

Evaluation

In

Theory and Practice

Edited by
Dr. Adenike E. Emeke
and
Dr. Charles V. Abe

EVALUATION
IN
THEORY AND PRACTICE

A Book of Reading in Honour of
Prof. Joseph O. Obemeata

Edited by

Dr. E. Adenike Emeke
Dr. Charles V. Abe

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Notes of Contributors

1. **Prof. Pai Obanya:** Is an Education strategist, consulting for various institutions within the country and outside Nigeria.
2. **Prof. James A. Ajala:** Is a professor in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Ibadan and currently the Head of the Department.
3. **Prof. S.Y. Erinsho:** Is a professor and former director Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye Nigeria.
4. **Prof. Joseph O. Obemeata:** Is an Education Consultant and an evaluator in whose honor this book was instituted to mark his retirement from the University of Ibadan.
5. **Prof. F.O.P Olagunju:** Is a professor in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Nigeria.
6. **Dr. A.A. Amori:** Is an Education Officer with the Oyo State Ministry of Education.
7. **Dr. (Mrs.) P.N. Ndukwu:** Is the Acting Provost of the St. Augustine's College of Education, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.
8. **Dr. E. Adenike Emeke:** Is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Education. University of Ibadan.
9. **Dr. F.V. Falaye:** Is a Research fellow in the Institute of Education. University of Ibadan.
10. **Dr. Okechukwu O. Nwaubani:** Lecturer at the St. Augustine's College of Education, Akoka, Lagos.
11. **Dr. E.A. Okwilagwe:** Is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.

12. **Dr. Modupe M. Osokoya:** Is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.
13. **Dr. Monica Odinko:** Is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.
14. **Dr. C. Adeola Adeyoju:** Is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.
15. **Dr. S.C. Opara:** Lecturer St. Augustine's College of Education, Akoka, Lagos.
16. **Dr. Andrew O. Okwilagwe:** Is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan.
17. **Dr. Martins Fabumi (MNIM):** Is a Lecturer in the Department of Educational Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
18. **Rev. Sr. (Dr.) Ezeasor, Mary Emmanuella Ngozi:** Is a lecturer in St. Augustine's College of Education Akoka Lagos.
19. **Dr. Adebunsi Adebukola I.:** Is the Co-ordinator of Foundation for Women Empowerment and Peace Initiatives, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).
20. **Dr. B.A. Adegoke:** Is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.
21. **Barr V.A. Asuru:** Is a lecturer at the River State College of Education, Port-Harcourt.
22. **Mr A.D.O. Adesina:** A Lecturer in the College of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria.
23. **Mr. B.A. Adeyemi:** Is a Lecturer in the College of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria.
24. **Dr Felix O. Ibode:** Is a Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan.

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Evaluating The Private – Public School Dichotomy: The Missing Link

E. A. Okwilagwe

E-mail: genaokwilagwe @ yahoo . com.

Introduction

It is the contention among Nigerian elites that there is a widening gap in the education provided by public and private schools for adolescents in Nigeria. The establishment of private schools in Nigeria (particularly in the metropolitan city of Ibadan, Oyo State) 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 adolescents. Issues on the widening gap in secondary education provided by these two types of schools border largely on the delivery of quality education.

Quality in education is seen as the maintenance of standards or excellence. It is the aspiration of every school management and provider of education in recent times to want to maintain standards in schools. The quest for quality would seem to stem from four basic imperatives as identified by West – Burnham (1992). These are the concern to provide optimal opportunities for children to achieve their full potentials in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes, the consciousness of the society/environment to achieve quality since the schools interact with community/society, the need to meet the expectations of clients (parents), and the issue of accountability provided through “reporting and inspection”. Quality of education as identified by educationists should pervade every area of the education system in terms of the input, process and output dimensions. Quality should not and cannot be restricted to how many were able to achieve which is a representation of the output dimension. Rather, Obanya (2002) contends that the degree of excellence should be stressed.

Quality of education has come to be linked with such indicators as quality teachers, improved curriculum delivery, quality infrastructures and facilities, conducive learning environment, provision of adequate learning

materials, training and re-training of teachers, improved teacher – pupil ratio, parental involvement, increased and improved monitoring and supervision of learning, and quality output among others.

