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# **An Evaluation of Parents' Patronage of Private Primary Schools in Abeokuta, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the factors determining parents' patronage of private primary schools using Abeokuta as a case study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 of 14 approved private primary schools in Abeokuta. Total of 210 respondents were used in the study. This comprises 100 parents (42 males, 58 females), 100 private primary school teachers and 10 school administrators. It also used three questionnaires – (PPSPQ, PPSTQ, PPSAQ) and a checklist – (SFC). Data analysis involved the use of percentages, frequencies and t-test. The paper found that private schools are highly patronized in spite of high fees charged. The results indicate that parents' patronage are influenced by: teachers' dedication to work, high level of discipline among the teachers and pupils, early opportunity to train a child, good physical facilities, teaching and use of appropriate medium of instruction for which reasons high fees did not deter parents from patronizing them.

## **Introduction**

Several studies have been conducted to find out the implication about the care parents give to their children have on the latter. For instance Osanyin (2002) is of the view that creating positive neural patterns in the child's education is one of the eight critical parenting skills. Every society ought to educate and care for her own children so as to make them fit for the society. During the Nigerian Second Republic, a population explosion was witnessed in primary schools all over the country because political parties then laid emphasis on mass education.

Ozigi and Ocho (1981) pointed out that reasons for the change in Nigerian institutions were due to changing ideas and needs of the Nigerian society. In response to the

change, many people established schools. Ajayi (1989) asserted that advanced knowledge of political science was more of a game of mischief, which has reduced education to catch-phrase, bait and mere propaganda. However, Eleckwachi (1999) opined that Government should aid voluntary agencies with funds to avoid craze for profit in the sub-sector. He stated further that most investors in the education industry were more interested in the net present value of the return on their investment.

Many researchers had also examined the concept of quality and quantity in education. These include Obemeata (1999), Fuller (1996), Adeboyeje (1994) and Olaniran (1980, who pointed out that the indicators of quality could be classified into material, physical, human and financial resources. All these are instruments which people use in judging the worth of a school. Stoop and Johnson (1967), observed that a community's reaction and attitude towards its school is often based on first impression. However, as for factors determining parents' preference for private primary school, little or no research findings exist in the area.

The study sought to investigate the factors determining parents' patronage of private schools and whether supervision as well as the quality of education provided in these schools recommended them for patronage in Abeokuta Metropolis.

### **Research questions**

Answers were specifically sought to the following questions

1. Why do parents prefer private primary schools to public school?
2. What is the pattern of supervision by the school management?
3. Do private primary schools provide quality education?

### **Methodology**

Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 10 private primary schools from Abeokuta Metropolis based on the following criteria:

1. schools that are highly patronized by parents.
2. schools that are government approved
3. schools that had presented candidates for the State Common Entrance Examinations for not less than 5 years

The sample was made up of 210 subjects. Ten parents, ten teachers and one administrator were selected from each school. The investigators and a trained research assistant directly used the following questionnaires: PPSTQ, PPSAQ, PPSPQ and a checklist validated by (Kuder Richardson 21, KR - 21) at 0.68, 0.86, 0.75, 0.86 and 0.76 coefficient (Arowojolu, 2004). Data collection lasted for 4 weeks. Data analysis involved the use of frequencies, percentages and t-test.

### **Results and Discussion**

The factors determining parents' choice of school are shown in Table 1. To verify the tenability of the factors in Table 1, using T-test carried out a pair wise comparison of parents' responses was also carried out. This comparison is presented in Table 11

**Table 1: Factors determining Parents' Patronage of Private Primary Schools.**

Item	Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD
1	Avenue to train a child properly	100	28 (28%)	27 (27%)	23 (23%)	22 (22%)
2	Children are trained to be inquisitive	100	18 (18%)	35 (35%)	28 (28%)	22 (22%)
3	Availability of educational activities	100	30 (30%)	25 (25%)	26 (26%)	19 (19%)
4	Secures future standard of children education	100	39 (39%)	16 (16%)	21 (21%)	24 (24%)
5	Children develop more academically, socially and morally	100	34 (34%)	22 (22%)	19 (19%)	25 (25%)
6	Smooth transitions from home to school	100	22 (22%)	30 (30%)	33 (33%)	15 (15%)
7	Children inculcates social norms and values	100	18 (18%)	40 (40%)	32 (32%)	10 (10%)
8	Beautiful uniforms	100	28 (28%)	34 (34%)	31 (31%)	7 (7%)
9	Children are more disciplined	100	20 (20%)	37 (37%)	32 (32%)	10 (10%)
10	Classroom environment encourages learning	100	24 (24%)	31 (31%)	23 (23%)	22 (22%)
11	Immediate environment are made attractive	100	25 (25%)	32 (32%)	22 (22%)	19 (19%)
12	No strike	100	34 (34%)	32 (32%)	18 (18%)	16 (16%)
13	No shortage of teachers	100	24 (24%)	34 (34%)	32 (32%)	10 (10%)
14	Opportunity of admission into the best secondary school	100	17 (17%)	41 (41%)	32 (32%)	10 (10%)
15	Qualified teachers	100	14 (14%)	43 (43%)	38 (38%)	5 (5%)
16	Workbooks are checked	100	18 (18%)	35 (35%)	37 (37%)	10 (10%)
17	Each pupils is given attention	100	15 (15%)	43 (43%)	31 (31%)	11 (11%)

