

Comparative Analysis of Pupils' Academic Achievements in Public and Private Schools in Ekiti State

Oyedokun Samuel Ajayi (Ph.D)

Department of Arts Education, College of Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti

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ABSTRACT: *The study observed the comparative analysis of pupils' academic achievements in public and private schools in Ekiti State. The study used a descriptive research design of survey type. The sample consisted of one hundred and eighty-two (182) respondents that were selected from the private and public primary schools in urban and rural areas of Ekiti State. A simple random sampling technique was employed in the selection of the 182 respondents and gender equality was considered in selecting respondents for the study. Two instruments were developed and used for the study. Based on the data analyses, findings revealed that there was a significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils in favour of private schools. It was further revealed that there were significant effects of the factors responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils. The outcome of the study showed that the public primary schools which were established, financed and managed by the government have not been performing up to expectation with respect to academic achievements of pupils. Sequel to the findings of the study, it was recommended that government should give adequate priority and proper attention to the education industry, particularly, the public primary schools to enhance proper pupils' academic achievement.*

KEYWORDS: Academic Performance, Pupils, Private Schools, Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

The significance of education in the global paradigm change worldwide cannot be overstated. Education, in its comprehensive definition, refers to the process of preserving and transmitting the information, skills, and customs of a particular group of individuals from one generation to the next by methods such as teaching, training, or study. Education is the whole process of human acquisition of information, training of talents, and development of skills. It serves as both an investment and a tool to expedite economic, social, political, technical, scientific, and cultural progress within a nation.

Learning is often equated with schools to such an extent that some individuals mistakenly believe that learning exclusively occurs within educational institutions. This perception of learning has been significantly strengthened by the acknowledgment of schools as establishments for acquiring knowledge, and universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education as institutions for further education (Okoye, 2019). Undoubtedly, a significant amount of knowledge is acquired within educational institutions.

Bibby and Peil (2016) observe that pupils who enrolled in private elementary schools demonstrated superior performance compared to their counterparts in public schools in the domain of English language. Lioyd (2018) also supports this perspective, arguing that public schools that value education often delegate the responsibility of educational success or failure to the pupils and their parents. This suggests that the public schools do not treat the business of education with the level of seriousness it requires. This is clearly the overall lack of enthusiasm among the citizens towards government-owned businesses or property. The lazy attitude of government officials, especially teachers in public schools, stems from the belief that an intellectually gifted child would naturally excel in school without requiring any proactive support from them.

Regarding the substantial disparity in academic achievement between public and private primary schools in Nigeria, According to Adesina (2019), the author points out the presence of substandard and insufficient physical infrastructure, outdated teaching methods, and a lack of moral guidance in schools. Fabunmi (2017) argues that the provision of school facilities can enhance the teaching and learning process, leading to improved academic performance among pupils. The models used to guide the provision of these facilities can be rational bureaucratic or political, depending on the chosen approach. He asserts that there is consistently a shared characteristic among various distributions of resources to educational institutions. Reflecting on the glaring deficiencies of school infrastructure in the Nigerian educational sector, Akinkugbe (2019) asserts that in every primary, secondary, special, technical, and tertiary school, there is ample proof of paralysing inaction, deliberate disregard, and widespread deterioration in both quality and norms.

The school is meticulously designed to optimise the delivery of effective learning. Regrettably, the deteriorating state of schools, namely primary schools, in the country is causing significant apprehension and serious worries. An cursory examination of these schools, despite government initiatives, indicates that they are predominantly characterised by deteriorating infrastructure, lacking adequate furnishings and equipment. Furthermore, it has been noted that there is a lack of provision or insufficiency in the educational materials. In addition, elementary schools suffer from a lack of sufficient staff, with teachers receiving poor wages and allowances that are not promptly paid. Furthermore, many schools have not had inspections in the last 15 years, and there appear to be disciplinary issues among both pupils and staff members, among other crucial aspects.

