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School Type as a Determinant of Students' Performance in WASSCE in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study considered the impact of school type (Public – Private) on the performance of students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State in English, Mathematics and Biology. The May/June result of thirty schools (15 Public and 15 Private) covering the six educational districts of Lagos State were used for the study. The result of the students for three years (2004, 2005 and 2006) was obtained from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and analyzed using the independent T-Test statistics.

The outcomes of the analysis revealed that the private schools performed better than the public schools generally, while the Unity Schools performed better than the Missionary Schools in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State within the three years investigated. It was also discovered that the public schools had large candidates to manage during the examinations – and this would have accounted, partially, for their poor performances, amongst other discoveries. Valid recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

Introduction

Background to the problem

Education is a veritable tool for any meaningful and worthwhile development in the society. For any nation to develop, she must first develop her citizens through the provision of functional education. Thus, Alimi (2006) noted that education is the only legacy that could be bequeathed to the younger generation. She added that without qualitative education, the nation will fail. To this end, education becomes the wheel on which development is driven down to the society. Hence,

when every citizen of a nation have received formal or informal education (formal by attending a school and informal by learning a craft or trade to earn a living), then such nation can start thinking in the direction of development. To support this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (1998) states that:

education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important... any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution (NPE; 1998).

As a social service, education is provided by every responsible government to her citizens. Though, due to the dynamic nature of the society and the increasing demand for educational services, private individuals and groups have joined in the provision of educational services. Thus, apart from government established primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning, we also have institutions that are established and managed by churches, organisations, individuals and group of persons. These are known as private schools.

According to the National police on Education (1998) 'secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage.' This definition informed the reason for the worry about the provision and standard of secondary education in the country, since it is the bridge between primary and tertiary levels. At the end of secondary education, students sit for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). And as we know, a student's performance determines whether he/she will receive further (that is, tertiary) education or not.

Obong (2006), asserted that the undue proliferation of private schools is the consequence of the failure of the public schools to meet the yearnings and expectations of the citizens. He posited that parents go to any length to raise the often prohibited school fees charged by the private schools rather than subjecting their children to the unhealthy environment posed by the public schools in spite of the free tuition policy. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the standard of secondary education in Nigeria, especially, those owned by the government, appears to be depreciating drastically. The situation have become a topic of popular concern and has garnered special attention from a wide array of special interest groups, stakeholders and educational policy (Ejenari 2006).

Based on the observed loopholes in government owned secondary schools, private individuals and groups, established schools as an intervention to remedy the situation. Alimi (2006) opined that

involvement of the private sector in the provision and management of secondary education in the country is a step in the right direction and called for proper monitoring of private proprietors to maintain the standard of education in the country. Considering the large number of private schools operating in the country; parents and guardians seems to have some problems and challenges in choosing the school to send their children. This challenge is coming from the disparity in the quality of education by the public and private secondary schools. Also there has been a controversy between public and private secondary schools as to which actually meets the indicators of quality education. Most private school operators claim that they are providing a snapshot of private education today because it has become an issue that cannot be ignored, claiming that parents no option but to seek succour in private education. Public school operators on their part, claim that they have numerous qualified teachers which the private schools may not have.

However, there appears to be a noticeable fall in the general standard of public secondary education in Nigeria. Hence, Okwilagwe (2005) contends that the establishment of private schools is hinged on the axiom that they are established primarily to overcome the deficiencies created by public schools in the delivery of quality education to the adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

For some years now, stakeholders in education have been debating on the issue of quality education provided by public secondary schools and those provided by the private secondary schools in the country. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the difference in the quality of education provided by these two types of schools by comparing their performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WAEC).

Research Question

What is the general performance of public and private school candidates in English, Mathematics, Biology, Commerce, Accounts, Economics, Government, Chemistry and Physics in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private school candidates in their performance in core subjects (English, Mathematics, Biology) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private school candidates in their performance in commercial subjects (Commerce, Accounts) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private school candidates in their performance in the social science subjects (Economics, Government) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).
4. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private school candidates in their performance in the Sciences (Chemistry, Physics) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Research Methodology

Research design

This is a survey study in which there is no manipulation of variable. The variables are used as they exist.

Target Population

The target population for this study comprises all the secondary schools in Lagos State that have been presenting candidates for the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations.

Sampling Technique and Sample

Secondary Schools in Lagos State are divided into educational districts based on Local Government Areas for the purpose of administrative convenience. The table below shows the six educational districts and the local government areas that make up each district.

