

Comparative Study of Performances between Private and Public Schools in English Language Programme

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ABSTRACT--- *This study investigated the performances of students in English language in Public and Private schools. The stand of one as regards the output was compared with the stand of the other. The areas of concern included the level of performance, teachers' qualifications and teachers' experience on the job. The population of the study consists of 15700 students. Ten senior secondary schools were randomly selected from the available sixty four secondary schools in the Local Government Area. Staff statistics and record of WAEC results of the students were collected from the schools. It was discovered from the available statistics that Public schools had more qualified teachers with more years of experience than their Private schools counterparts. It was against the run of play that the students in Private schools performed better than the students in Public schools. The physical outlook of the Public schools visited suggested that maintenance culture was lacking as revealed in the unkempt school plants which might be as a result of lack of supervision. Consistent and meaningful supervision is therefore recommended among others in order to promote good performance in the Public school system especially in the teaching and learning of English language as a language of utility in Nigeria peculiar linguistic situation.*

Keywords--- Comparative study, Public schools, Private schools, Performance, Supervision

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent times the rate at which the private schools are springing up is rapid. This does not exclude any level: from nursery school to the university. The business seems booming and the glory seems rising. On the other side, public schools primarily owned by governments are fading away in glory. It seems as if only the indigent in the land send their children to the government schools because of the cost. It is becoming a curse for the enlightened parents to send their children to the public schools. The structures of some old missionary schools taken over by governments are collapsing. A visit to any of the public schools gives one the impression of a deserted compound especially in the interior. The reason for the decay may not be farfetched: nobody is really holding responsibility for the declined fortune.

If the learning environment repels exciting academic activities, no one will be willing to enrol in the programme of the system. One thing that is certain in human nature is growth and development. A system cannot remain the same: there is growth into regeneration and growth into degeneration. It seems as if the public schools status nose-dive to the negative hemisphere in the system. Investment into the education in the public sectors by the government in most cases is misdirected. Government venture is nobody's venture. Officials and personnel in charge seem to fail to discharge their responsibilities faithfully. Meaningful goal oriented consistent supervisions are not given to the running of the public schools. The system needs appropriate nurture for a positive result. Perhaps the private sector receives the required nurture in this regard. An individual, who invested his resources into a venture, gives adequate attention required to the business as he expects good yield that will enhance the expansion of his business empire. According to the Department for International Development (DfID), an organ of the British Aid Agency as cited by Tookey et al (2005) the Proprietors of private schools are motivated because of financial benefits they will derive from the venture. This idea is also supported by Adelabu and Rose (2004). The competition generated by the free entry of interested individuals to establish schools supplies the needed tonic for a higher rate of commitment in the academic activities of the schools.

A casual observation of the on-goings in the government owned schools reveals abandoned project, misdirected programmes and a lackadaisical terrain of no-man's-land. Perhaps the nature of governance in the land suggests the outlook of schools. The concern of the government reflects in the performance of the school children and the facilities provided for intellectual development. The amount spent to build and maintain the government house may be ten times the budget voted for education in the State (Nigeria political institution and arrangement for an example). The inconsistency in governance with all its policies remains the picture that can be seen in schools and the students'

academic outputs. The system depends on the whim and caprices of the individuals that occupy the seat of governance. Each government, with different political ideologies especially on education, wants and launches a new culture even if the new idea is lethal to the existing structures. New policies emerge again each time a new crew comes on board of governance. Where the system is inconsistent like this, the expected remarkable growth may not be recorded. The system must be strong, stable and sustaining than the different operators that appear and disappear. The 'deteriorating quality of public education ...created demand for private alternatives' (Bauer, Brust &Hybbert,(2002).The Probe Team(1999) reports that some poor and disadvantaged parents preferred to make a great sacrifice to send their children to private schools because they were greatly disillusioned with the government schools as a result of the perceived low quality especially in students' linguistic delivery. Although Rose (2002) observes that the acclaimed good performance of the private institution is debatable. The actual major concern in this paper remains the process of quality assurance as regards language teaching and learning in our schools: making a positive change. This affirms the fact that quality assurance in language pedagogy is to ensure effective resource inputs, resource control, refining the process and raising the standard outputs in order to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability (Venkaiah(1995).