It could be observed from table 1 that all the 17 listed factors as influencing parent(s) preference actually acted as stimulants for parents' patronage of private schools. The table indicates that more than 50% of parents in the sample agreed that they were spurred by the factors listed in the PPSPQ. A study of this table also depicts the pattern of response of parents. Moreover, close agreements were reported for the 17 items. These items fall into 5 categories, which are early opportunity to train a child properly, discipline, physical facilities / environment, dedication to work and prediction of future education of a child.

Items 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 in section B of PPSPQ show that parents' preference for private primary schools was encouraged by provision of early education opportunities. In respect of discipline, one item was observed. As shown in table 1 item 9, 58% of the parents agreed that private primary school is an avenue to bring up disciplined children, 42% disagreed. In support of this, parents' response to items 28 depicts that many parents are of the opinion that children in private primary schools are more disciplined than children in public schools and this is why they do not patronize public schools. Parents' view of teachers dedication to work in private primary schools as shown in table 1, an interpretation of the results presented there indicate that the three items. 12, 16 and 17 which measured teachers' dedication to work in private primary school pupils depict that it was another factor which stimulates parents' patronage.

The response of the respondents to private primary school as a predictor of the future education of a child in items 4 and 14 has (54%) and (57%) show that many parents agreed with the view that private primary school pupils get admission into best secondary schools. 62% of the parents agreed on beautiful uniforms as one of the factors that influence their patronage of private primary schools while 58% and 57% of the parents agreed on adequacy of teachers availability of qualified teachers in private primary schools respectively, being stimulants.

**Table II: Pair- wise comparison of parents' response to 4.3.3 the 17 factors influencing parents' patronage**

Variables	N	M	SD	T-obs	P
1. Strongly agree	17	24.18	7.26		
2. Agree	17	32.71	7.33	-2.478	Sig.
3. Disagree	17	28.18	6.12		
4. Strongly disagree	17	14.94	6.29	4.570	Sig.

\*p is significant at 0.05 level, DF + 16

The results in table 11 reveal that significant differences existed between the responses to strongly agree and agree, disagree and strongly disagree with the t - observed of -2.478 respectively. The mean score of strongly agree was 24.18 with standard deviation of 7.26. Agree has 32.71 and 7.33 standard deviation. Disagree has the mean score of 28.18, 14.94 and 6.12, 6.29 standard deviation respectively. Table 11 indicates those strongly agree and agree has a higher standard deviation, which is high enough to consider the 17 factors on table 11 as stimulants to parents' choice of primary school.

**Table III: Summary of Assessment of teaching/learning process in private primary schools by parents**

Item	Statement	Always	Often	Occasionally	Never
18	Teachers gives relevant home work	58 (58%)	30 (30%)	11 (11%)	1 (1%)
19	Teachers promptly mark the assessment	75 (75%)	22 (22%)	3 (3%)	-
20	Teachers are ready to assist my child (ren)	64 (64%)	20 (20%)	15 (15%)	1 (1%)

21	Teachers are friendly with my child (ren)	63 (63%)	25 (25%)	11 (11%)	1 (1%)
22	Child complains about not understanding what teachers teaches	4 (4%)	10 (10%)	67 (67%)	19 (19%)
23	Child complains about being beaten by the teachers	5 (5%)	14 (14%)	68 (68%)	13 (13%)
24	How often do you check your children school work	64 (64%)	28 (28%)	7 (7%)	-
25	Parent relationships with the teacher	Excellent 15 (15%)	Good 75 (75%)	Fair 7 (7%)	Poor 1 (1%)
26	Rating of teachers' dedication to work	23 (23%)	65 (65%)	11 (11%)	1 (1%)
27	School facilities	18 (18%)	59 (59%)	29 (29%)	2 (2%)

It can be observed from table 111 that parents' assessment of teaching and learning process in private primary schools was another factor determining parents' patronage of private schools. The result reported in tables II and III are all indicative of the fact that teachers' dedication to work and the rapport between the parents and teachers. Parents and headmaster or headmistress and teachers and pupils play an important role in parents' patronage of private schools. Parents responded to an open-ended question on reason why parents do not register their children in public schools. The responses are presented in table IV.