Educational Districts	Local Government Areas
District 1	Alimosho, Agege and Ifako/Ijaye
2	Ikorodu, Kosofe and Shomolu
3	Eti-Osa, Ibeju/Lekki and Epe
District 4	Surulere, Lagos Mainland and Apapa
5	Badagry, Ojo and Amuwo/Odofin
6	Ikeja, Mushin and Oshodi/Isolo

Source: Lagos State Post-Primary Teaching Service Commission.

The WASSCE results of 2004–2006 used for this study are derived

from 30 secondary schools purposely selected from 5 educational districts in 15 local government areas of Lagos State. The 30 secondary schools are made up of 15 public and 15 private schools. One public and One private secondary schools were purposely selected from each of the 15 local government areas.

Instrument and Materials

The instruments used are 2004–2006 WASSCE results in six subjects, namely; English Language, Mathematics, Biology, Commerce, Accounts, Government, Chemistry and Physics.

Method of Data Analysis

The only research question raised in the study was answered with descriptive statistics. While hypotheses were analyzed using the independent t-test statistics.

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results

Research question

What is the general performance of public and private school candidates in English, Mathematics, Biology, Commerce, Account, Economics, Government, Chemistry and Physics in the West African Senior Certificate Examination in Lagos State?

Table 1: Total Number of Students per year and the percentage that passed per subject

	Public Schools						Private Schools					
	2004		2005		2006		2004		2005		2006	
	No Sat	% Passed	No Sat	% Passed	No Sat	% Passed	No Sat	% Passed	No Sat	% Passed	No Sat	% Passed
Eng.	400 3	59.10	395 7	60.65	423 0	58.25	165 0	94.91	173 2	90.53	162 9	92.76
Maths	400 3	51.10	395 7	51.25	423 0	49.31	165 0	88.97	173 2	79.16	162 9	89.39
Bio	400 3	59.71	395 7	61.16	423 0	56.88	165 0	76.79	173 2	87.41	162 9	89.44
Comm	210 2	65.56	173 4	50.75	205 1	53.58	770	85.45	864	85.65	808	80.82
Acc	177 5	47.15	141 0	34.75	167 7	32.20	570	85.09	663	58.37	599	84.81

Econs	378 7	65.99	373 2	70.63	401 9	56.58	159 7	96.06	166 6	94.00	156 4	95.78
Govt	235 2	57.48	217 9	56.22	258 2	68.59	969	89.58	959	94.14	933	91.85
Chem	126 6	65.32	145 0	69.72	135 9	63.72	624	69.71	629	92.05	635	87.56
Physcis	126 6	69.83	145 3	76.26	135 9	72.63	619	87.49	628	91.72	632	91.77

Table 1 shows the number of candidates that sat for the WASSCE in each subject and the percentage that passed in both public and private schools for the three years under reviewed.

Table 2: Overall number of candidates and percentage that passed per subject

	Public Schools		Private Schools	
	Total Number Sat for 3 years	Percentage Passed	Total Number Sat for 3 years	Percentage Passed
English 2004, 2005 2006	12190	59.81	5011	92.70
Mathe- matics 2004 2005, 2006	12190	50.81	5011	81.71
Biology 2004, 2005 2006	12190	59.20	5011	84.57
Commerce 2004, 2007 2006	5905	56.85	2442	73.99
Accounts 2004, 2005 2006	4682	38.40	1832	75.33
Economics 2004, 2005 2006	11538	64.21	4827	95.26
Government	7113	1.13	2861	92.52

2004, 2005 2006				
Chemistry 2004, 2005 2006	4075	66.36	1888	3.16
Physics 2004, 2005 2006	4078	73.05	1879	90.31

Table 2 shows the total number of candidates that sat for each subject in the selected Public and Private schools for the three years under investigation.

Tables 1 and 2 reveal that the private schools performed better than the public schools in all the subjects compared. For instance, a total of 12190 public school candidates that sat for the core subjects, 59.31% passed English Language, 50.81% passed Mathematics and 59.20% passed Biology. On the other hand, of 5011 private school candidates that sat for the core subjects, 92.70% passed English Language, 85.71% passed Mathematics and 84.57% passed Biology.