Research evidence has consistently shown that educational indicators such as teacher quality (qualification/experience), class size, curriculum quality, provision and use of school facilities are potent determinants of students' achievement (Heyneman, 1983; Osafehinti, 1984; Gannicott and Throsby, 1992; Schiefelbeni and Farrel, 1993).

Previous studies are also in support of the fact that the effects of conducive learning environment, training and retraining of teachers, parental/community involvement can no longer be discountenanced when issues on quality education provision and quality output are being discussed (Osafehinti, 1984; Onocha, 1985; Idowu, 1992; Obemeata, 1995).

In order to achieve teacher efficiency and school effectiveness and indeed quality education, there is the need for proper monitoring and supervision of schools and personnel. Increased and improved monitoring exercises and supervision of school teaching personnel ensures that the best in the system can be achieved. The quality of school management besides curriculum reform has been found to be an important indicator of quality of education (Ganicort and Throsby, 1992).

If the intent of establishing private schools is to bridge the gap between what ought to be and what is in the delivery of quality secondary education in Nigerian secondary schools, it will be of interest to stakeholders to know the extent to which private schools are achieving this objective. This is essential considering the fact that exorbitant fees are charged by these school owners. It is in the light of the foregoing that it is pertinent to ask if private schools are meeting the objectives for which they are set up or to what extent are they really relevant in the system.

Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which quality education is provided in private secondary schools compared with their public counterparts in Oyo State. It was also of interest to isolate the key issues that are responsible for the widening gap in the education provided by these schools if any.

Methodology

The Sample: The sample consisted of a total of eight (8) secondary schools, four (4) public and four (4) private. These schools are located in the metropolitan city of Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State. The public secondary schools were between 15 and a little over 20 years old and were of the status of grades I and II, whereas, the private schools were between 3 and 6 years old and were relatively younger.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to gather data: structured interview schedule and classroom observation form. The interview schedule consisted of items that enabled the school heads provide information on matters that had to do with administration and provision of quality education in both school types.

Documentary analysis was carried out to obtain further information on the quality of output (achievement).

Data Collection and Analysis

The investigator personally conducted the interviews with school heads and observed the teaching-learning activities in the schools. These were randomly obtained for JSS1 and II, SSI and II, as the other classes were either writing their external examination or had completed them. Analysis of the documents was also personally done.

Data analysis involved the use of qualitative and descriptive statistics and graphs.

Results and Discussion

(a) Interview with School Heads on Quality of Secondary Education Delivery

The findings of the interview with heads of some secondary schools in Ibadan, see the underlisted factors as being determinants of the quality of education in public and private schools.

Quality of Education: There is no consensus on the views of heads of schools on the quality of education provided in public and private schools in the city. The views of older (grade 1) school heads, are

that, public schools compete favourably with private schools on students' performance in spite of the high quality of students, that private schools admit. However, younger public schools, contended, that, the quality of education in private schools is higher than those in public schools because of the higher quality of students usually admitted. The heads of private schools sampled corroborates this latter view. In addition, they contend that they have more educational materials to complement their teaching. That, both teachers and students are more committed to their work. They contend further, that the number of students in public schools are unwieldy and difficult to control. It is not, also, in the character of private schools to go on strike, a common feature of public schools. Findings revealed that, some private schools prepare students for other higher external examinations, and, so, they cannot afford to toil with the quality of preparation given to their students.

Teachers: With a teacher/student ratio of between 1:30 and 1:43 in public schools, as compared with between 1:4 and 1:20 in private schools, the quality of teachers as shown in Table 1 and Figures 1 (a – h) would seem to suggest that there are more professionally qualified teachers, in private than in public schools. However, this is far from being true, as private schools tend to recruit more teachers with less professional training. As suggested by some school heads, recruitment of teachers should be on merit and not on tribal/ethnic sentiments or nepotism consideration.

Improved Teaching: Virtually all the schools revealed that teachers vary their methods of teaching. However, in the public schools sampled, only one out of the four schools could substantiate this claim with evidence. It was obvious that there were avenues for teachers to improve on knowledge in their subject areas by attending workshops and conferences organized regularly for various subject teachers. In one of the schools, teachers in Science and English were actually preparing to attend one of such workshops organized by the State's Ministry of Education at the time of visit. In the private schools sampled, some form of improved methods of teaching was in use.

