

## Review

# A comparative analysis of the contributions of private and public primary schools to educational development in Nigeria

Kabiru Mohammed Badau (Ph.D)

### Abstract

Department of Science Education,  
Modibbo Adama University of  
Technology, Yola, Nigeria

E-mail: [badaubadau@yahoo.com](mailto:badaubadau@yahoo.com)  
Tel: +2348038068439

**Qualitative primary education is the bedrock of educational development. This paper examined the contributions of private and public primary schools to educational development in Nigeria. In the process, private and public primary schools were compared on different variables such as size, quantity, equity, efficiency and quality as indicators of educational development. The paper concluded that both private and public primary schools contribute immensely on the different indicators to educational development in Nigeria.**

**Keywords:** Comparative analysis, contributions, educational development, Private primary schools, Public primary schools

## INTRODUCTION

Primary education is typically the first and foundation level of compulsory education in the education industry. The goal of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) has been on the international agenda since the universal declaration of Human rights affirmed in 1948, that primary education has to be made freely and compulsory available for all children in all nations. This objective was reinstated subsequently on many occasions by international treaties and in United Nations Conference declaration (Monitoring Report, 2005).

In Nigeria, Primary Education is given in institutions for children aged 6-11 years. It has a duration of 7 years under 7-5-4, 6years under 6-3-3-4 and 6years under the present 9-3-4 systems of education (Wakpa,2015). The major goals of primary education as stated in the national policy on education (FGN,2004) is

- To inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.
- Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
- Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child.
- Develop in the child the ability to adapt to Childs changing environment.

- Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable function effectively in the society within the limits of the Childs capacity.
- Provide the child with basic tools for the educational advancement including preparation for trades and the craft of the locality.

The primary education sector in Nigeria includes state funded primary schools, special schools and private primary schools. It is provided by private and public institutions (Awhen, Timipre and Agyngwuye, 2014).

### Private Primary Education

Private primary education is received from educational institutions at the elementary level where individuals or group of persons, organizations or missions bodies come together to establish and run and education institutions. It is the responsibility of entrepreneurs', agencies or groups such as religious bodies, communities, universities, corporate bodies and foreign communities to supplement government effort at providing quality public primary education. These are educational institutions that are established, conducted and supported by non-governmental agencies. They are also not operated by

any public authority regardless of whether they receive financial support from public authorities. The characteristics of private primary schools according to Guga (2014) are as follows:

- Supported by private organization or individuals rather than by the State.
- Independent schools that are supported wholly by the payment of fees.
- Schools that are not administered by local, state or federal government.
- They are schools that retain the right to select their students.
- They are schools that do not rely on mandatory taxation through public or government funding.

The number of private primary schools in Nigeria is increasing with a fast population growth.

### Public Primary education

Public primary education is a system of elementary institutions and measures that ensures the education and upbringings of a pupil in accordance with interest and requirement of society and state. A public primary school in Nigeria is an elementary school supported by public funds and providing free education for children of a community or district. It is maintained at public expense for education of the children of such community or district. These schools are endowed to prepare students chiefly for secondary schools. Public primary schools are owned and funded by federal and state governments. They are characterized by:

- Tuition free
- Centrally run by boards
- Overseen by the Ministry of Education
- Adjusting managerial styles for improved service delivery.
- Responding to change (innovations improved school provision) (Guga, 2014).

Nigeria has 54,434 public primary schools (Egwu, 2009).

### Quality Primary Education

Quality primary education refers to a system of education that through programming process, structure and contents enables quality learner, quality environment, quality content, quality process and quality outcome (UNICEF, 2000). Most of the United Nations declarations and commitments were silent about the quality of primary education to be provided. Until when the United Nations Dakar Framework Action and Millennium Development Goals stated in the Education For All (EFA) Dakar Goal 2, is to achieve Universal Primary Education by the year 2015 by which time, they run to ensure that all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to

complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005).

Some of the indicators that may be involved in determining quality or standard of primary education are pupils enrolment/completion rates health/nutrition of pupils, availability of portable water in the schools, provision and utilization of instructional/infrastructural materials, violence free school environment, quality recruitment process of staff, staff retraining process, teacher pupil ratio, teachers readiness, family support services, support from other stakeholders proximity of schools and compliance to school rules and regulations (Shah, Ghazi, Shahzad and Ullah, 2015). Quality primary education in Nigeria is determined by considering the extent to which school, curriculum, teachers, students, teaching-learning materials, learning time, teaching practice, educational administration and community services are available, adequate and accessible (Anero, 2013).

