

A Comparative Analysis of Students' Performance in Economics in Private and Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The study was carried out to compare the academic performance of students in the private and public secondary schools in the subject of economics in Lagos State. Samples of 120 students and 60 teachers were randomly selected from five private secondary schools and five public secondary schools in Oshodi/Isolo and Alimosho Local Government areas of Lagos State. The instrument used for the collection of data was a questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentages, means and standard deviations. All hypotheses were subjected to a one-way analysis of variance at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the school location, socio-economic status of teachers and the availability of instructional materials have an impact on the students' performance in private secondary schools in Lagos State. It was concluded that the students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools academically.

INTRODUCTION

Basically, the aim of classroom teaching and learning is to satisfy the set objectives of instructions with the aim of attaining the goals of education. Consequently, all the activities in the classroom are geared towards achieving the societal goals of education. Thus, the expectation of the society from the learner is to perform well at least to satisfy parental expectations as well as to justify the huge national expenditure on education. Regrettably, despite the increasing public funds committed to education, the students' performance over the years for the West Africa School Certificate (WASC) has continued to be of great concern to the society as a result of continuous failure (Rufai 2010). Adu (2006) noted also that the subject of academic performance is of great concern to individuals and the society. It was observed that failure brings untold hardship and frustration to the individual.

The general consensus was that the attainment level of student performance in Senior Secondary Certificate (WAEC 2000) and General Certificate of Examination was below expectation. Considering the concern of the people for their ward performance and the fact that there is a sharp rise in the number of schools and students, Adu and Oshati (2014) noted that there is need to continuously evaluate the trends in the performance of the students. The hues and cries that normally accompany the release of student

results by the West African Examination Council every year have called for continuous research in order to find a more permanent solution to the problem.

In recent times, there has been a sudden upsurge in the establishment of private secondary schools because of the liberalization policy of the government. Most parents are of the opinion that the standard of education in private secondary schools is higher than that in the public secondary schools. In terms of achievement, Ekundayo (2013) reported that performance is largely affected by a range of statistical indicators including the student-staff ratio, qualification of teachers, years of experience of the teacher and the school environment.

Again, the society is not helping matters at all. There are a lot of factors distracting the students (playing of professional football, going into the entertainment industry) from serious academic work. The government is also shying away from their responsibilities. The World Bank report (2001) noted that most of the public schools have dilapidated infrastructures like building, laboratories and obsolete instructional material. Akinloye (2002) pointed out that the teaching job in Nigeria at all levels is not attractive. There is no nation that can rise above her teachers, so teachers have to be highly motivated. The development of any nation depends largely on the quality of her educational system. It is generally believed that the basis for any true development is hinged on the development

of human resources. Formal education therefore remains the vehicle for socio-economic development and social mobilization in any society.

Academic performance has indeed attracted a lot of research studies in recent years. Several of these studies have sought to find out the factors that influence it, how it is measured and how it can be changed. The approaches adopted in these studies tend to follow the teacher's preparedness to teach and his characteristics. While many believe that the dedication of the teacher to his duty determines academic performance, others believe that dedication of teacher only sets a limit and other factors like the personality of the teacher and environmental factors such as motivation on the part of the teacher, adequate curriculum, infrastructure, teaching aids determine how much of this limit is actually achieved.

According to Ekundayo (2013), in the quest for finding survival feet, the nation has evolved a series of socio-economic and educational measures and policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Austerity measures, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE) and other educational policies. Most of these measures have not improved the socio-economic and educational status of families in the country. They have rather increased their sufferings and widened the socio-economic gap between families. Adeyanju and Adu (2013) lamented that parents became poor due to these hard measures, such that they could no longer provide good education for their children. Also, they could no longer provide shelter, clothing and the special needs of their children in school such as provision of textbooks, school uniforms and good medical care.

High levels of illiteracy, poverty and low socio-economic status coupled with a high rate of paternal and maternal deprivation of student academic needs, which were necessitated by poor socio-economic situation of the country, have thrown many people into untold financial problems. Also, many rural and sub-urban dwellers can no longer pay the school fees of their wards. These ugly situations have promoted young students to dropout of schools. Hence, many students have since taken schooling as a secondary assignment and school attendance on vocational basis. The resultant problem posed by this, is poor academic performance in examinations like the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) most especially in the public secondary schools (Adeyanju and Adu 2013).

The rate and degree of failure by secondary schools students both, in the private and public secondary schools in external examination is now at an alarming rate. Considering the concern of the parents and guardians for their children's performance and the fact that there is a sharp increase in the number of schools and students, Adu and Oshati (2014) said that there is a need to continuously evaluate the trends in the performance of the students. Again, Kolawole (2000) agreed with Adu and Oshati (2014) when he stated that the problems that normally accompany the release of students' result by the West African Examination Council every year have called for continuous research in order to find a permanent solution to them. In recent times, there has been a sudden upsurge in the establishment of private secondary schools because of the liberalization policy of schools and the loss of confidence in public secondary schools. Most of the parents are of the opinion that the standard in private secondary schools is higher than what that in the public secondary schools.