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Various variables, within the multitude of obstacles faced by public and private elementary schools, will inevitably have an impact, either favourable or bad, on pupils' academic performance. A significant number of schools suffer from inadequate infrastructure, including subpar buildings, facilities, and equipment such as books, libraries, and instructional materials. Additionally, there are deficiencies in maintaining discipline, managing and administering primary schools, and overseeing the school curriculum and timetable by the State Ministry of Education.

The study therefore seeks to find out if there is any difference in pupils' academic attainment between private and public primary schools in the area of study. It also wants to highlight the causes of such differences in academic achievements of pupils between the private and public primary schools and suggest measures to rectify the differences so discovered.

The general objective of this study is on the comparative analysis of pupils' academic achievements in public and private schools in Ekiti State. The study intend to specifically:

1. find out the difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils; and
2. examine the various factors responsible for the difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. Is there any difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils?
2. What are the various factors responsible for the difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. There is no significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils.
2. There is no significant factor responsible for the difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The English language is not native to Nigeria. Nigeria has a higher level of academic inquiry and practical application in comparison to the majority of its native languages. The English language is Nigeria's secondary language, yet, several parents prioritise their children speaking English over their native languages. English serves as the principal means of communication in certain elementary schools, and those who speak any of the native languages are required to pay a fee or face harsh consequences. A similar phenomenon is noticed in several basic institutions. Nigerian

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higher education institutes also actively employ the English language. When discussing work environments, it is impossible to overlook the importance of the English language. Even elderly parents with less education or no formal schooling still have a strong desire to learn and utilise the English language.

According to Fabunmi (2017), pupils reported having a more positive attitude towards grammar training in a contextual setting, although their performance improved only modestly after receiving standard grammar instruction. Elkilic and Akca (2018) found that pupils in a private primary EFL classroom usually held favourable views towards studying English grammar. Specifically, somewhat more than 50% of their participants had a strong affinity for grammar, whereas only around 10% acknowledged encountering challenges in comprehending and retaining grammatical concepts.

Pupils' Academic Achievement

The attitude of parents and teachers is a crucial determinant of pupils' academic success. For example, the manner in which parents attend to their children and the approach teachers employ with their pupils can exert both beneficial and detrimental effects on the pupils' conduct inside the educational setting. The manner in which parents interact with their children and teachers manage their pupils also serves to elucidate the academic performance of pupils in schools. Evasco (2015) explains that additional factors such as peer group influence, distance of home from school, and socioeconomic position might also affect academic outcomes. Despite efforts to enhance learning and academic performance of pupils, there persist concerns over the consequence of their scholastic achievements. Lefrancois (2019) asserts that the teaching strategy is a reliable predictor of pupils' academic success. The teaching approach refers to the established method of instruction, which can be categorised as either teacher-centered or learner-centered. In the classroom context, there has traditionally been a teacher-centered approach, with pupils playing a passive role as mere recipients of knowledge.

Classroom capacity in Nigerian primary schools is severely insufficient due to the high number of pupils enrolled. As a consequence, classrooms are often overcrowded, with more than fifty pupils receiving instruction in spaces designed for only thirty to forty pupils, failing to meet the UNESCO pupil-teacher ratio. Typically, the seats and desks provided are insufficient. In certain schools, pupils are compelled to stand while others resort to sitting on the bare floor in order to learn. Educators' Professional development improves the overall performance of pupils. Lloyd (2018) asserts that teachers have a crucial role in establishing a favourable learning environment. He emphasises that, as professionals, they understand that teaching is more than just transmitting information. Many educators see the need of actively seeking out more enriching and efficient methods. (teachers are interested in beginning learning activities and traits that enhance life, rather than focusing just on the skills they were trained for as teachers). Teachers require updated information, advanced abilities, and exceptional attributes to effectively handle the whole process

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of classroom administration and organisation. According to Onabamiro (2017), certain primary school teachers lack expertise in their subject matter, resulting in ineffective communication. Additionally, some teachers are too inflexible in their teaching approaches.