**Table IV: Reasons on why Parents Do Not Register Their Children in Public Primary Schools**

S/N	ITEM	RESPONSE
1	over crowdedness	16
2	Strike actions	41
3	Lack of dedication to work	76
4	Use of mother-tongue during teaching process	20
5	Shortage of teachers	38
6	Poor learning environment	32
7	Lack of facilities	39
8	Teachers lack good human relations	10
9	Low standard of education	18
10	Lack of interest by parents	9
11	Neglect of public schools by government	15
12	Non-fashionable uniforms	8
13	High level of indiscipline	21
14	Lack of monitoring and supervision	13

Through item 28 presented in table iv parents gave reasons why they do not register their children in public schools. The responses are grouped into fourteen (14) factors, these are: overcrowded classrooms, strike actions, poor teachers dedication to work, use of mother-tongue during teaching process, shortage of qualified teachers , (inefficiency). Poor

learning environment, lack of facilities, lack of interest by parents, neglect of public schools by government, non-fashionable uniforms, high level of indiscipline and lack of monitoring and supervision. The frequency responses of parents to each of the above factors was 16, 41, 76, 20, 38, 32, 39, 10, 18, 9, 15, 8, 21 and 13 listed factors in the table.

The indicators of qualitative education, which entails, pattern of supervision, material, human and physical resources are presented in tables V-IX.

**Table V: Pattern of Supervision in Private Primary Schools**

Variables	Level	Frequency	%
Assessment of pupils' academic work	Weekly	6	60
	Monthly	2	20.0
	Termly	2	20.0
	Annually	-	-
Checking of the diaries registers and lesson notes	Weekly	10	100
	Monthly	-	-
	Termly	-	-
	Annually	-	-
Checking of pupils workbooks	Weekly	7	70
	Monthly	3	30
	Termly	-	-
	Annually	-	-
Checking of teachers activities while in the classroom	Weekly	9	90
	Monthly	1	10
	Termly	-	-
	Annually	-	-

Table V shows that majority of the school administrators (60%) assess the pupils academic work weekly, while (20%) carry out assessment of the pupils academic work monthly and termly.

The supervision of diaries, registers and lesson note is done weekly. Usually teachers, after teaching for a week are expected to fill in the school diary the contents taught during the week. This also gives aid to supervision. In this study, the supervision of diaries, registers and lessons notes are carried out in all schools (100%) weekly. This type of supervision has significant effect on students' achievement, which eventually encourages parents to patronize private primary schools. Supervision of pupils' work is done through checking of their notebooks and workbooks, which is done weekly in most schools (70%) while other schools do it monthly. Teachers' activities are also checked while in the classroom in (90%) of the schools, while 10% of the administrators supervise teachers' activities. Sometimes, teachers' activities are supervised in private schools in order to provide guidance in doing their work. This helps to achieve the stated goals and objectives. This also encourages parents' patronage.

**TABLE VI: Summary of Availability of Quality Facilities**

Variables	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Playground	10	100	-	-	10 (100%)
Science laboratories	2	20	8	80	10 (100%)
Sport field	2	20	8	80	10 (100%)
Sickbay	4	40	6	60	10 (100%)
Library	4	40	6	60	10 (100%)
Resources Centre	2	20	8	80	10 (100%)
Dormitory	2	20	8	80	10 (100%)
Dinning hall	2	20	8	80	10 (100%)
Geographical garden	-	-	0	100	10 (100%)
Computer centre	5	50	5	50	10 (100%)

The results in table VI shows that most school is well equipped by the proprietors, by proving some facilities in the schools. (100%) of the schools under study have playgrounds. Science Laboratory is also available in (20%) of the schools while (80%) of the schools do not have laboratory, as reported in table. Only 2 schools have boarding facilities because they are operating boarding system. From the PPSAQ, the number of pupils enrolled on the two schools 'is not' enough to deduce that boarding facilities is one of the factors influencing parents' patronage. (40%) of the schools have sickbay and library while (60%) do not have these two facilities (100%) of the schools do not have, geographical garden (50%) of the schools have computer room/centre. All these facilities add to the quality of education provided by the private schools for their pupils.