In other subjects, 73.99% of 2442 private school candidates passed Commerce against 56.85% of 5905 public school candidates. For Financial Accounting, 75.33% of 1832 private school candidates passed against 38.40% of 4862 public school candidates. Whereas 95.26% of 4827 private school candidates passed Economics while 64.21% of 11538 public school candidates passed the subject in the three years studied. 92.52% of 2861 private school candidates passed Government while 61.13% of 7113 public school candidates passed. In the Sciences, 83.16% of 1888 private school candidates passed Chemistry against 66.36% of 4075 from the public schools; while 90.31% of 1879 private school candidates passed Physics against 73.05% of 4078 candidates from the public schools.

Generally, the public school candidates performed averagely or a little above average in all the subjects except in Financial Accounting where they performed below average. While the private school candidates performed well above average in all the subjects within the three years studied. The private school candidates performed better in Economics and Government than they did in other subjects; while the public school candidates did better in Chemistry and Physics than in other subjects investigated.

		12.58	14	Private Schools
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Ho1:

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public school and private school candidates in their performance in the subjects (English, Mathematics and Biology) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State.

Table 3.3: Test of Public and Private School Candidates Mean Scores in the Core Subjects

Sources of Variance	N	Mean	S.D	t-Critical	df	t-calculated	P
Public Schools	14	483.26	12				
				2.06	26	81.8	0.05
Private Schools	14	808.71	8.38				

Effect Size = 3.04

The result on Table 3 shows that public schools have a mean score of 483.26 and a standard deviation of 12, while the private schools have a mean score of 808.71 and a standard deviation of 8.38. Since the critical t is less than the calculated t ($t = 2.06 < t = 2.06 < t = 81.98$), hypothesis one is rejected. This means that there is a marked significant difference between the mean score of public schools and the mean score of private schools in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State. in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

The result shows that private schools performed better than the public schools in core subjects within the years under study. This is because the mean score of public schools is twice that of the private schools. Again, the deviation of the scores is more in the public schools than it is in the private schools. The effect size of 3.04 shows that school-type has a big effect on students performance in the core subjects.

Ho2:

There is no significant difference in the mean score of public school students and the mean score of private school students in the Commercial Subjects (Commerce and Accounts) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WAEC).

Table 4: T -test of Mean Scores in Commercial Based Subjects

Sources of Variance	N	Mean	S.D	t-Critical	df	t-calculated	P
Public Schools	14	104.75	14.77				
				2.06	26	11.02	0.05
Private Schools	14	169	15.58				

Effect Size = 4.23

The analysis of hypothesis 4 in Table 2 shows that public schools have a mean score of 104.75 and a standard deviation of 14.77 as against the private schools mean score of 169 and a standard deviation of 15.5. Since the t-critical is less than t-calculated ($t = 2.06 < t = 11.02$), hypothesis two is rejected, indicating that there is a significant difference in the performance of public and private school students in the Commercial based subjects.

This result shows that the performance in the private schools is better than that of the public schools in Commerce and Financial Accounting. The effect size of 4.23 shows that school-type is largely responsible for students performance in the commercial subjects.

Ho 3:

There is no significant difference in the mean score of public and private school students in their performance in Social Sciences subjects (Economics and Government) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Table 5: T-test of Mean Scores in Economics and Government

Sources of Variance	N	Mean	S.D	t-Critical	df	t-calculated	P
Public Schools	14	129.04	14.24				
				2.06	26	11.57	0.05
Private Schools	14	193.25	16.39				

Effect Size = 4.44

The result of Table 5 shows that the private schools performed better than the public schools with a mean score of 193.25 and standard deviation of 16.39 against a mean score of 129.04 and standard deviation of 12.24. Since the t-critical of 2.06 is less than the t-calculated of 11.57, hypothesis three is rejected because there is a significant difference in the mean scores of candidates in public and private schools in their performance in Economics and Government in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in Lagos State. The effect size of 4.44 shows that school-type highly responsible for students performance in the Social Science subjects.

Ho 4:

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public private school students in the Sciences (Chemistry and Physics) in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

Table 6: Shows Result of Hypothesis Four

Sources of Variance	N	Mean	S.D	t-Critical	df	t-calculated	P
Public Schools	14	127.78	15.45				
				2.06	26	8.42	0.05
Private Schools	14	176.97	14.95				

Effect Size = 3.24

The analysis of hypothesis five shown on Table 6 reveals that private schools performed better than the public schools in Chemistry and Physics with a mean score of 176.97 and a standard deviation of 14.95 against the public schools' mean score value of 127.78 and standard deviation of 15.45.