Table 1
Quality of Teachers in Public and Private Schools in Ibadan

Quality	Public School												Private School											
	1			2			3			4			1			2			3			4		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Graduate teachers with professional qualification	25	48	73	21	40	61	5	23	28	NA	NA	24	10	5	15	-	-	11	5	-	5	3	2	5
Graduate teachers without professional qualification	2	6	6	6	3	9	4	1	5	NA	NA	12	5	7	12	-	-	4	7	1	8***	7	8	15***
Teachers with NCE	9	17	26	8	28	26	7	16	23	NA	NA	17	1	1	2	-	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	1	2	3*	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1**	-	-	-	1**	-	1	2	1	3**
Grand Total	37	72	109	36	73	109	16	40	56	-	-	55	16	14	30	-	-	16	13	3	16	12	11	23

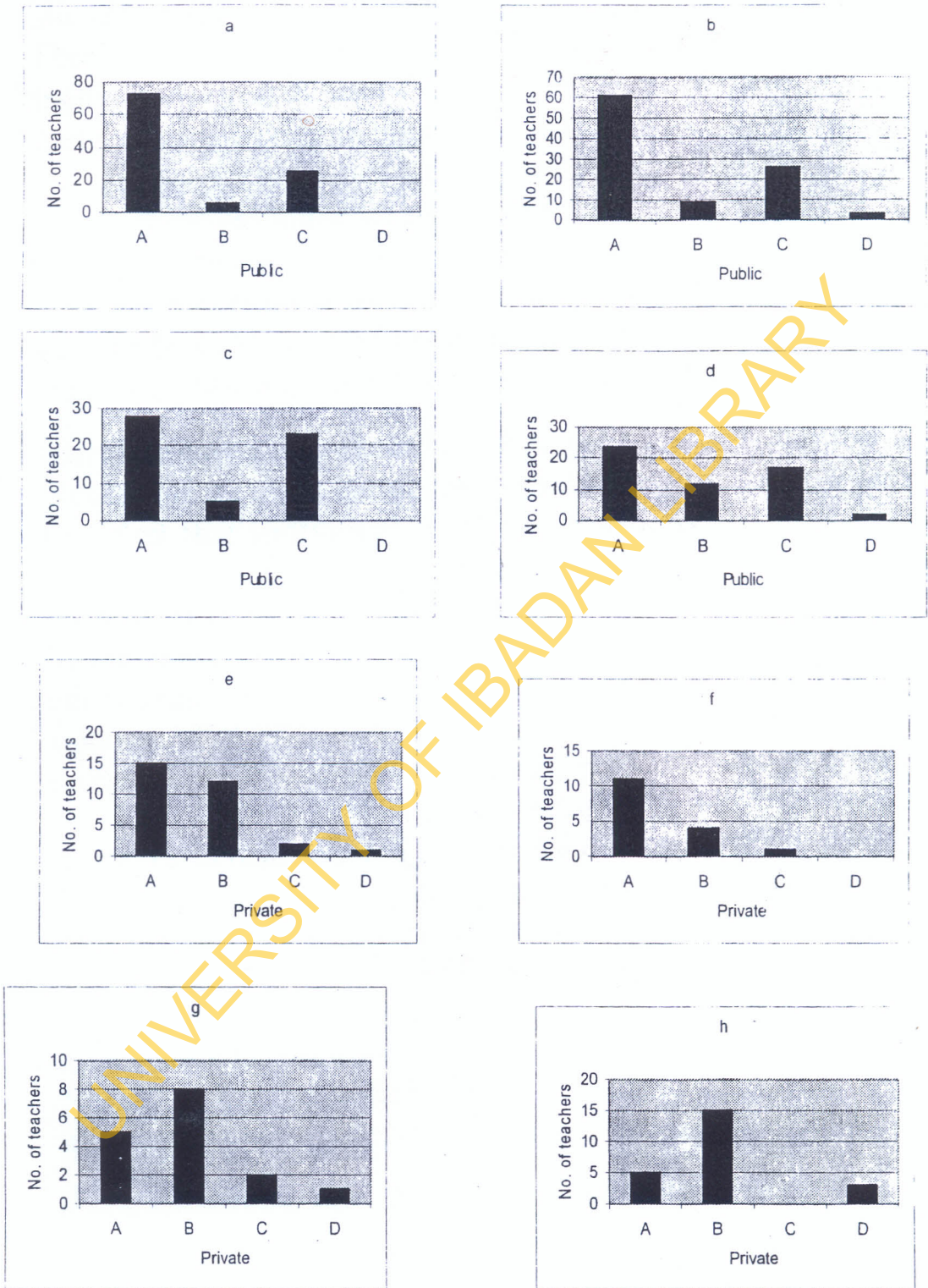
NB = M = Male F = Female T = Total

* NYSC

** National Diploma/HND

*** Some evidence of higher degree qualification (M.Ed./Ph.D.)

NA = Information not available.