Theoretical Framework

The theories applied in the study are based on achievement and Adaptive Resonance Theory. The Adaptive Resonance Theory considered in this study is Grossberg theory. **Grossberg Theory** - Adaptive Resonance Theory was developed by Grossberg (1976) on aspect of how the human brain processes information. It describes a number of neural network models. This model postulates that top-down expectations take the form of a memory template or prototype that is then compared with the actual features of an object as detected by the senses. As long as this difference between sensation and expectation does not exceed a set threshold called vigilance parameter, the sensed object will be considered a member of the expected class.

The implication of this to the study is that, the basic Adaptive Resonance Theory system is an unsupervised learning model. It typically consists of a comparison field and a recognition field composed of neurons, vigilance parameter, and reset module. The vigilance parameter has considerable influence on the system: higher vigilance produces highly detailed memories, while lower vigilance results in more general memories. The comparison field takes an input data (one dimensional array of values) and transfers it to its best match in the recognition field. Its best match is the single neuron whose set of weights most closely matches the input data. Each recognition field neuron outputs a negative signal (proportional to that neuron's quality of match to the input data) to each of the other recognition field neurons and inhibits their output accordingly.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Multiple research conducted by sociologists, psychologists, and educationists demonstrate that the educational institution a pupil attends significantly impacts their academic performance. According to Bibby and Peil (2020), children who go to private elementary schools outperform those in public schools. Lloyd (2016) also supports this perspective, arguing that public schools that see education positively prefer to delegate the determination of educational success or failure to the public and parents. This suggests that the public schools do not treat the business of education with the level of seriousness it requires. This might be seen as the overall indifference of the population towards government-owned businesses or property. The lazy attitude of government officials, especially teachers in public schools, stems from the belief that an intellectually gifted child would naturally excel in school without requiring any proactive support from them.

A collaborative study conducted in 1977 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, UNICEF, and UNESCO aimed to assess the academic performance of primary school pupils across the country. The findings revealed that private schools consistently outperformed public schools in all three

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK areas examined, with higher average scores compared to the national average. In a same vein, Yoloeye (2018) evaluates the level of education in Osun level by comparing the educational standards in five other states of the federation, namely Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. He evaluates the performance disparities across urban and rural schools, private and public schools, and male and female primary school pupils. His analysis reveals that Osun State ranks bottom in nearly all the sub-sectors examined, with the exception of private schools, where it outperforms other states and even surpasses the overall average. He fails to provide explanations for either low or high levels of accomplishment.

Fafunwa (2019) said that factors such as access to high-quality teaching, effective supervision in schools, appropriate instructional resources, well-built school facilities, less-crowded classrooms, and a congenial school climate are significant variables that impact pupils' academic achievement. He asserts that in regions with well-established private schools, there would be a significant decrease in drop-out rates and a notable improvement in pupils' academic achievement.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey research design, which is consistent with the nature of the problem being investigated, as it allows the -researcher to reach out to a larger number of the target population. The target population for this study is made up of pupils in both private and public primary schools. All private and public primary schools in urban and rural areas of Ekiti State constitute the population of the study. Also, all male and female pupils are the target population for the study. A sample of 182 respondents were drawn from the population. Averagely sixty one (61) pupils were selected each from primary 4 and 5 in a private, public and sixty (60) in SUBEB schools in each of the three local governments that represent the three Senatorial Districts in Ekiti State which make the total samples to be one hundred and eighty two respondents. The sampling techniques was simple random sampling techniques where every pupils is entitled to be sampled.

Two instruments were developed and used for the study. The first was a structured questionnaire to collect information on the biographical data of the respondents and information on the general conditions in the schools and various factors affecting schools. The second instrument was a Pupil Achievement Test (PAT) in Mathematics, English language, Social Studies, and Basic Science. The subjects were used for this instrument because they constitute part of the core subjects in the primary school curriculum. Each of the subjects contains thirty (30) multiple tests of two hours duration.

The face and content validities of the instrument were ascertained by two (2) Tests and Measurement experts from College of Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere. A reliability index of 0.87 was obtained which is high enough,

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hence the instrument was adjudged to be reliable for the study. The researcher visited all the schools under study. Data collected are analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. In analyzing the data collected from the instruments, the researcher makes use of mean and standard deviation in dealing with the first instrument. The inferential analysis of the study are tested using *t*-test of independent sample and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistic at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS version 23.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study based on the data collected from the field to provide answers to research questions and hypotheses raised in the study.