One major thing that may be lacking in the administrative culture of the public schools system is supervision. The private owners understand this and will not toy with it. The normal nature of man is ease, relaxation and pleasure. The best expert may not put in his best if he is left alone. The best material may be wasted if the operators are not willing. Therefore meaningful supervision seems to be lacking in the company of the commonwealth. Where administrative structures become nexus, the multitude of the administrative stop-points may create ruptures that mellow-down the desired effect of supervision. Supervision is not exerting authority, witch-hunting nor fanfare activities through which certain undue gratifications are enjoyed. The elements of supervision can be discerned in the word itself –

S-U-P-E-R-V-I-S-I-O-N:

- S** -**Searching** for better way of doing things
- Sourcing** for appropriate materials for better service
- Supply** of the needed tools for effective service delivery

- U** -**Unification**: different parts carrying the same identification with the same cultural value.
- Uniformity**: guided by the same rules.
- Uniqueness**: stand out from the multitude of others.

- P**- **Purposefulness** through goal-oriented programmes.
- Participation**: idleness is not allowed, accommodation is not given to any dead-wood.
- Prioritization**: developing the right scale of preference.

- E**- **Enlightenment** through constant education.
- Endowment** through proper empowerment for effective discharge of responsibilities.
- Encouragement** through improved condition of service and friendly relationship.

- R** - **Remediation**: giving strength to the weak point of the programme of the institution -
- Reconstruction**: effect the necessary adjustment in the programme in order to respond to the dynamic nature of the system `
- Renewal**: replacement of the ageing tools and recruitment of young bubbling personnel into the stream for maximum profitable performance

- V**- **Vision** shared for meaningful mission -
- Vigour**: generating energy for executing the programme.
- Vetting**: appropriate appraisal in order to do away with burdensome elements

- I** - **Instruction** for appropriate move and direction
- Investigation** in order to carry out the needed evaluation that informs the necessary decision
- Inquiry** into the areas that poses challenges in order to generate better performance. The discovery that calls for research endeavor

S - Stimulating for renewed energy that prompts exciting work attitude
-**Sustaining** for stable progress
Securing the right standard in the system for a unique cultural output and a group identity.

I - Inspection for a well coordinated programme.
Intimacy for adequate, correct and true information system
Inculcating the desired professional attitude for a healthy functional system.

O- Observation of how each element in the system functions
Organization of available resources for optimal utilization
Occupation: giving appropriate task to the actors according to training and orientation.

N- Nurturing the nature of the system for adequate performance
Networking in the system for a more productive outreach
Need assessment for evaluation that produces the required rejuvenation

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of English language in Nigeria can be divided into two major phases that is pre-independent period and post-independence period (Bamisaye 2006). Pre-independence period can be traced to the British missionaries and traders who had earlier contact with the coastal areas such as Lagos, Warri and Calabar. With these activities, English language was brought to the coast of the country. Thus, in spite of the existing native languages, English language became the language of evangelism and the language of western education in Nigeria.

Also, the post-independent period reflected the development and status of English. After independence, English language became firmly established and entrenched as the official language of the country. The language became more popular as a language of inter-ethnic relations, language of administration and language of education (from mid-primary to the university). The Federal Government in its National Policy on Education (FGN 2014) makes a provision for indigenous language as means of preserving the people's culture. The Government considered it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages in Nigeria: Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba. Government sees to it that the medium of instruction in primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment and at a later stage English. This, notwithstanding, English language enjoys prominence in Nigeria because of her acute multi-lingual nature (Babalola 2010).

English is taught as a compulsory subject in secondary schools and the whole teaching process is carried out in English Language. In other words, English is also the medium of instruction in the private and public secondary schools. There is sufficient empirical evidence that suggests that the achievements of school children rely substantially on the teachers' ability to handle the teaching of the language as a school subject and as a tool for general school administration. Fredricksson (2004) believes that teacher's quality that guarantees good students' performance should cover: knowledge of substantive area and contents; pedagogic skill : this includes acquiring a range of teaching strategies; reflection: the ability to be self critical which is the hallmark of teacher professionalism and managerial competence as teacher assumes a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom

Classroom based research is valid enough to determine whether the learners are receiving appropriate contents or not. The learners' efficiency is judged by how well school prepares the students for their communicative roles in the society (Psachropoulos & Woodhall, 1995). A good performance by the teachers is the ability to combine relevant inputs that promote teaching and learning activities. This implies that teacher's performance is a function of other variables. From some scholars' findings, it is discovered that supervision is one of the major factors or variables that enhances teachers' delivery which could result into improved learner's performance.