A = Trained graduates
B = Untrained graduates
C = NCE holders
D = others (HND/ND)

Figure I: (a-h): Quality of teachers in public and private schools

In one of the schools, students had “private reading cards”. This enables students to read up two or three literature books a week from the school library, summarize them and report to their teachers for grading. Other methods included the use of “assignment book” whereby students do all assignments given from home. These are checked by the teachers who sign the assignment books while parents regularly monitor their wards to ensure these assignments are done by counter-signing them. In other schools, in-house seminars on teaching methods, test construction and continuous assessment are organized on regular basis for teachers. Experts in some fields were called upon to give talks on their trade/production of finished goods. Regular workshops were similarly organized for teachers.

Curriculum enrichment: Two of the public schools visited, indicated that teachers do not enrich the curriculum in use. One other school revealed that individual teachers (especially teachers of English Language) do improve on the curriculum used. They incorporate content areas, which they feel students should know, but are omitted in the government syllabus. The last school had enriched her curriculum by introducing into it a programme called “Life Planning Education” (LIFE). This programme creates awareness of teenage problems and how to prevent such and prepare adolescents for life.

In the private schools, various forms of curriculum enrichment measures were introduced in three of the schools visited. These include indepth teaching of some content areas after comparing existing syllabuses with those of foreign examination bodies (like London GCE, IGSE and other top private schools like Corona College). The use of “projects”, a termly activity whereby students’ ingenuity is tapped with little or no guidance from the teachers and are presented to their parents on “parents day” was common. Other activities include what is tagged “talent show”, “hand on skills”, and computer appreciation/awareness skill development.

Examination Success: Available school results in the sampled schools were from 2000-2001 for WAEC and NECO Senior Secondary Certification Examinations respectively. The performance of students in WAEC examinations in most public schools is about average. This include students with five (5) credit passes and above in older schools but four (4) credits in younger schools. The success rate ranges from 20% to 50% in public schools. The performance in private schools in WAEC

Senior Secondary Certificate Examination is above average. Virtually every student enrolled, succeeded with six (6) credit passes and above, and accounts for between 50% - 79% success rate. Comparatively, the performance in NECO conducted in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination is higher than in WAEC exams in both types of school, but success rate is higher in private than public school.

Student Discipline: The nature and frequency of students' indiscipline in schools are varied. Lateness to school seems to top the list in all school types. Truancy, rudeness, laziness, fighting and stealing in that order, seems to predominate in public schools. Stubbornness, permissive behaviour and minor disobedience seems to predominate in private schools. The measures used to instill student discipline also vary among school types. More severe punishments seems to be employed in public schools (e.g. canning and manual labour) whereas, more liberal punishment seems to be used in private schools (e.g. "writing lines", liberal use of corporal punishment and picking of litter). The use of counselling, invitation of parents for talks and moral talks by experts for correcting bad behaviour seems to be common in all types of school. The use of suspension for persistent and serious indiscipline is also common, but, used with care in private schools than in public schools.

Funding: The funding of private schools contrast sharply with that of the public schools. It was reliably gathered that by virtue of their being funded by the government, public secondary schools are handicapped in the amount of subvention available to them on a termly basis which is a paltry sum of ₦50.00 per student, and is hardly received on time. Furthermore, the school heads lamented that the free education policy in the State does not allow for the payment of any fees except for the purchase of assessment report cards. Contrariwise private schools have a free hand in charging fees, and are therefore, able to meet the financial needs of their schools. Besides, many of the proprietors and proprietresses are business individuals and can easily divert funds from other sources to meet school needs.

Others: These include having a mini zoo in the school compound, engaging in practical agriculture and responsibility training. These seems to be more in private than public schools. It is the opinion of school heads that government should introduce and implement good and enduring

programmes from overseas countries into the country and that every Nigerian child should be computer literate. In their view the government and administrators should not kill the nation's education because they can afford to send their children for overseas training.