**TABLE VII: Summary of development of pupils Affective Domain**

Statement	Yes	%	No	%	Not sure	%
Do you have active clubs for pupils?	9	90 %	1	10 %	-	-
Do you punish latecomers?	8	80 %	2	20 %	-	-
Do you give moral instruction to the pupils?	10	100%	-	-	-	-

A study of table VII shows that 90 % of the primary schools have active clubs 80 % punished latecomers. This indicates that lateness is not encouraged in private primary schools. Moral instruction depicts 100 %. This indicates that moral instruction is given in all private primary schools. One of the objectives of primary education is to develop the children in all the three domains of learning. These are cognitive, affective psychomotor domains.

According to "A Handbook on Continuous Assessment" (1985), teachers, parents and the society at large expect changes in pupils' behaviour in desired and desirable directions as a result of what the pupils' are exposed to in the school. The word-behaviour- here means activities. In the cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains, cognitive has to do with the activities performed based on subject's syllabuses. Affective has to do with value and belief, attitude and appreciation, interest social relation, emotion adjustment, habits and life style. These can be achieved through activities like moral instruction, involving the pupils

in club activities and physical education like games and sports. Psychomotor domain deals with manipulative skills and body movements.

**TABLE VIII: Distribution of Teachers by Qualification and Experience**

Item	N	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1. Qualification:</b>	100		
Higher degree with teachers training		1	1%
First degree with teachers training		3	3%
NCE		59	59%
HND with teacher training		20	20%
Higher degree with no teachers training		3	3%
First degree with no teachers training		2	2%
HND with no teacher training		1	1%
Grade II		4	4%
Secondary School Certificate		7	7%
<b>2. Years of experience</b>	100		
Below 3 years		18	18%
3-5 years		38	38%
6-9 years		30	30%
10 years		10	10%
Above 10 years		4	4%

Table VIII: Reveals that many teachers in private primary schools possessed National Certificate of Education (NCE), Teachers with (NCE) has 59%. This indicates, that half of the teachers in Private Primary Schools 30% possessed the standard, which a teachers in primary schools should attain as stated by the Ministry of Education. Teachers with Higher degree with teacher training has 1%, first degree with teachers training has 3% while first degree with no teachers training, HND with no teachers training, Grade II and Secondary School Certificate have 2%, 1%, 4%, and 7% respectively.

A study of table VIII also depicts that 10% of teachers in Private Primary Schools are not trained teachers. In other wards, they have no training in teaching profession. Table VIII also show that 18% of the teacher in Private Primary Schools have below 3 years of experience while those with 3-5 years, 6-9 years, 10 years and above 10 years have 38%, 30%, 10%, and 4%. These depict that few teachers have up to 10 and above years of training experience compared to public primary school teachers.

**Table IX: Teachers' Perception of Learning Process and Input by Administrators**

Item	Statement	N	Agree	Disagree
1	Students are not easy to control	100	29 (29%)	71 (71%)
2	Parents have interest in education of their children	100	54 (54%)	46 (46%)
3	Parents' relationship with teachers is cordial	100	63 (63%)	37 (37%)
4	Supervision is through in my school	100	66 (68%)	34

				(34%)
5	All parents come to discuss their children academic performance	100	75 (75%)	25 (25%)
6	Furniture for sitting and writing is adequate for pupils	100	98 (98%)	2 (2%)
7	Sports are encouraged in my school	100	73 (73%)	27 (27%)
8	There is adequate provision for sport facilities	100	70 (70%)	30 (30%)
9	Teaching aids are adequate and enough	99	77 (77%)	23 (23%)
10	Teachers' lateness and indolence are frowned at by the administrators	100	85 (85%)	15 (15%)
11	Teacher's workload is moderate	100	29 (29%)	71 (71%)
12	Administrators and parents encouraged teachers to discipline pupils	100	64 (64%)	34 (34%)
13	Majority of the pupils have relevant textbooks	100	80 (80%)	20 (20%)
14	The number of periods for all subjects offered are enough	100	82 (82%)	18 (18%)
15	Assignments are given on all subjects	100	73 (73%)	27 (27%)

An observation table IX depicts teachers' perception about the quality of education given to pupils in private primary schools. This table shows two ingredients of quality of education provided in private schools: the learning process and administrator or proprietor's input to education.