A survey carried out by Oladejo (1991) on the factor of the relevance of teachers' qualification reveals that most teachers employed to teach English language in schools are not qualified. For example, 95 teachers were sampled in Kaduna State: 44 (46.3%) had their degree certificates in English language while 53.7% was non degree holders: these are teachers that specialize in other subjects but the public schools made do with them to handle English language in their various schools because the specialized professionals are not available.

Experience as a major factor that can enhance better output may not contribute meaningfully when the concept of meaningful supervision is absent. For example, Okafor (2005) observes that the rate of absenteeism in government schools is a reflection of low level of commitment of government employees .The lack of this (experience) in a

wholesome progressive manner reduces a language teacher to a deadwood but without thorough supervision, experience acquired over the years may not be triggered into action. A language teacher must be dynamic because language itself is a dynamic phenomenon. The quality of any school system has been considered to be a function of the aggregate quality and commitment of teachers who operate it (Adeyemi 2012). The required level of commitment may be elusive without a well structured supervision model. Supervision, according to Eniola(1991), is acclaimed to be the best tool for greater success and productivity that involves the use of both human and material resources . The parameter to measure this is the job performance of a language teacher: the teacher's competency in the way he handles the subject matter. The professional touch in the preparation of lesson note, ingenuous improvisation and application of instructional materials and the teaching acumen applied by the teacher provide the right language atmosphere for the learners to excel. Application and enforcement of the right ethical codes in language pedagogy could occur when responsibility for the codes and discipline action are determined and where professional development is provided (Shirley, 2009).Teacher's quality is a critical variable but a thorough and well coordinated supervision brings out the best quality in the professionals in the art of language teaching. The school's principal officers should be equipped with basic tools to monitor and evaluate schools activities through a well conceived supervision programme.

In order to achieve the broad aims of Nigeria National Policy of Education as stated in the policy document of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014, English Language has been classified as one of the core subjects which reflects substantially the vital role it plays in our contemporary multilingual society. In a multi-lingual society like Nigeria, the need for a lingua franca cannot be over-emphasized, thus, for easy and effective communication both in oral and in written forms; English Language has been chosen as a common medium of expression. This has also informed the government's decision that a student should compulsorily have credit pass in this subject as a pre-requisite for admission into most programmes in the tertiary institutions in the country.

It has been discovered by many researchers that there is clear difference in students' performance in English Language between public and private secondary schools. The opinions of people on this difference of students' performance in English Language between the private and public secondary schools are different from one another. The students' academic outputs in private secondary schools in English Language seem to be highly encouraging than that of public secondary schools.

Furthermore, it is observed that there are many factors responsible for the excellent and good performance of private secondary school students. Some of the factors responsible could be: availability of appropriate teaching aids, enriched and adapted curriculum, qualified and experienced teachers, thorough supervision, conducive environment, parental contributions coupled with good administration. On the other hand, learners in public secondary schools seem to lag behind because of, perhaps, certain things they are deprived of, some of which may include: lack of vital learning materials, inadequate inspection and supervision, poor administration, lack of total dedication by the teachers due to one reason or the other, poor environment of learning, static curriculum and a host of others.

3. STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The outcome of the ability of students in English language which is measured through their performance indicating the pass mark of 50% and above and the fail score of 49% and below. Performance in the contents of this study, however, refers to the level of success as acquired by students in English language or continuous assessment and terminal examination in selected private and public secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolitan Area (Oluyole Local Government). The level of success by the students in English language assessment can determine the potentials of achieving success in their school subjects when they sit for external examinations such as West African Examination Council (WAEC).

The report presented at WAEC monthly seminal by the Head of Research Division (2011) revealed that the percentage of failure rate in English language in the past five years surpassed that of the percentage of credit level. This corroborates the earlier studies by various researchers who had found that the achievement of students in English language in the secondary school level was poor. Students' poor writing skills as reported by the Chief Examination Officers, (West Africa Examination Council, 1999) is responsible for the poor performance recorded in English language.