(b) Key Issues Responsible for the Widening Education Gap in the Public – Private Schools

School Size: Public schools tend to have large school size irrespective of their age, whereas, private schools tend to have small size. The largest school size was close to 3,000 students while the least was a little below 2,000 students for public schools. School size for private schools is relatively smaller and it ranges from 30 to under 250 students. This is evident in Tables II a & b.

Class Size: The class size in public schools is larger than those in private schools. In public school, average class size is in the neighbourhood of 35-70 for science classes, but can be as high as 90-124 for Art classes. In contrast, average class size in private school is between 3 and 25 but can be as high as between 30-38. Class size is, also, higher in lower classes such as JSS 1 and SS1 than in terminal classes (JSS III and SS III). The number of class arms range from 3 to 9 in some public schools while in private schools it is between 1 and 2.

Enrolment: School enrolment in terms of the number of boys and girls vary markedly in both school types. In junior secondary classes 1-3, enrolment of boys seems to be higher in older public schools than for younger ones. The reverse is true for enrolment of girls. This trend seems to be the case in senior secondary classes. In private secondary schools there is no readily observed pattern of boys and girls enrolment (refer to Tables II a & b).

Social Background of Students: Older public schools have students that cut across all social background, (high, middle and low) while the younger ones have more students from low social background. Students from most of the private schools are from high and middle social background. However, it is not uncommon to find few students from low social background whose parents work extra hard to see that their wards get quality education.

Table II(a): School Enrolment and School Size in Public Schools in the City of Ibadan

Class	Public School											
	1			2			3			4		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
JSS I	219	180	399	229	193	422	140	193	333	201	232	433
II	245	257	502	271	237	508	168	176	344	177	193	370
III	255	211	466	249	217	466	157	168	325	115	133	248
SSI	399	350	749	319	301	620	200	199	399	187	198	385
II	231	245	526	226	202	428	84	123	207	93	102	195
III	173	140	313	173	161	334	98	100	198	69	67	136
Grand Total	1,572	1,383	2,955	1,467	1,311	2,778	847	959	1,806	842	925	1,767

NB = B= Boys, G = Girls, T= Total

Table II(b)
School Enrolment and School Size in Private Schools in the City of Ibadan

Class	Private School											
	1			2			3			4		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
JSSI	35	15	50	24	14	38	4	3	7	13	10	23
II	36	14	53	16	18	34	3	7	10	12	5	17
III	22	13	35	16	14	30	3	-	3	8	10	18
SS I	33	18	51	20	20	40	2	3	5	6	6	12
II	13	25	38	35	25	60	-	3	3	10	11	21
III	10	12	22	14	21	35	2	-	2	4	4	8
Grand Total .	149	100	249	125	112	237	14	16	30	53	46	99