Research Question 1: Is there any difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils?

Table 1: Responses to the difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils

Paired Samples Statistics					
School Location and Type		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Pair 1	Urban Public	29.48	80	6.395	0.034
	Urban Private	32.67	44	11.108	
Pair 2	Rural Public	19.29	41	4.647	0.762
	Rural Private	21.82	17	6.425	

Table 1 reveals the mean and standard deviation of the difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils. It is shown that the pupils in public schools from urban area has a mean of (29.48) and standard deviation of (6.395) while the mean performance of pupils in private schools from urban area was (32.67) and standard deviation of (11.108) with significant value of (0.034). Also, it was shown that the pupils in public schools from rural area has a mean of (19.29) and standard deviation of (4.647) while the mean performance of pupils in private schools from rural area was (21.82) and standard deviation of (6.425) with significant value of (0.762). This indicated that pupils in urban location outperformed their counterparts in rural areas while among the pupils in the urban area, those in private schools had higher mean score over their counterparts in public schools. Even in rural area, pupils in private schools had higher mean in relation to their counterparts in public schools. Hence, there is difference in academic achievement of private and public primary school pupils with pupils from private schools having better academic performance.

Research Question 2: What are the various factors responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils?

Table 2: Response to the various factors responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils

S/N	ITEMS (FACTORS)	PUBLIC SCHOOLS					PRIVATE SCHOOLS				
		N	A	%	D	%	N	A	%	D	%
1.	Availability and extent of school facilities usage positively influence pupils' academic achievement	121	84	69.4	37	30.6	61	42	68.9	19	31.1
2.	The teacher – pupil relationship positively influence pupils' academic achievement	121	91	75.2	30	24.8	61	46	75.4	15	24.6
3.	Pupils' high parental status positively influence pupils' academic achievement	121	47	38.8	74	61.2	61	38	62.3	23	37.7
4.	The effective utilization of lesson periods by my school teachers positively influence pupils' academic performance	121	79	65.3	42	34.7	61	52	85.2	9	14.8
Total		484	301	249	183	151	244	178	292	66	108
% Mean		4.84	3.01	2.49	1.83	1.51	2.44	1.78	2.92	0.66	1.08

Source: *Researcher's Field Survey (2023)*

Table 2 shows the responses to various factors responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils. It was revealed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 show that 68.9%, 75.4%, 62.3% and 85.2% of the private school pupils agreed that factors such as: availability and usage of school facilities, teacher – pupil relationship, high parental status and effective utilization of lesson periods positively influence pupils' academic achievement in their schools, while 30.6%, 24.8%, 61.2% and 34.7% of the public school pupils disagreed accordingly. However, only 38.8% of public school pupils agree that pupils' high parental status positively influence pupils' academic achievement while 37.7% of private school pupils disagreed to such factor. Ultimately, pupils in private primary schools with a mean agreement of 2.92 percent are more positively influenced by the factors examined in Table 2, than the public primary school

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pupils with a mean agreement of 2.49 percent. This implies that multifaceted factors influencing positively, primary school pupils' academic achievement in private schools in Ekiti State.

Summarily, it was revealed that availability and usage of school facilities, teacher – pupil relationship, high parental status and effective utilization of lesson periods positively influence pupils' academic achievement of private schools pupils while availability and usage of school facilities, teacher – pupil relationship and effective utilization of lesson periods are the factors that positively influence pupils' academic achievement in public schools.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils.

Table 3: t-test analysis of difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils

Method	N	Mean	SD	Df	t _(cal)	t _(tab)	Decision
Private	61	33.53	10.569	180	5.702	1.98	S
Public	121	25.40	7.899				

P < 0.05 level of significance

S = Significant

From table 3, the mean score performance of the pupils in private schools (33.53) is more than the mean score of the pupils in public schools (25.40) with a mean difference of (8.13). The measure of variability (standard deviation) has a difference of (2.67). The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (5.702) is higher than the table value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils. Since pupils in private schools had higher mean score rating than those in public schools, then pupils from private schools performed better than their counterparts from public schools. Hence, the null hypothesis is not upheld.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant factor responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils.