From this table items 1, 2, 3, 5, 1, 12, 13, 14, and 15 shows the response of the teachers to learning process in private primary schools, 29% of the teachers agreed that children are not easy to control while 71% disagreed. This indicates that majority of the teachers in private primary school find it difficult to in still discipline into their pupils. Item 2 and 3 deal with the type of relationship between the teachers and the parents. 54% of the teachers agreed that parents have interest in their children's academic performance. 3% agreed that parents' relationship with teachers in cordial. These show that there is cordial relationship between the teachers in private primary schools and the parents. It also implies that the teachers' effectiveness is encouraged by the cordial relationship between them and the parents.

Moreover, there was also a close agreement in the report of teachers' responses to item 27 and 18 in PPSPQ. Items 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 show the response of the respondents in regard to input (in terms of facilities-human and material) by the proprietors of private primary schools. The result of the above items shows, 66%, 98%, 73%, 70%, 77% and 85%, respectively agreed with the statements. Besides, 71% of the teachers disagreed with 11 (on teachers' workload). This indicates that there is no room for impacting knowledge effectively, which is contrary to qualitative education.

The Seventeen (17) factors listed in the PPSPQ are stimulants for parents' patronage of Private Primary Schools. These items fall into five (5) factors namely: Early opportunity

to train a child properly, discipline, physical facilities/environment, dedication to work and prediction of future education of a child. The finding on physical facilities/environment is in agreement with Adeboyeje's (1995), Stomp and Johnson's (1967) finding on what people use to judge the worth of a school. Another factor is the dynamic way of implementing the pre-primary school curriculum; one way of implementing the curriculum is the use of English Language as medium of instruction and communication among the pupils. This contradicts the national policy on education (FRN, 2004).

The policy states that one way to achieve the objectives of pre-primary education will be to ensure that medium of instruction is principally the mother tongue or the language of immediate community. However, this study is supported by finding of Soyode (1993) and Arowolo (2002) which advocate the use of English as medium of communication in primary schools. These researchers also pointed out that parents send their children to Private Primary Schools in order to learn how to speak English Language. Other factors include, qualitative education offered in private primary schools. These include: the number of pupils per class, pattern of supervision, and educational qualification of employed teachers, physical facilities available for learning experiences.

From the findings of this study, the number of pupils per class is moderate. This conforms to the Nigerian National Policy on Education which according to FRN (2004), stipulates that total number of 40 pupils per class. Overcrowded classrooms in the public schools further encourage parents to send their children to private schools. Thus supporting the finding of Onuka (2001) that private schools have better facilities than those in public schools. The findings of this study are supported by Adesina's (1984) finding that large school population and overcrowded classrooms which began to be more noticeable in 1976, led abnormally increase in primary school enrolment with no corresponding increase in human and material resources available to schools. They also agree the finding of Adesina (1982) in the same direction.

This study discovered that more teachers in Private Primary Schools possessed National Certificate of Education (NCE) as against those in public schools. This agrees with Peters who states what the caliber of teachers employed to teach in the system is one of the process dimension of quality. It, however, contradicts the findings of Onuka (2005) that the teachers in private were less qualified than those in public schools. The findings in table v-ix conform with the findings of Abe (1999) and Obemeata (1995) that when buildings that are conducive to learning are in place, that is adequate furniture and classrooms which are well equipped as well as adequate libraries and qualified staff, which are indicators of qualities, there is the concomitant result in the corresponding attainment of learning objectives and the accomplishment of high quality education.

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that parents prefer to send their wards to private primary schools because the medium of communicate is mostly English Language which enables the children to do well in examinations and communicate effectively. It also showed that there are better facilities and qualified teachers in these schools vis-à-vis those in public primary schools.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made. Private primary school administrators or proprietors should provide library services in their schools to enable the pupils cultivate the habits of reading, while teachers will be able to update their knowledge.

Introduction of computer studies to equip them with computer knowledge and skills in order to enhance the effective learning of the subject at the primary level. This type of supervision enables both teachers and pupils to keep abreast with modern information technology both in public and private primary schools.

Government should ensure that good environment and adequate teaching facilities are provided in the public primary schools. This entails good buildings, appropriate teaching aids playground, library, computer centre etc. In other words, government should ensure adequate funding of the public primary schools. This will enhance high standard of quality of education provided in the schools.

Proprietors should endeavour to make teachers workload moderate in order to facilitate effective teaching in their schools. This can be achieved through the employment of adequate number of qualified teachers.

The inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education should be made more functional in order to ensure strict adherence to quality and standards in school administration and standard instruction.

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