NB = B= Boys, G = Girls, T= Total

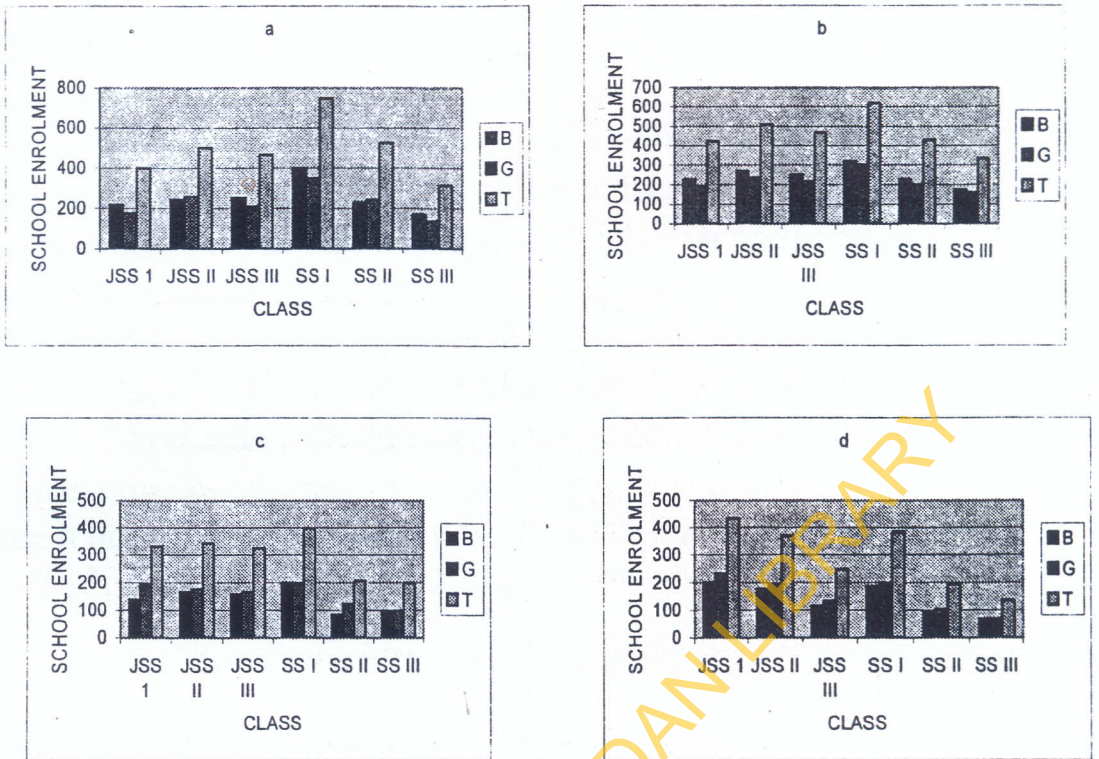


Figure II (a-d): School Enrolment/School Size in four Public Schools in Ibadan

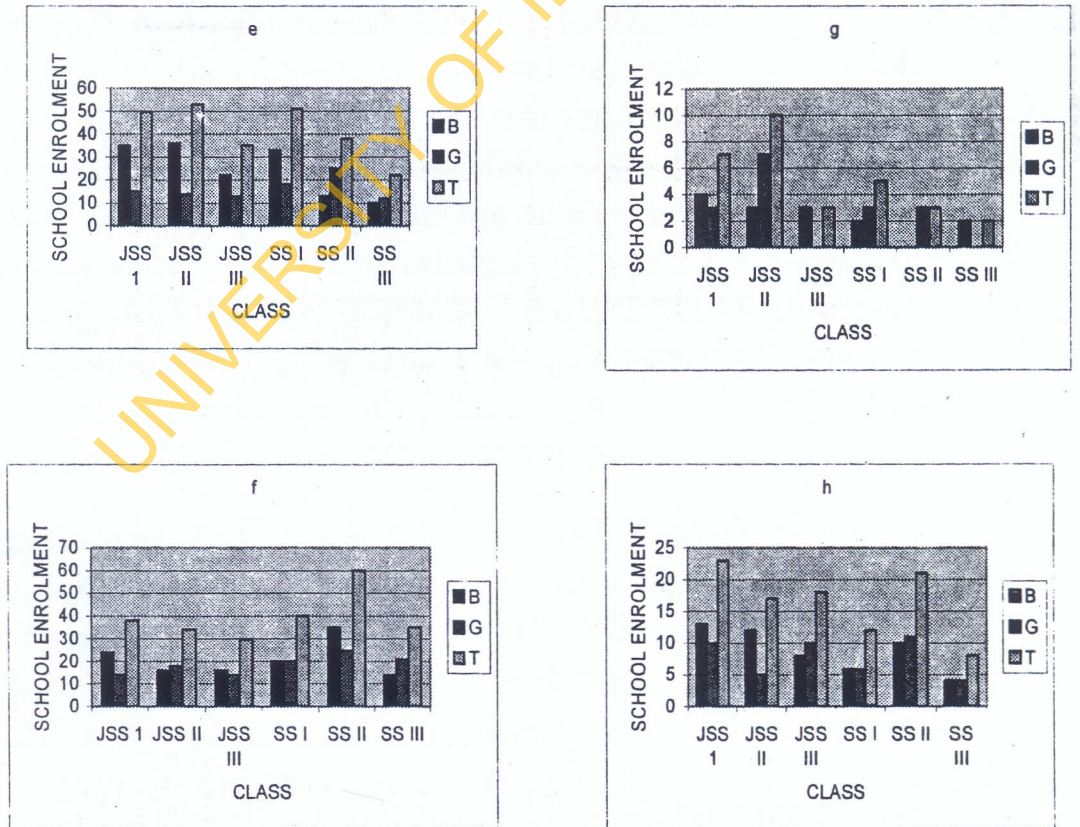


Figure II (e-h): School Enrolment/School Size in four Private Schools in Ibadan

Teacher/Educational Materials Availability: Teacher/educational materials availability is higher in private than public schools. The variety of educational materials is equally higher in private than public schools. Such educational materials include commercially made charts, globe, learning kits in Sciences and Geography, Agriculture and Introductory Technology besides improvised teacher made instructional materials. There are relevant and modern books for teachers in their specialized areas and fairly-well stocked libraries in both school types. Most of the private schools have fairly-well equipped laboratories for respective subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Introductory Technology. This cannot be said of most public schools. Nevertheless, the ratio of teacher to available educational materials in private schools is still not adequate. There is, however, conscious and continued efforts by these schools to improve on what is available.

Classroom Teaching Practices: Heads of both types of school are of the view that their teachers are qualified subject teachers, and that, they prepare adequately for their lessons. They also write notes of lesson, which are duly checked. However, in spite of this contention, Table 1 and Figures 1(a-h) show that some private schools employ more of less professionally trained teachers than public schools. An analysis of the teaching-learning process in some randomly selected classes in both school types, reveal that teaching hardly go on in most classes. This occurred about the third and fourth periods (10.00 – 10.45a.m), and sixth period (12noon – 12.55p.m) shortly after the break period for the day.

In classes where teaching and learning were going on, it was observed that teaching was teacher - dominated (i.e. teacher lecturing, teacher or students writing notes on the board). There were few interactive learning sessions in SS I, JSS II and III in both types of school, and in subjects such as English, Economics, Integrated Science and Business Studies.