Academic performance has indeed attracted a lot of research in recent years. Several of these studies have sought to find out the factors that influence it, how it is measured and how it can be changed. The approaches adopted in these studies tend to follow the teacher preparedness to teacher characteristics controversy. While many believe that the dedication of the teacher to his duty determines academic performance, others believe that the dedication of teacher only sets a limit and determines other factors like the personality of the teacher and environmental factors such as motivation on the part of the teacher, adequate curriculum, infrastructure, teaching aids determine how much of this limit is actually achieved. While earlier studies in this area have been teacher-centered, this study goes a step further by considering the role of the students in the entire issue. The student angle is a worthwhile aspect to consider since they are the ones who actually write the examinations, and they are indeed the final product of the entire process. However, the teacher role has not been jettisoned in any way (Adu et al. 2009).

Learning Environment

A learning environment that is not free of barriers, obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollution and so on, can constitute a health hazard, which in turn affects or reduces the students' concentration or perceptual or

conceptual focus to learning (Dibua 2009). Markets and garage located near schools have always posed a threat to students. Noise and pollution from these sources have always endangered the students' life and concentration. Therefore, for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-urban and urban areas should be located in off-zones, characterized with smoke/gas pollution, market centers or garages, as a conducive learning environment stimulates learning, understanding and high perception.

Other factors, according to Dansey (2004), complimenting environmental and socio-economic factors in producing high academic achievements and performance include good teaching, counseling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidating buildings, lacking mental stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangements will also be destructive. Dansey, however, noted that the innovative environment does stimulate a head start in learning and mental perception. It has also been proved that students that come from a simulative environment with laboratory equipment or those that are taught with rich instructional aids, pictures and allowed to demonstrate using their functional peripheral nerves like eyes, hand and sense of taste, performed better than those trained under the theoretical canopy of abstraction. Thus, teaching and learning should be done in an organized, planned and fortified environment with learning instructional aides to stimulate the students' sense of conception, perception and concentration in order to facilitate a systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them. In such a combination of a healthy family background, living in a good environment plus the child being educated in a conducive environment with fortified learning or instruction aids or motivational incentives, prompts good academic performance, while lack of it retards academic performance.

Teaching Equipment and Facilities

Bakare (1994) affirmed that the condition of the teaching equipment and facilities is perhaps the most nagging problem in the Nigerian secondary school system. He stressed that in most schools across the federation, there is inadequacy of basic infrastructure required for effective teaching and learning. Laboratories and libraries are either non-existent or very poorly

equipped. How could one expect candidates to perform well in schools with no laboratory, no microscope or apparatus, no books in the library and no audio-visual teachings aids. Emunemu et al. (2014) opined that an institution, which lacks essential equipment, should not expect to reasonably achieve its desired objectives. More so, it is also important that the environment must be a challenging one if it is to arouse the inherent qualities and faculties of the students. It is a common phenomenon today for stakeholders in education to complain about the inadequate school facilities, which invariably bring about lack of job satisfaction on the part of the principals and teachers.

The negative impact of a poor economy in the nation is felt here. The governments at the federal, state and local levels do not seem to set aside enough funds to provide these essential equipment for schools. The expense of having several secondary schools is that there is usually no adequate provision for servicing the equipment and when any of it gets damaged it is difficult sometimes to get them repaired and replaced.

Method of Teaching

Adu and Adeyanju (2013) pointed out that a teacher could have all the qualifications but could yet cause academic failure of his students if he has a poor method of teaching. The effect is that the students do not gain from the lessons. Topics of different nature will require different methods of teaching but if the teacher uses the same method all the time, then the students are unmotivated. This could also lead to truancy on the basis of "our teacher does not teach well". If such is said of trained teachers, what then will be said of untrained teachers? Emunemu et al. (2014) emphasized in this regard that additional classroom practices, such as individualization, collaboration and authentic assessment should be put in place. Individualization means that the teacher instructs each student by drawing upon the knowledge and experience that a particular student already possesses. Collaborative learning means that teachers allow students to work together in groups, while authentic assessment refers to the fact that assessment occurs as an artifact of learning activities. All these can be accomplished, for instance, through individual and group projects that occur on an ongoing basis rather than at a single point in time.