Quality assurance in primary education is a mechanism to evaluate the efficiency and appropriateness of teaching and learning in primary/schools so as to ensure the delivery of high quality education. It is also a holistic method of identifying and resolving problem within the educational system in order to ensure continuous quality improvement. It can also be described as a means of disseminating information regarding the quality of primary education (Alaba, 2010). According to National Educational Quality Assurance Policy base on National minimum standards on educational establishment institutions Act 16 1985, Nigeria is concerned with eight (8) components of quality standards for educational development which was itemized as:

- Learner achievement and standards.
- Learner welfare and participation.
- Care guidance and support.
- Leadership and management.
- School-community relationship.
- Learning environment.
- Teaching and learning.
- Curriculum and other activities.

Quality primary education is one of the determinants of educational development. In this case, qualitative private and public primary education and instructions plays a great role in educational development in Nigeria.

### Educational Development in Nigeria

Educational development means expanding the facilities to match numbers with needs of the clientele diversifying teaching – learning situation as well as their content to suit the varying demands of society. It is the process of promoting life, learning through the provision of Education For All in - school and out-of-school and adults or establishing an effective challenge response

relationship between economic and social development on one side and education on the other (Study mode, 2012).

Educational development is viewed as a system, which receives inputs in the form of new entrants, transforms these inputs through certain internal processes and finally yields outputs in the form of graduates. The output from primary education is defined as those pupil who complete the 6years and the input used up in the process of education are determined in terms of pupils years (Vos, 1996). UNICEF (2015) grouped educational development factors into social, political, economical and environmental. Primary educational development years can be classified according to Mehta (2004) into indicators of size, quantity, equity, efficiency and quality.

Access to primary education in Nigeria is to get the know ledge of whether the school facilities are equally distributed or not, and adequately utilized. A number of factors such as population of habitation, distance from the house, mode of travel and time need to reach primary schools are considered while analysis is made of accessibility. The current norm in Nigeria is to provide a primary school within a distance of one and three kilometers from the habitation respectively. Habitation is treated as the lowest act of planning where schooling facilities are supposed to be available. So far as the population norm is concerned, habitations having population of 300 and more and 500 and more are entitled to have a primary school within a distance of one and three kilometers (UNICEF, 2015).

Educational coverage according to Johnstone (1981) is the interaction between demand and supply. Demand and supply in primary education means children of a specific age group utilizing the education facilities as supply. Coverage includes admission enrolment ratio and transition. Admission rate plays an important role in knowing the coverage of the entry age of the child population (generally age -6) in the system. This is interms of primary I enrolment and population of age -6 years.

Enrolment is simply the division of enrolment by population which presents extent to which the education system is meeting the requirements of the child population. Enrolment of which level and population of what age group.

Enrolment is overall the enrolment ratio, age specimen enrolment and level enrolment ratio. Overall enrolment presents a picture of the entire education system. In a primary school system consisting of primary 1- 6, the overall enrolment is the division of total enrolment in primary 1 – 6 to the corresponding school age population. Age specific enrolment is for a particular age or age group. It is the division of enrolment in year and in age group (b) at all levels of education in any class by a population of a particular age in that year (b) level enrolment gives enrolment ratio level wise for gross and

net enrolment ratio (Mehta, 2002).

Attendance is considered a better indicator of coverage. This can be either daily, monthly, quarterly or annually. It is considered important aspect of monitoring. It can be separately for boys and girls. The school specific attendance is used to identify schools that need immediate attention. Monthly attendance highlights the possible reasons of low attendance (Mehta, 2004).

The estimate of average and under age children plays important role to work out the number of out of school children for obtaining the out of school children, enrolment is first refined/adjusted with respect to the estimate of the over age and under age children. The balance of the age specific population and refined enrolment is termed as the out of school children (UNESCO, 1982).

Transition is based on student flow analysis. Student flow analysis starts at the point where students enter into an education cycle. Transition is determined by promotion, repetition and dropout rate. Promotion is separately for all the classes. The main task is to obtain the number of promotes who are promoted to the next higher class. Once the promotion rate is determined, the next indicator that is required to be computed is the class to class repetition rate. Repetition is the division of number of repeaters in a class to the enrolment in the previous year but in the same class. Drop out is determined class-wise. The first requirement of dropout rate is to obtain the number of drop outs between the classes. The number of promoters and repeaters in different classes are obtained. The balance of the enrolment in a particular class in other words, those who are not promoted or have repeated is known as dropouts (Study Mode, 2012).