Examination Success: The public schools sampled have been presenting students for external examinations such as the West African Examination Council's conducted Senior Secondary Certificate of Educations (WAEC/SSCE) for no less than 10 years. The National Examination Council (NECO) is only two years old in conducting Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations in the State. Two of the private schools presented their students as external candidates in other schools, while one is just having a go at external examinations.

Table III(a)
WAEC/SSCE Examination Results in Six Subjects at Credit and Distinction Levels for 2000 and 2001 Academic Sessions

School		Public School Year		Private School Year	
		2000	2001	2000	2001
1.	ENG	34(8)	100(22)	33(87)	-
	MATH	128(29)	107(24)	24(74)	N.A
	PHY	74(40)	61(38)	10(42)	-
	CHM	53(30)	61(37)	16(59)	-
	BIO	55(21)	100(24)	33(87)	-
	YOR	295(66)	250(85)	37(97)	-
2.	ENG	13(4)	96(28)	-	-
	MATH	100(23)	85(26)	**	**
	PHY	65(39)	28(26)	-	-
	CHM	56(34)	28(21)	-	-
	BIO	59(14)	46(12)	-	-
	YOR	279(62)	251(68)	-	-
3.	ENG	15(8)	-	-	-
	MATH	29(11)	N.A.	**	**
	PHY	5(8)	-	-	-
	CHM	7(11)	-	-	-
	BIO	13(5)	-	-	-
	YOR	71(27)	-	-	-
4.	ENG	2(1)	NR	-	
	MATH	24(15)	15(13)		
	PHY	9(19)	7(27)	N.A.	*
	CHM	12(25)	6(23)		
	BIO	17(11)	8(7)		
	YOR	55(34)	72(59)		

Figures in Parentheses are percentages

N.A. = Not Available; N.R. = Not released

**Presented first set of candidates for examination in 2002.*

*** Students enrolled as external candidates.*

A close look at WAEC/SSCE results in Six (6) subject areas indicate that students' performance in English Language and Mathematics appear higher in private than public schools. The same holds true for Physics, Chemistry and Biology. It is the contention of some heads of public schools that the seemingly low performance in these subjects is partly due to the large number of enrolment in these subjects. Students' performance in Yoruba Language is, however, consistently high in both types of school (Refer to Tables IIIa and b)

Table III(b)
NECO/SSCE Examination Results in Six Subjects at Credit and Distinction Levels for 2000 and 2001 Academic Sessions

