



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The study was a comparative analysis of effectiveness of private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 333 private secondary schools and 206 public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Fifty-four private and 96 public secondary schools were randomly selected. The only null hypothesis formulated to guide the study was tested at 0.05 level of significant. The study revealed that, there was a significant difference between effectiveness of private and public secondary schools which means, private secondary schools are more effective than public secondary schools. It was recommended that public secondary schools should emphasise on continuous assessment and examination preparation and organise remedial classes for struggling students; have regular meetings with parents and have transparent communication about student performance and behaviour; make sure, teachers are engaged to meet up with the salary they earn every month; provide security outfits for healthy environment; and through appropriate agency, request for qualified teachers.

**Keywords:** Comparative Analysis, Effectiveness, School Effectiveness, Private Secondary Schools, Public Secondary Schools

### Introduction

According to Adeyinka (2010), public schools are those schools that were established, managed, financed, as well as supervised by the government. He further opined that those schools were established with the tax payers' money in order to educate the generality of the people irrespective of their social, economic, or political status in the society. According to the international definition used in UNESCO questionnaire, a private school is a school not operated by a public authority, whether or not operated, the schools receive financial support from such authority. Effectiveness of secondary school is the ability of the school to achieve its goals and positively impact students learning. This include, qualified and engaged teachers, clear mission and goals, parents and community involvement, monitoring of students' progress, teachers' professional development, safe and conducive learning environment, and strong leadership. Numerous authors have tried to identify and more closely describe the components of school effectiveness, and to provide more specific definitions of this construct. Behlol et al. (2019) opined that school effectiveness is a multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic concept that refers to contextual setting of education, the mission and the objective of the institution, as well as the specific standards of an educational system. Bezirtzoglou (2014) asserted that school effectiveness can be approached from diverse perspectives and considering different aspects and goals of education. Hence, school effectiveness can have different meanings depending on whether one focuses on diverse components and stakeholders in education, their interests, outcomes educational process or is seeking to encompass all the characteristics of education.

According to Scheerens (2013), a more comprehensive definition of school effectiveness is the level of goal attainment of a school. Scheerens maintained that although, average achievement scores in core subjects established at the end of a fixed programme are the most probable 'school effects' alternative criteria like the responsiveness of the school to the community and the satisfaction of the teachers may also be considered. This definition seems more relevant to the purpose of this research as school



effectiveness is examined using not only students' achievement but also, the satisfaction of teachers, students and parents. One of the most prominent indicators of school effectiveness is academic performance, which is often measured through student results in examinations such as the West Africans Senior School Certificate Examination, National Examination Council Examination and other internal assessments. However, it has been observed by the researchers that private secondary school students on average tend to score higher in standardised tests such as the West African Schools Certificate Examination and National Examination Council Examination and achieve greater academic outcomes than the students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This might be because of the factors such as, smaller class size, safe and conducive learning environment, and resource availability in private schools which can contribute to enhance learning experience for students. In contrast, it appears, public secondary schools are often underfunded and face resource shortage. This gap has led to the perception that private schools are more effective as they can provide a more safe and conducive learning environment. Okpara (2000) cited in Nwafor (2019) observed that in NECO examinations, the performances of students in private schools are better than the performances of students in public schools. Okpara also stated that private schools are closely monitored and supervised by the School Management Boards, as a result; they perform better in external examinations.

According to Ntim (2014), learning outcomes of the private school pupils are high compared to those of the public schools. To buttress the above point, the World Bank Report (2022) cited in Kareem (2024) opined that Nigerian private schools consistently performed better than public schools across all indicators. The report said a notable distinction was in their management of human resources. Absence from school in public schools was more than double the absence rate among private school teachers: 16 versus 6 percent. The United States Department of Education (2012) stated that National Assessment of Educational Progress which is representative at national level for the assessment of Americans' students' knowledge in various subject areas reported that private schools performed better than public schools in all major subject area including Mathematics and Science. In another study of the analysis of American students' achievement in Mathematics, the private schools outperformed in the majority of cases while public schools perform well after accounting for the facts (Lubienski and Lubienski, 2006; Peterson and Llaudet, 2006) but based on 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress data (often analysed in studies like those from National Center for Education Statistics), private schools students generally performed better than public school students in Reading and Mathematics. .

It has been observed by the researchers that some private secondary schools in Ekiti State often attract highly qualified and engaged teachers but are facing challenges with teacher turnover and retention because of lower pay and demanding workload whereas, public secondary schools also attract qualified and engaged teachers but are not facing the problem of teacher turnover and retention. Meanwhile, Onyema (2025) argued that the proliferation of private schools employing unqualified teachers may negatively affect instructional quality in core subjects. When people who teach English Language and Mathematics in several schools are people with O'level or OND, what then do you expect? Onyema asked. In Ekiti State, there are some private secondary schools whose mission statement is specific and tailored towards their religious faith. Hardly do they allow other students with different religious faith to attend their schools while some public secondary schools often emphasise inclusivity and support for a diverse student body, aiming to meet the needs of students from various socio-economic backgrounds with different learning requirements.