As there are different types of private secondary schools in terms of the quality of the teaching learning process so also there are different types of public secondary schools, the ideas generated through the available reports suggest that the private secondary schools pay more attentions to their teachers' input in the teaching system than they do in the public secondary schools (Salawu and Adedapo ,2001). They also spend substantial amount of money to provide instructional materials for the teaching and learning process, they take their students out on field trips and well coordinated excursions: the cultures that are alien to most public secondary schools.

Over the years, students' achievements were poor in English language in the public secondary schools and this has hindered the transition of many students to the next level. It has also been revealed that only an average of 30% of candidate that enrolled yearly for English language (the report paper presented at WAEC monthly seminars by the Head of Research Division, 2011), passed at credit level. This is a source of worry to parents, researchers and in fact, every stakeholder in Education. The situation is more astoundingly embarrassing as one considers teachers' remuneration in both public and private schools. Tooley (2005) explores the issue of salaries discovered that the average salaries in government schools are more than three and a half times of teachers' earnings in private schools. Why are teachers willing to teach despite these low wages? Could this be as a result of mass graduate unemployment as suggested by Dabalen and Oni (2000)? It is against this background that the study investigates the academic performance of students of private and public secondary schools with the purpose of bringing out the difference, if any, through a comparative analysis as obtainable from their cumulative performances.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There had been comments from the society and the governments that showed the great concern of the citizens towards the poor performance of students in English language. In Oyo State and Ibadan metropolitan area in particular, Principals of secondary schools, Local and State Governments, Inspectors of Education, Parents, Teachers and even the Students themselves were aware of the alarming rate of poor performance of students in English language especially in schools owned by the Governments: the quality and the level of academic qualifications of teachers notwithstanding. Based on the long year of experience the researcher had in the various strata of the nation's education design (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions), it was observed that students in private secondary schools performed better than students in public schools. Though the cost of sponsoring children in the private institutions is at a very high rate of financial commitment, serious loving and committed parents were ready to render the sacrifice for a better future for their children. What has really gone wrong? What is the way out?

5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The specific purpose of the study is to find out the difference between the performance of students in public and private secondary schools. It is also the focus of the study to investigate the cause of the difference in performance (if any) and suggest viable solutions to students' poor performance in English language as a school subject.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were raised in order to guide the investigation in the study.

1. What is the level of students' performance in English language in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination?
2. Are there any differences in the performance of students in private and public schools?
3. Are teachers in private schools better qualified than teachers in public secondary schools?

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study could be of great help to all the stake holders as it highlights the different problems that hindered the students' better performance in English language in the schools' system. The work supplies some pieces of information on the factors responsible for different performances of students in English language and viable suggestions are made on ways of improving the teaching of the subject.

Among other things, the research could serve as a guide for future endeavour for those who may be interested to study further on the comparative study of performance between private and public secondary school students.

8. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is a descriptive research of a survey type carried out to find out the difference in the performance between private and public secondary school students in English Language in Ibadan Metropolitan Area.

9. SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample used for the study is ten (10) secondary schools: five (5) private secondary schools and five (5) public secondary schools were randomly selected in Oluyole Local Government Area of Oyo State.

10. DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions earlier raised.

Research Question 1:

What is the level of students’ performance in English language in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination?

2010/2011

A1-C6 = 184: 2.11+33.21 = 35.32%

D7-F9 = 337:38.58+26.10= 64.68%

2011/2012

A1-C6 = 168: 1.6+31.81= 33.41%

D7-F9 = 335: 40.95+25.64=66.59%

2012/2013

A1-C6 = 175: 2.4+32.7=35.1%

D7-F9 = 323:41.2+23.7=64.9%

The above data demonstrate the actual general performance of students in public schools in English language. Public schools were selected because of their larger population compared with the Private schools. The students’ performance status in the three years considered indicated negative trends. In 2010/2011 only 35.32% pass was recorded (A1-C6), In 2011/2012 it was 33.41% while in 2012/2013 35.1% had good grades that can afford them admission into higher institutions.

Research Question 2:

Are there any differences in the performance of students in English language in private and public secondary schools?