School	Public School			Private School	
	Year			Year	
		2000	2001	2000	2001
1.	ENG	24(62)	308(66)	-	35(100)
	MATH	24(62)	254(55)	N.A.	24(69)
	PHY	20(95)	110(70)	-	20(82)
	CHM	19(91)	110(70)	-	27(94)
	BIO	26(67)	206(44)	-	34(97)
	YOR	28(78)	262(59)	-	27(77)
2.	ENG	289(72)	204(59)	-	
	MATH	155(38)	182(53)	-	
	PHY	131(85)	42(48)	N.A.	**
	CHM	106(68)	57(55)		
	BIO	304(75)	167(48)		
	YOR	278(69)	201(58)		
3.	ENG	-	-	-	
	MATH	-	-		
	PHY	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	CHM	-	-		
	BIO	-	-		
	YOR	-	-		
4.	ENG	-	6(5)		
	MATH	-	5(4)		
	PHY	N.A.	20(74)	N.A.	*
	CHM	-	15(56)		
	BIO	-	13(11)		
	YOR	-	21(20)		

Figures in Parentheses are percentages

N.A. = Not Available; N.R. = Not released

*Presented first set of candidates for examination in 2002.

** Students enrolled as external candidates.

The performance in WAEC seems to be the trend in NECO/SSCE examinations. The exception, however, is that performance in most subjects in older schools compares favourably with those of private schools than in younger public schools (refer to Table: IIIb). Private schools report some exceptional performance such as students obtaining (10 A's in junior School Certificate Examinations (JSCE), which qualifies them for entry into Science College. Some other students qualify for the school for the gifted or earn university admission in SS two.

Teacher/Student Ratio: Teacher–student ratio is higher in public schools than in private schools. A ratio of between 1:25 and 1:33 in public schools is common whereas it is between 1:2 and 1:15 in private schools.

Involvement of Parents: Parents are not involved in the education of their wards in public schools except in cases of occasional occurrence of disciplinary problems, for “Open Day” and “Sport Day”. They are also, free to call and make inquires about their childrens’ academic and moral welfare. Beside these, parents do not contribute to the financial education of their wards, due to the free education programme of the state.

In most private schools, the involvement of parents in financial activities beyond the school fees they pay is not too different from what obtains in public schools. What is different, is the frequency of their involvement in academic activities, earlier on mentioned in addition to other activities outlined for students’ enjoyment. For instance, activities as “Talent Show”, “Economic Skill Development” and the likes enable parents to encourage their wards by participating in their exhibitions and patronizing their products. Parents also monitor their wards during tests and examinations period. It is only in few instances that parents make financial promises and gift donations to a small number of private schools.

Discussion and Conclusion

Issues that border on provision of quality education in both private and public secondary schools do not follow a definite pattern. This is in spite of the fact that, the research findings with respect to all the indicators associated with the provision of quality education discussed in this study would seem to be in support of private schools in contrast to their public counterparts. This difference would seem to be restricted to only young public secondary schools of the grade III status than with older schools of grade I and II status.

In terms of the success rate (i.e. quality of output); funding, parental involvement, provision of quality teachers and improved teaching, private schools would seem to be doing well relatively to public schools irrespective of their status. The findings find support in studies such as (Jimenez and Cox, 1989; Obemeata, 1995).

With respect to teacher quality, it would seem that this indicator on its own does not determine success rate but is rather heavily dependent on the extent and intensity of monitoring and supervision carried out by the head teachers. The level of teacher/educational material availability and the quality of students admitted are also strong issues in this respect.

Again, there seems to be an erroneous conception among school administrators as portrayed in the findings of this study that curriculum enrichment mean the same thing as curriculum overload. Curriculum enrichment is not the addition to the curriculum content. Rather, according to Obanya (2002), it should de-emphasize content and examination while at the same time dwell more on the process(es) of delivery that emphasize analytical and logical reasoning, manipulative skill development using a variety of teaching – learning materials. It should also be science and technological conscious, be sensitive to societal needs and the works of life.

The issues that are responsible for this dichotomy are equally addressed. In both school types there is need for proper monitoring and supervision of teaching – learning activities by those in-charge in order to achieve the desired optimal result. The public schools have the requisite personnel but lack the administrative will to turn things around. There is also the strong need to properly process enrolment so as to take in only the academically – fit students, as well as reduce teacher – student ratio. The less academically fit students should be properly channeled to the technical and vocational branch of the education system. These should be given adequate personnel, facilities and material support that will prepare them for a successful life in such a way that recipients do not feel robbed of life's meaning.

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