This then suggests that this set of classroom practices if well tailored and used can produce qualitative improvement in the academic performances of all students, regardless of their background. Decisions made by teachers about classroom practices can either facilitate student learning or become an obstacle irrespective of the level of preparation students bring into the classrooms. The secondary school child is squarely within the adolescent years and it is known, or it should be known, the problems of children during this period. The child's mind must be at peace with what goes on in the school before he can profit from it. To channel the immature minds of the adolescents to purposeful endeavors needs judicious guidance services in every secondary school. The contacts with the schools revealed that only a small percentage of them have some measure of guidance services. One says, "Some measure of guidance services" because the guidance counselor is often made to teach specific subjects. A good majority of the schools have no guidance counselors (Adu and Adeyanju 2013).

One of the reasons why the services of guidance counselors are extremely necessary in the secondary school apart from psychological and emotional reasons is the inordinate ambition of some parents especially among the elite group. They compel their children to study certain subjects leading to specific careers in life even though their children are not interested in these subjects and since they are not interested they hardly do well in them. In their attempt to keep to their parents' wish and in the absence of guidance counselors, they end up neither learning the subjects dictated to them by their parents, nor the other subjects they were originally interested in. A few of them who prove tough and continue to work in order to fulfill the wishes of their parents may end up as broken personalities. Eventually they fail the WAEC examination in these subjects. If one has adequate guidance services in the school, the guidance counselor could even reach out the parents of such children and counsel them to avoid compelling their wards to learn specific subjects.

Statement of the Problem

There has been an increasing concern about the overall academic achievements of public and private secondary school students as measured

by the results released by the National Examination Council (NECO) and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCCE). Poor academic achievement is taken in this study to mean low scholastic achievement that falls short of expectation. Student performance in the West Africa Examination Certificate (WAEC) has revealed that many students are under achieving (Adu 2006). Frequent incidence of leakages and examination malpractices on the part of the examination body may not be totally unconnected with lack of dedication on the part of teachers, inadequate teaching materials, supervision, qualified staff, exponential enrolment, automatic promotion, low funding of education on the part of government, low level of commitment of students and poor provision, broken homes, emphasis on materialism on the part of parents, and incapability on the part of principal. Some parents and other stakeholders in secondary education have argued that private schools have a more positive attitude towards intellectual development of students and therefore offer greater learning opportunities to their students' performance in academics. On the contrary, it is felt that governments (owners of the public schools) provide little or no intellectual and motivational environment for their students, which in turn has adverse effect on the students' academic performance. It was against this background that this research work was carried out to determine a comparative analysis of academic performance in both the public and private secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to compare the academic performance of students in public and private schools. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate the relationship between the academic performance of students and socio-economic backgrounds of teachers.
2. Find out if there is any relationship between the academic performance of students and the location of the schools.
3. Identify the impact that instructional material and quality of infrastructures have on academic performance of students in private and public secondary schools.

Hypotheses

H01: The school location does not affect the students' academic performance in public and private schools.

H02: The academic performance of students does not depend on the socio-economic background of the teachers.

H03: The availability of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities do not affect the academic performance of students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the comparative analysis of academic performance of both public and private secondary schools in Oshodi-Isolo and Alimosho Local Government Areas of Lagos State.

Population/Sample/Sampling Technique

The sample population of the study comprised of teachers and students from selected private and public schools in Oshodi-Isolo and Alimosho Local Government Areas of Lagos State. A sample of 10 schools—five private and five public were randomly selected from 28 public secondary schools and 23 private secondary schools in both, Alimosho and Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Areas of Lagos State. Six teachers were randomly selected from each school to arrive at a total of 60 teachers and 12 students from each school to make a total of 120 students.

Instrument

The Student Academic Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ) was used as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it contained information concerning the students' performance. The second questionnaire was designed to reflect the teacher qualification and experience in relation to students' performance questionnaire (TQESPQ). Also, the SAPQ consisted of the name of the schools, sex and class. The TQESPQ was designed to investigate the students' performance in relation to teacher-student ratio, as well as qualifications both, in terms of experience and academic. The assessment item in this questionnaire is on a 5-point Likert Scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Experts in the field of Statistical and Economics designed the content validity of the instrument. The instrument was pre-tested using a sample of one private and public school, and two teachers from each school after which some of the instrument items were discarded. The reliability coefficients were 0.81 and 0.91, respectively.

Data Administration and Analysis

The researchers administered the questionnaires personally in each of the selected schools to both the students and the teachers that formed a part of the study. Data collected was analyzed using simple percentage, the mean and standard deviation. All hypotheses were subjected to a one-way analysis of variance statistical tool at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

This study compares the performance of students in public and private secondary schools in Lagos Metropolis. One hundred and twenty students (120) and sixty teachers (60) were used as the sample population for the research work. Two sets of constructed questionnaires, one for the students, and the other for the teachers and an achievement test in economics were used as the instrument in this study. A One-Way Analysis of Variance Statistical tool was used for data analysis at a 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses Testing and Interpretation of Results

H01: The school location does not affect the student academic performance in public and private schools.