Wastage and internal efficiency of primary education system are measured through apparent cohort method, reconstructed cohort method and true cohort method. Kapoor (1998) report that apparent cohort method requires either the cross sectional year-class or time series data on the class-wise enrolments. If the cross sectional class data is used the percentage of enrolment in all other classes to the enrolment in all other classes to the enrolment in class I, which is considered cohort, is measured and termed and treated as the evidence of wastage. Reconstructed cohort method is determined when repeaters are taken out from the enrolment and the ratio to class I enrolment is calculated. True cohort method is based on the existing rate isof promotion, repetition and dropout in different classes would continue throughout the evolution of the cohorts. The pupil will not be allowed to continue in the system after he / she has repeated for three times, thereafter he / she will either leave the system or would be promoted to the next class. There is no pupil other than the original would be allowed to enter the education cycle in between the system. The computation procedure is based on input/output ratio, Input per graduate wastage ratio, proportion of total

wastage spent on the account of dropouts and repeaters, average duration of study on account of the graduate and dropouts and cohort survival and dropout rates (Varghese, 1997).

Coverage and efficiency of the educational system fail to give any idea about pupil completing an educational level and also the level of their educational attainment. Educational attainment is measured in terms of learner's achievement. Learner's achievement is considered as one of the indicators of quality primary education. The quality is based on output in which is determined by completion rate gross completion ratio, net completion ratio and graduation rate. Completion is based on pupils completing an educational level as a percentage of initial enrolment in the first class of those level fours back. Gross completion is the total number of students completing an educational level (including repeaters and average and under age pupils by class V) as a percentage to single age population which is supposed to complete that level (Moja, 2000). Net completion is pupils completing an educational level of a particular single age population ratio as a percentage to total single age population which is supposed to complete that level. Students' who complete an educational level and fulfill graduation requirement (achievement test) as a percentage of total number of completers is graduation rate. The rate if calculated in relation to the original cohort is termed as cohort graduation rate, which can either be gross or net in nature (UNICEF, 2015)

Investment on primary education is determined by unit cost. This is generally in terms of the total cost and enrolment. The same can also be in terms of pupils attending school, graduates and corresponding age specific. It is defined as per pupil cost per capita expenditure, percentage expenditure and expenditure on primary education facilities is a factor which influence quality of education in general, and learners achievement in particular. Studies in the past grouped a number of school facilities into school building, equipments and staffing conditions. The first important objective is to assess the availability of school buildings and also that quality of available buildings, which plays an important role for identifying the priority areas so that renovation and extension of buildings are taken up. The analysis of equipment will help to identify disadvantage areas and will help to assess the true capacity of a school so that schools which are underutilized or conversely overloaded can be identified (Mehta, 2004).

Once the facilities are identified, the next important issue is utilization. So far as the utilization of the premises in a primary school is concerned, the simple percentage of schools which work double shift and rooms which are used by double stuffs be completed. Equipments and their utilization are also identified. They cover furniture, teaching aids and educational supplies. This is determined either school – wise or classroom – wise which depends on the nature of the variables.

Percentage of schools having electricity, drinking water and toilet facilities, play ground and staff quarters are some of the basic facilities which can be computed for a block for state and local government (Moja, 2000). But for the facilities within the schools, percentage of classrooms with pupils desk and teachers chairs and tables, can be considered. Percentage of class rooms having black board may be considered an indicator of teaching equipment, so also the percentage of teachers having access to maps, charts and globes. Percentage of children having textbooks, slates, exercise books and pencils are some of the determinants of pupils supplies. Similarly, percentage of pupils in a primary school delivery midday meals, free textbooks, and uniforms are also determinants of beneficiaries under a particular scheme (UNICEF, 2015).

Teachers play an important role in the functioning of school and imparting education. No educational system rises above the quality of its teachers and teaching. Therefore, information's on a number of variables such as teacher's qualifications, length of service, training and subject need to be analyzed. However, these factors themselves do not guarantee the quality of a teacher, as it depends upon a number of other factors predominantly concerning working environment and type of school in which the teacher works. Simple percentage distribution of teachers according to sex can be completed. The information on workload of teachers needs to be collected on pupil – teacher ratio and class size to know the average audience.

Gender parity index is most widely used to know the empowerment of women in the society. The index was developed for enrolment ratio, literacy rate, repetition rate and coefficient of efficiency to know the participation of women in an educational activity. The parity is established by age groups and rural and urban areas (Mehta, 2004).

### **Comparing Private and Public Schools on Educational Development**

The comparison indices of private and public educational schools is based on factors responsible for educational development in Nigeria.

