachers. Open parental involvement and feedback mechanisms.
2. **Enhanced supervision and care**: Increased staff-to-student ratios. Trained and experienced staff and counselors. 24/7 support and guidance.
3. **Student well-being programs**: Mental health services and counseling. Academic support and tutoring. Extracurricular activities and hobbies.
4. **Safety and security measures**: Secure campus facilities and surveillance. Emergency response plans and drills. Student ID cards and access control.
5. **Bullying prevention and response**: Anti-bullying policies and education. Incident reporting and investigation. Support for victims and consequences for bullies.
6. **Academic support and flexibility**: Personalized learning plans and tutoring. Flexible academic pacing and accommodations. Regular progress monitoring and feedback.
7. **Parental involvement and engagement**: Regular parent-teacher conferences and updates. Parent associations and volunteer opportunities. Parent education and support programs.
8. **Staff training and development**: Regular professional development and workshops. Training on mental health, bullying, and child protection. Staff mentorship and support.
9. **Student leadership and empowerment**: Student council and leadership opportunities. Peer mentoring and support programs. Student voice and feedback mechanisms.
10. **External oversight and accreditation**: Independent inspections and evaluations. Accreditation by reputable organizations. Compliance with national and international standards.

By implementing these strategies, boarding schools can reduce vulnerability and provide a safer, more supportive environment for students to thrive.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used. The study population includes 50 boarding schools in Nigeria. The sample and sampling technique used for the study a random sampling technique. A total number of 150 respondents consisting of 50 boarding school heads and 100 teachers were selected from 15 boarding schools from Delta and Edo states. Two states were randomly selected. A questionnaire self - designed and titled "Perception of Parents to the Vulnerability of Boarding Schools Students Questionnaire (PPVBSSQ)", validated and its reliability equally determined via a pilot study using test re-test reliability technique with a coefficient index of 0.84 was used. The research questions raised were answered using simple percentage.

Results

Table 1: Perception of Parents to the vulnerability of boarding school students and the risk of sending their children to school in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
1	Fear of abuse or neglect	75 (112.5%)	40 (60%)	20 (30%)	15 (22.5%)
2	Emotional distress	45 (67.5%)	35 (52.5%)	40 (60%)	30 (45%)
3	Lack of parental involvement	65 (97.5%)	40 (60%)	25 (37.5%)	20 (30%)
4	Inadequate care and support	45 (67.5%)	40 (60%)	30 (45%)	35 (52.5%)
5	Peer pressure and influence	32 (48%)	48 (72%)	35 (52.5%)	35 (52.5%)
6	Safety and security risks	75 (112.5%)	20 (30%)	40 (60%)	15 (22.5%)
7	Academic pressure and stress	73 (109.5%)	40 (60%)	20 (30%)	17 (25.5%)
8	Limited communication and transparency	45 (67.5%)	35 (52.5%)	40 (60%)	30 (45%)
9	Bullying and social struggles	65 (97.5%)	40 (60%)	25 (37.5%)	20 (30%)

Source: Field

From table 1, 150 respondents agreed that fear of abuse or neglect, emotional distress, lack of parental involvement, inadequate care and support, peer pressure and influence, safety and security risks, academic pressure and stress, limited communication and transparency, bullying and social struggles are what parents perceived as vulnerability of boarding school students.

Table 2: Psychological effects of boarding schools students and the risk of sending their children to school in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Feeling of Loss	46 (69%)	47 (70.5%)	23 (34.5%)	34 (51%)
2	Stress	50 (75%)	33 (49.5%)	40 (60%)	27 (40.5%)
3	Adjustment	65 (97.5%)	40 (60%)	25 (37.5%)	20 (30%)
4	Bullying	40 (60%)	35 (52.5%)	35 (52.5%)	40 (60%)
5	Insecurity	35 (52.5%)	48 (72%)	32 (48%)	35 (52.5%)

Source: Field

From table 2, 150 respondents agreed that feeling of loss, stress, adjustment, bullying and insecurity are a psychological effect of boarding schools.

Table 3: Strategies that can be adopted to reduce vulnerability of boarding school students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Improved communication	50 (75%)	33 (49.5%)	40 (60%)	27 (40.5%)
2	Enhanced supervision and care	48 (72%)	35 (52.5%)	32 (48%)	35 (52.5%)
3	Student well-being programs	46 (69%)	47 (70.5%)	23 (34.5%)	34 (51%)
4	Safety and security measures	32 (48%)	48 (72%)	35 (52.5%)	35 (52.5%)
5	Bullying prevention and response	48 (72%)	35 (52.5%)	32 (48%)	35 (52.5%)
6	Academic support and flexibility	65 (97.5%)	25 (37.5%)	40 (60%)	20 (30%)
7	Parental involvement and engagement	46 (69%)	47 (70.5%)	23 (34.5%)	34 (51%)
8	Staff training and development	50 (75%)	33 (49.5%)	40 (60%)	27 (40.5%)

| 9 | Student leadership and empowerment | 65 (97.5%) | 40 (60%) | 25 (37.5%) | 20 (30%) |
| 10 | External oversight and accreditation | 40 (60%) | 35 (52.5%) | 35 (52.5%) | 40 (60%) |

Source: Field

From table 3, 150 respondents agreed that improved communication, enhanced supervision and care, student well-being programs, safety and security measures, bullying prevention and response, academic support and flexibility, parental involvement and engagement, staff training and development, student leadership and empowerment, external oversight and accreditation are strategies that can be adopted to reduce vulnerability of boarding school students.

Discussion

The result of the analyzed data showed that fear of abuse or neglect, emotional distress, lack of parental involvement, inadequate care and support, peer pressure and influence, safety and security risks, academic pressure and stress, limited communication and transparency, bullying and social struggles are what parents perceived as vulnerability of boarding school students. This is in line with Morris (2023) noticed the experience of the schools was often harsh, especially for the younger children who were separated from their families. Also, the findings revealed that feeling of loss, stress, adjustment, bullying and insecurity are a psychological effect of boarding schools. This is in line with Cameron (2014) who highlighted some social and psychological effect of boarding schools on children. More so, the finding showed that improved communication, enhanced supervision and care, student well-being programs, safety and security measures, bullying prevention and response, academic support and flexibility, parental involvement and engagement, staff training and development, student leadership and empowerment, external oversight and accreditation are strategies that can be adopted to reduce vulnerability of boarding school students. This is in line with King (2023) who highlighted strategies to be consider to reduce boarding school vulnerability.

Conclusion

It therefore concluded that parents perceived that boarding schools can be too strict and regimented; they also feel that their children are being taken away too soon. Parents also perceived that some children may feel isolated, feeling of loss, adjustment, emotional stress, insecurity of schooling environment, attitude of teachers, managers, toxic school environment and fear of being bullied. However, parents consider these risk before sending their children to boarding schools in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations:

1. The schools should try to make their boarding schools appropriate for the students in order to reduce the hostility situation. Where good food, friendly/ caring and committed teachers are found. Available resources for the children and everything deemed important to the students.
2. Also the government should come in the situation of boarding schools for the young children, rather than leaving everything to the owners. The government to make policies that guide the situations in boarding schools for the purpose of improvement rather than leaving everything to the school owners. There should be standard and qualities to be met before one establishes a boarding school for the young children.
3. Government should make policy regulation for all boarding schools to ensure proper formation of students.

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