Hypothesis five is rejected because the calculated t of 8.42 is greater than the critical t of 2.06. The effect size of 3.24 shows that school-type is responsible for students performance in the Science subjects.

The results of the four hypotheses tested corroborates the of the research question which was revealed that the private schools outperformed the public schools in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE).

Discussion

The findings from the study show that the private schools donned better than the public schools in the West African Senior School, Certificate Examination in Lagos State in 2004, 2005 and 2006. This result corroborates earlier studies by Okwilagwe (2005); Isiugo Abanihe and Labo-Popoola (2004). These two studies revealed that private schools performed significantly better than the public schools in the Senior School Certificate Examinations conducted by both the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) in Oyo and Osun States. The result also supports the view of Obong (2006) that the schools have failed in meeting the yearnings of the masses in providing quality education at the secondary school level.

The findings also reveal that Unity schools performed better Missionary schools in Lagos State in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination within the years studied. This means that

there is still an element of quality and quality assurance in the secondary education provided by the public schools in Nigeria. According to Eric (2006), Unity schools have well equipped laboratories and other learning facilities necessary for teaching and learning of various school subjects. He opined that they have the needed human resources to produce and continue producing the best results in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination throughout the federation.

The results also show that public schools have a major problem of large candidature. According to Ojerinde (2004) large candidature occurs when an examination body has more candidates than it could manage. Large candidature is not a problem of examination bodies alone. It also affects the public school system in Nigeria. For instance, the number of candidates that sat for English Language in the public schools is bigger than the total number that entered and sat for the same subject in the private schools.

Since a student's access to tertiary education depends on his success at the qualifying examinations at the secondary school level, result of this study may imply that it is only students that passed through the private schools that will have easy access to further tertiary education. One can equally conclude that this may be the reason why private schools charge very exorbitant fees from parents. Obong (2006) notes that parents go extra mile to raise the fees. Thus, while private school candidates sit for the exams once and make their papers, public school candidates may need to sit for November / December SSCE for private candidates to complete their papers or to get the required number of credit passes before they can receive University/Tertiary education.

Poor performance occurs when students perform below the minimum standard set in an examination. The result of this study shows that poor performance is high and common among the State Government owned public schools. In table 1, we see that Public school candidates perform poorer in Mathematics and Accounting but fluctuates in English, Biology, Commerce, Economics, Chemistry and Physics but consistent in their performance in Government. While the private candidates were consistent in Biology and Physics with slight fluctuations in English, Mathematics, Commerce, Accounts, Economics, Government and Chemistry. As we know, the standard for WAEC certification is five passes. According to Okwilagwe (2006), if a student does not meet this standard, such student would not receive any certificate for sitting the examination. Thus, teachers in State Government owned, schools should use more of formative tests to prepare their students for subsequent West African Senior School Certificate Examinations. They may use past

SSCE questions as Mock Examinations to prepare students for the actual May/June examinations.

On the conduct of principals and proprietors during examinations, many people interviewed were of the opinion that the public schools principals are more disciplined in the examination halls than private school proprietors. They say that most proprietors are involved in high level of examination malpractices; because they want to increase their patronage and impress their customers who go to any extent to raise the exorbitant fees they charge while the principals are a little carefree about the success of the students in the examinations because they are not running the schools for themselves or for profit but as a humanitarian services as the Lagos State Policy on Education stipulates. However, this two positions or opinions can be verified through a more scientific study.

Conclusion

Given the outcome of this study, one major policy implication is that urgent attention should be given to the public schools to ensure improvement in the students' performance. The government should constantly train and retrain teachers and managers of the public schools as a way of repositioning the public schools to improve the quality of their instructions to the students.

Also private-public partnership (P.P.P.) initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education under Mrs. Obi Ezekwesili, where private individuals and organizations will come in and provide certain basic infrastructural amenities and other learning facilities for public schools should be sustained. This is a sure way of saving the public schools from the looming danger of infrastructural decay.

Quality supervision and inspection should be carried out regularly to monitor teaching and learning activities in public schools. This will make teachers and students of public schools to be more committed to their teaching and learning responsibilities and thus, improve their performance in subsequent Senior School Certificate Examinations.

Since performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination is used as a measure of best and/or quality between the standard of secondary education provided by both the public schools and those provided by the private schools, it may not be wrong to conclude that private schools provide and offer best/quality secondary education in Lagos State and Nigeria in general than the public schools. This conclusion is based on the result of this study.

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