A private school is autonomous and generates its own funding through various sources like student tuition, private grants and endowments. A public school is government funded and all students attend free of cost. School facilities in private primary schools are accessible because they are adequately provided and utilized for the small class size. They have enough school buildings like classrooms, instructional rooms, staff and students' rooms and furniture for the privileged few. In public primary school, pupils have no access to facilities because of overpopulation borne from free and compulsory education of government. The facilities

cannot be adequate to the large class size. Admission rate in private primary schools is controlled. It is determined by parents of pupils who can afford it for their children. There is no admission criteria but can be based on tests and other criteria. Admission to public primary school is determined by the address of the students. Every community has a zoned or district school and pupil attend their respective zones or district school.

Public primary schools are required to accommodate all children within a zoning area. Enrolment in private primary schools is defined by the school authorities, most parents cannot afford the cost of private primary school which reduces the number of pupils enrolled. Public primary schools have a massive enrolment of pupils no matter the disability, academic level, religion, ethnicity and socio economic status. The transition rate in private primary school level, by pupil flow analysis though promotion, repetition and dropouts are one hundred percent. All pupils are promoted without repetition and dropout because of the small number of pupils and cost of private education. Public primary schools transit pupils through promotion, repetition and dropout because of the massive enrolment.

The efficiency of private primary schools has no wastage because pupils enrolled in primary I which is considered cohort will all complete their primary Six years. Wastage in public primary schools is high as many will not complete primary 1-6. The incidence of wastage on the part of girls is higher than on the part of boys. Retention of the cohort in private primary schools is higher than public primary schools.

The input and output efficiency of the true cohort in private primary is also higher than public primary schools. The input per graduate wastage on account of repeaters and dropouts' average duration of stay on graduates dropout and cohort survival and dropout rate are also found in public primary schools than private primary schools.

The quality of private primary schools based on completion rate, gross completion rate, net completion rate and graduation rate to complete the six years of educational attainment produce better output than public primary schools. Learners' achievement is lower in public primary schools than private primary schools.

The investment in primary education as determined by unit cost per pupil is higher in private primary schools. However, the same is also in terms of pupil attending school, graduates and corresponding age specific population. Expenditure on per pupil cost in public primary school level is low.

Quality facilities and utilization in private primary schools are limited. They do not have large spacious school buildings but small classrooms. Facilities like laboratories, libraries, demonstration farms, toilets facilities, playgrounds and staff quarters etc. are not available (Agi, 2013). All facilities in public primary schools including buildings, halls, library, furniture and

utilities like electricity, water supply, and toilet are adequately provided by government. Utilization of facilities based on spaces is adequate. Pupils' supplies like textbooks, slate, exercise books and pencils are available, school meals and uniforms are provided to the pupils in public primary schools.

Teachers play an important role in functioning of school and imparting education in both private and public primary schools. Teachers' qualification in private schools may not be certified. Private primary schools have less qualified or untrained teachers, but pay individual attention to students. Homework is assigned and checked regularly. Selected study is done in private schools and short notes are given to students. Students become more dependent and careless because of more attention of teacher. They are more female teachers in private primary schools than the public once. Teachers' qualification must all meet state mandated requirements and be highly proficient in their subject areas with at least B.A, B.SC and M.A, M.Sc degrees. Teachers are permanent highly qualified and trained. Teachers pay in public primary school is also higher than his counterpart in private school. Teachers' salary is government funded not from tuition fees brought in by student as in private schools.

Private Primary schools has reasonable small class size and greater control over the classrooms. Teachers – student ratio is smaller in private schools. Teachers give complete attention to pupils. Public primary schools have larger overcrowded classrooms. A teacher will only remember your name if you often interact with them or because of your classroom participation. Teacher – student ratio is wider. Teachers are more in number in public primary school than private ones.

The gender parity index on enrollment, literary rate and efficiency of female is higher in public primary school than private schools.

## CONCLUSION

This comparison has revealed that private primary schools have contributed to educational development of Nigeria in terms of internal efficiency of the educational system and quality of services and the utilization. Public primary schools on the other have contributed to the development of primary education in terms of access and coverage of the educational system. Public primary schools have better facilities, spacious buildings, highly qualified staff and development oriented management styles, as compared to private primary school. Various comparative studies (Afolabi, 2003; Baum, Jenkus and Grigg, 2006; Couson, 2009) has revealed that private schools has better academic achievement, facilities and attendance than public primary schools. Research findings from comparison of the academic performance of private and public primary schools found that pupils in

private schools performed better than public schools. In their comparative study, John and Ademola (2014) reported that private schools in Katsina State are better in science achievement than their counterparts in the public schools. Both private and public primary schools systems have contributed immensely to the development of education in Nigeria (Agi, 2013, Oguntimehin and Oni, 2010).