Table 4: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the factor responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between Group	211.378	2	120.689	4.907	0.031
Within Group	545.400	180	30.652		
Total	566.778	182			

P<0.05

The result in table 4 shows the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the factor responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils. It was revealed that $F= 4.907$, $P= 0.031$ which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is significant effect of the factor responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils. Hence, the null hypothesis was not upheld.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The descriptive analysis of the study reveals that there is a difference in academic achievement of private and public primary school pupils with pupils from private schools having better mean academic performance. Also, it is revealed that availability and usage of school facilities, teacher – pupil relationship, high parental status and effective utilization of lesson periods positively influence pupils' academic achievement of private schools pupils while availability and usage of school facilities, teacher – pupil relationship and effective utilization of lesson periods are the factors that positively influence pupils' academic achievement in public schools.

The inferential analysis of the study reveals that there is a significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils. Since pupils in private schools have higher mean score rating than those in public schools, then pupils from private schools perform better than their counterparts from public schools. This supports the findings of Bibby and Peil (2016) who note that children who attend private primary schools perform better than pupils in public schools. This view is also supported by Liloyd (2016) as he contend further that the public schools which see education as good, tend to leave the question of educational success or failure in the hands of the public and their parents. This implies that the business of education is not taken with all the seriousness it demands in the public schools.

Also, it is revealed that there is a significant effect of the factors responsible for difference(s) in academic achievements between private and public primary school pupils. The finding supports

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the position of Whilaker (2015) who opines that teachers are important factors in creating positive learning environment. He further stresses that as professionals, they know that teaching is more than simply passing information. Many teachers are aware of the need of engaging in the ‘search for more life-enhancing and effective processes.

Also, Onabamiro (2017) who is of the opinion that some teachers in primary schools lack mastery of their subject and thereby cannot communicate effectively while some are too rigid in their teaching methods. The finding further corroborates Adesina (2019) who identifies poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching techniques, overcrowded classrooms among others, as factors. Throwing more light on school facilities and moral guiding provision, Fabunmi (2017) asserts that school facilities when provided will aid teaching learning programme and consequently improve academic achievement of pupils while the models guiding their provision to schools could take any form as rational bureaucratic and or political model.

CONCLUSION

The study has been able to establish the nature of the relationships that existed between the comparative analysis of pupils’ academic achievements in public and private schools in Ekiti State. The outcome of the study shows that the public primary schools which are established, financed and managed by the government have not been performing up to expectation with respect to academic achievement of pupils. The above research outcome implies that, public primary schools, in spite of their high quality in teaching manpower over the private schools, have not to a large extent provided the appropriate conditions for success and improvement in pupils’ academic achievements. Also, pupils in private primary schools are more positively influenced by the factors that yield attainments of learning than the public primary school pupils. This implies that there are multifaceted factors influencing positively, primary school pupils’ academic achievement in private schools in Ekiti State.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of this paper, it is hereby recommended that government should give adequate priority and proper attention to the education industry, particularly, the public primary schools to enhance progressive pupils’ academic achievements. Also, government should always ensure that public schools in urban and rural areas are well supervised. It is also recommended that conducive environment in terms of timely payments of adequate salaries and provisions of necessary instructional materials for teachers are provided and mandates be given before the operations and management of such schools by their private owners. It is further recommended that there is the need for stakeholders to focus on primary schools where good moral values and academic excellence can be imparted early.

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The National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) and the Ekiti State Ministry of Education should partner for the purposes of training and retraining of teachers. Also, teachers in both private and public schools should endeavour to infuse the right pedagogies in their teaching. Parents should show special interests in their children's academic activities on daily basis. Government and stakeholders should jointly work towards upgrading the teaching facilities in public primary schools in order to enhance pupils' academic achievement.

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