From Table 1, the calculated F-value of students in the private school (4.41) is more pronounced and greater than the critical F-value (3.07). Likewise, the calculated F-value of students in public schools (3.62) is greater than the critical F-value (3.07). However, the students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools and this is aided by the location of the school and other factors such as availability of instructional materials, qualification of teachers and the supervisory role of principals.

Table 1: School location and student academic performance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>F-calculated</i>	<i>F-critical</i>
School location	3.72	0.94	1.22	3.07
Performance in private	19.85	4.36	4.41	3.07
Performance in public	18.83	3.72	3.62	3.07

Source: Field Study 2013

H02: Academic performance of students does not depend on the socioeconomic status of teachers.

From Table 2, the calculated F-value of socio-economic status of teachers in private secondary schools (3.10) is greater than the socioeconomic status of teachers in public secondary schools (1.23). This implies that the well-being of teachers has a significant impact on the students' performance in private schools, as the calculated F-value (3.10) is greater than the critical F-value (3.07). The private school teachers have a better edge than those in public schools because of better salary and good condition of service in private schools.

H03: The availability of instructional materials (IM) and infrastructural facilities (IF) does not affect the academic performance of students.

Table 3 indicates that the instructional materials and infrastructural facilities in private schools have a F-ratio value of 3.67, which is greater than the public schools (3.04). Hence, more materials are provided in private schools to aid the level of understanding of students, which invariably makes them perform better than those in public schools.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis states that the school location does not affect the students' academic performance in public and private schools. A one-way analysis of variance statistical tool was used to test this hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that F-calculated value of students in private schools (3.19) was more pronounced and greater than the F-critical value (3.07) at a 0.05 level of significance. This implies that students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools and this was aided by the location of the school. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This result confirms the assertion of Dansey (2004) that for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-urban areas should be located off zones, characterized with smoke. He goes further to say that a conducive learning environment stimulates learning, understanding and high perception. It also corroborates Emunemu et al. (2014) who assert that teaching and learning should be done un-

Table 2: Socio- economic status of teachers and student academic performance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>F-calculated</i>	<i>F-critical</i>
Socio economic status (Private schools)	19.83	4.07	3.10	3.07
Socio economic status (Public schools)	11.34	0.56	1.23	3.07

Source: Field Study 2013

Table 3: Instructional materials and infrastructural facilities and student academic performance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>F-calculated</i>	<i>F-critical</i>
Materials (Private)	13.32	3.22	3.67	3.07
Performance (Private)	18.75	4.35	3.55	3.07
Materials (Public)	0.11	2.11	3.04	3.07
Performance (Public)	16.33	3.31	1.09	3.07

Source: Field Study 2013

der an organized and fortified environment with learning instructional aids to stimulate the students' sense of conception, perception and concentration in order to facilitate a systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis states that the academic performance of students does not depend on the socio-economic status of teachers. This hypothesis was tested with a one-way analysis of variance at a 0.05 level of significance. From the results obtained, calculated F-value of socioeconomic status of teachers (4.20) was higher than that of academic performance of students and higher than the critical F-value (3.07). This implies that the wellbeing of teachers has a significant impact on students for both public and private schools. Preferably those in private schools will have a better edge than those in public schools. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This result is in support of the assertion of the Programs International Student Assessment (PISA 2000) that their home background influences the academic success of students while socio-economic status reinforces the activities and functioning of the teachers and students. From the above, it was revealed that the home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. A poor parental case with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance. Adu and Oshati (2014) also stated that there is a positive relationship between the socio economic background of parents in terms of occupation and the students' academic performance while Aina (1997) observed that home encouragement promotes higher academic achievement and reality aspirations among students.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis states that the availability of instructional materials and provision of infrastructural facilities does not affect academic performance of students. This hypothesis was tested with a one-way analysis of variance at a 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed by the results obtained that more materials were provided in private schools to aid the

level of understanding of students, which invariably improved their academic performance than those in public schools. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. The result confirms the assertion of Olayemi (2001) that buildings, furniture and equipment contribute immensely and remarkably to the intellectual growth of the learners most importantly as instructional strategies are often influenced by the quantity and quality of the school facilities. The result is also in line with the findings of Bakare (1994) who affirmed that the condition of teaching equipment and facilities is perhaps the most nagging problem of the Nigeria Secondary School System. It was stressed that in most schools across the Federation, there is severe lack of basic infrastructure required for effective teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

Students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools academically. The wellbeing of teachers had a significant impact on the students' performance in both private and public schools. Those in private schools had a better edge than those in public schools. There was availability of more materials in private schools, which aided the level of understanding of students and this invariably improved their academic performance compared to those in public schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and findings of this research work, the researchers hereby make the following recommendations:

1. The teachers in public secondary schools should have better working conditions.
2. The government should take steps to further review the teachers' salary in public secondary schools.
3. The government should provide affordable public transport for students.
4. The government should further encourage the establishment of private schools.

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