## REFERENCES

- Afolabi AO (2015). Comparison of private and public schools products performance in Mathematics and English language from educational technology perspective. *Ilorin J. Education*, 3(4), 44-51
- Agp UK (2013). The challenges and prospects of managing private school system in Rivers State. *African Research Review*, 7 (1), 340-351
- Alaba SO (2010). Improving the Standard and Quality of Primary Education in Nigeria. A case study of Oyo and Ogun States. *International J. Cross-disciplinary subjects in education*, 1(3), 156-160.
- Anero N (2003). Quality primary education and its 3 – A concept indicators among public schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Acad. Res. J.* 4(6), 223-231.
- Awhen OF, Timipre OF, Agyngwuye UB (2014). Improving the Standard and Quality of Primary in Nigeria for National Development. *Int. J. Res. Rev. Edu.*
- Coulson AJ (2009). Comparative Public Private and market Schools. *The International Evidence. J. Sch. Choice*, 3, 31-54
- Council for American Private Education (2015). Private Schools: A Brief Portrait US Department of Education.
- EFA Global Monitoring Report, (2005). *Understanding educational quality*. New York: UNIECF.
- Egwu SO (2009). *Roadmap for Nigeria Education Sector*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education.
- Fabal M (2012). Public versus private secondary schools. A Quantitative Comparison. *J. Res. Reflection in Education*, 6 (1), 40-49
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on education*. Lagos
- Grover S, Singh NH, Stonguist N (2002). *The quality of primary education. A case study of a Madurai and Villupuram District in Tamil Nadu India*. Boston: Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Guga A (2014). An assessment of the contribution of the private sector to the provision of access to primary education in Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Int. J. Edu. Res.* 2 (3), 1-10.
- John OK, Ademola OR (2014). A Comparative Study of Public and Private senior secondary school students science achievement in Katsina State, Nigeria. *J. Edu. Soc. Res.* 4 (3) 203-208.
- Johnstone JN (1981). *Indicators of Educational Systems*. London and Paris: Koga Page and UNESCO
- Kapoor MM (1998). *Indicators of Education*. New Delhi: NIEPA.
- Lapite AO, OM (2015). *The Assessment of Academic Performance of Public and Private Primary Schools*. Lagos: College of Education.
- Mehta AC (2002). *Module on Projection of population, Enrolment and Teachers with Focus on Elementary Education*. New Delhi: NIEPA.
- Mehta A (2004). *Indicators of educational development*. New Delhi: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.
- Moja T (2000). Nigeria Education Sector Analysis: A Analytical Synthesis of Performance and Main Issues. New York: World Bank.
- Oguntimehin YA, Oni JO (2010). Teachers perception to educational development in Ijebu– North Local Government, Nigeria, *MEdwel J.5 (4)*, 280-285.
- Omede J (2015). Private participation in education in Nigeria: some issues that matter. *Asian J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.* 3 (91), 101-109.
- Opoth FA, Okou FT, Ubung JA (2014). Improving the standard and quality of primary education in Nigeria for national development. *Int. J. Res. Rev. Edu.* 3 (1), 1-6.
- Shah SA, Ghazi SA, Shalizad S, Ullal I (2015). The Impact of Quality Indicators on Quality Primary Education in klyberpekhunkhwa. *Ame. J. Humanit. Soc. Sci.* 3 (1), 7-12
- Study Modes (2012). Fundamental Concept of Educational Planning [www.studymode.com/essay/s/fundamental concept of education planning.1158848.html](http://www.studymode.com/essay/s/fundamental%20concept%20of%20education%20planning.1158848.html)
- UNCEF (2000). *Define Quality in Education*. New York: UNICEF.
- UNESCO (1982). *Quantitative and Financial Aspects of Educational Planning*. Basic Training Programme in Educational planning and Management, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok.
- UNICEF (2000). *Quality Primary Education: the potential to transform society in a single generation*. UNICEF.
- UNICEF (2015). Educational development Indicators. New York: UNICEF.
- Varghese NV (1997). *Modules on District Planning in Education*. New Delhi: NIEPA.
- Vos R (1996). Educational Indicators: what is to be measured. *Working paper series 1-1*.
- Wakpa P (2005). Planning and Implementation of Primary School Education Policies in Nigeria: Problems and Solutions. *J. Res. Humanit. Soc. Stud.* 3 (7), 33-37.