1: 2010/2011 SSCE RESULT

Grade	Private		Public	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A1-B3	5	5.4	11	2.11
C4-C6	84	90.3	173	33.21
D7-E8	4	4.3	201	38.58
F9	0	0	136	26.10
Total	93	100	521	100

2011/2012 SSCE RESULT

Grade	Private		Public	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A1-B3	17	16.34	8	1.6
C4-C6	75	72.12	160	31.81
D7-E8	11	10.58	206	40.95
F9	1	96	129	25.64
Total	104	100	503	100

2012/2013 SSCE RESULT

Grade	Private		Public	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A1-B3	14	10.53	12	2.4
C4-C6	103	17.44	163	32.7
D7-E8	12	9.02	205	41.2
F9	4	3.01	118	23.7
Total	133	100	498	100

From the data presented and analyzed in the tables above, it can be inferred that the private secondary schools are better in terms of performance in English language than their public secondary schools counterpart. This assumption is based on a comparison between the percentages of passes of both types of school.

Research question 3:

Are teachers in private secondary schools better qualified than teachers in public secondary schools?

Table 3 (a): Qualifications of the Respondents

Qualification	Private		Public	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
N.C.E	0	0	5	19.2
B.A	6	42.9	4	15.4
B.Sc.	0	0	0	0
M.A.	3	21.4	6	23.1
B.Ed.	5	35.7	11	42.3
M.Sc.	0	0	0	0
Total	14	100%	26	100%

Table 3 presents the qualifications of the respondents. In private secondary schools B.A. holders= 6 :(42.9%), M.A. holders =3 (21.4%). These are untrained teachers that engaged in teaching jobs in private schools: the percentage amounts to 65.3% while in the public schools the percentage of trained personnel for teaching job stood at 61.5%.

Table 3(b): Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Private		Public	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	7	50	5	19.23
6-10 years	5	35.7	9	34.62
11-15 years	2	14.3	7	26.92
16-20 years	0	0	5	19.23
21-25 years	0	0	0	0
Above 26	0	0	0	0
Total	14	100	25	100

The above analysis in table 3(b) reveals that English language teachers in the selected public secondary schools were more experienced than their counter parts in the selected private secondary schools.

11. DISCUSSION

The study was carried out to compare the performance between private and public secondary school students in English Language in some selected secondary schools in Oluyole Local Government, Ibadan, Oyo State. A basic point to note is that majority of those who teach English language in the selected schools especially the government owned schools are competent but such competence is being undermined by the poor performance of the students in the subject on yearly basis.

The Ministry of Education and principals of public secondary school lack proper and regular supervision of teachers in most public secondary schools and this affects students’ performance in English language. In the land, Government project is no man’s project. The gains are not measured and therefore evaluation was not carried out. The latter idea reflected in the general performance of the students in three consecutive years of academic programme: the consistent poor performance of students should be disturbing. If the private schools with less qualified personnel could perform better, definitely something essential is missing somewhere.

It is the conclusion of the researcher that the correct manipulation of the necessary variables had not been carried out. These variables include the men and the methodology, money and the materials as vital variables that are not meaningfully manipulated in the public school system in the land. The input into the system is on the average acceptable but the process is seriously defective. The standard manual for productive manipulation was either not available or available but not properly applied especially in the public schools. There is an acute observable inertia in the system. Within the focus of this study, Private schools performed better but this is subject to further investigation as regards their products. The performance of the students in certificate examinations may not be sufficient to draw a reasonable conclusion on their output. Further research can be carried out on this.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of supervision had been emphasized earlier in this work. It is suggested here again that meaningful supervision should be consistently carried out both in private and public schools. It is not a kind of supervision that are looking for the culprits to be punished (this may be applicable in some situations) but often, it is the one that identifies areas of shortcoming and proffers solutions for better performance in the system. The best of personnel without adequate

monitoring could mess up the system. Men should be made to be responsible and accountable: commendation or correction must be given where necessary in order to generate the right tone.

Teaching English language with relevant instructional materials and modern teaching auxiliaries should be emphasized in the secondary schools in order to generate interest in students for the learning task ahead. The government should provide adequate instructional materials to the public schools in order to enhance better students' performance in English Language. Regular training and retraining programmes should be put in place in order to refresh and update teachers' knowledge on the current pedagogical approach to language teaching and learning activities.

Finally promotion and advancement on the job should be based on a well defined and definite professional output: this can enhance an accelerated promotion as well as giving the reward of indolence to unproductive staff in the system.

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