The researchers observed that private schools communication is direct and personalised between the teachers and communities through social media (WhatsApp) while in public schools, communication is more bureaucratic; private schools often encourage greater parental involvement, often requiring parents to participate in various school activities like, end of the year parties while public secondary schools, parents involvement might be structured through informal committees like Parents/Teachers Association. In the area of monitoring of students' progress, private secondary schools appear to have more money (fees and donations) and tend to invest in better resources for tracking students' progress while, public secondary schools appear to have limited financial resources for tracking students' progress. However, public secondary schools have access to community resources and programme to help parents engage. As in, parents are being called to make talks with the students. In private secondary



schools, it appears professional development for teachers is more regulated, opportunities to teachers to pursue their own interest is limited while in public secondary schools, professional development of teachers is allowed. For instance, teachers in public secondary schools are allowed to enrol for sandwich programme in various Universities across the country.

In Ekiti State, it appears private secondary schools are always better funded and have enough resources which allow investment in more modern facilities like well-maintained laboratories, classrooms, libraries and so on, which seem to result into a more conducive learning environment and students' overall safety. Meanwhile, majority of the public secondary schools appear to be suffering from inadequate infrastructure, including those mentioned above, poor classroom conditions, insufficient instructional materials and limited access to basic amenities like clean water and sanitation. These seem to result into poor safety and overall learning environment for students. It appears majority of the private schools in Ekiti State maintain smaller class sizes which allows more personalised attention from the teachers. This also allows the teachers to address individual student's need more effectively and contribute to a more supportive and safer learning environment. In the public secondary schools, it appears the student enrolment is on the high side which may lead to overcrowded classrooms resulting into high student-to-teacher ratio which may limit students' individual attention and support, impacting students' engagement and the overall learning experience.

The researchers observed that all the private secondary schools nowadays, place a very strong emphasis on security by employing professional security services and implementing very strict access controls. It appears the security measures put in place by the public secondary schools vary from one school to another. Some employ the services of local hunters while some employ the services of ex-service men (retired police/military). Meanwhile, it seems some schools have security personnel or adequate safety protocols while others lack sufficient protection against external threats, leading to concern about student safety. In Ekiti State, Nigeria, the researchers observed that principals of private secondary schools demonstrate strong leadership activities than the principals in public secondary schools. This might be because of better discipline and managerial outcomes. In a study conducted by Lin (2025), on comparative analysis of public and private secondary school education systems in the United States with three dimensions: analysing teacher characteristics, student demographics, and curricula approaches using National Centre for Education Statistics data and academic research to explore key differences and their causes. The study revealed that teacher certification and professional autonomy differ significantly, with public schools emphasising formal standardise requirements and private schools offering more flexibility; and that student demographics and academic outcomes differ, as public schools serve more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, whereas, private schools often have higher academic performance because of higher socioeconomic factors.

In a study conducted by Ajayi (2024), on comparative analysis of pupils' academic achievements in public and private primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria using descriptive research design of survey type. The sample consisted of 182 despondence that were selected by simple random sampling technique. Two instruments were developed and used for the study. It was revealed that there was a significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils in favour of private schools. A study was conducted by Sadaf et al. (2017) on comparative study of students' academic performance between private and public higher secondary schools of Wah Cantt. The sample consisted of 240 students who were randomly selected from the private and public higher secondary schools in Wah Cantt. A structured questionnaire and Pupils' Achievement Test (PTA) in three core subject areas of the school curriculum namely: English Language, Mathematics, and Social Studies were used for the study. PAT was used to collect data on students' performance in the three subjects involved in the study. The study revealed that students in the private higher secondary schools performed better than their counterparts in the public schools.

A study was conducted by Ahmad et al (2021) on a comparative study of teachers' academic professional qualifications in public and private secondary schools in Malakand Division. The study sample consisted of 480 teachers from 148 randomly selected schools (50 percent public and 50 percent private) in Malakand. A survey questionnaire technique was used for the collection of data, which was



then analysed using inferential statistics and descriptive statistics. The result indicated that teachers at public secondary schools had higher academic qualification than teachers at private secondary schools. A study was conducted by Jameel et al. (2021) on a comparative study of public and private sector education at secondary school level. The study used quantitative research design. The population comprised all public and private secondary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 911 teachers. The sample consisted of 602 participants (285 participant from public sector and 317 participants from private sector) through stratified random sampling technique. The data collected were tabulated, and analysed and interpreted by using t-test. It was found out that private schools have more qualified staff as compared to public schools.

A study was conducted by Sulyman et al. (2024) on comparative analysis of teachers' job performance in private and public secondary schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary School 3 students in 40 public and 36 private secondary schools. Twenty public secondary schools and 18 private secondary schools were proportionately sampled; this represented 50% of each school type. Ten students were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools to make a total of 380. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The study revealed that job performance in private secondary schools is more than public secondary schools. A study was conducted by Amoran et al. (2017) on healthful school environment: A comparative study of public and private primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used for the study. The participants were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analysed using the SPSS version 20.0. The study revealed that environmental health situation in private schools is better than that of public schools.

A study was conducted by Modi and Shrivastawa (2022) on comparative study of professional development of teachers among secondary level schools. The raw data collected from different school of 60-60 (private and secondary male and female teachers) selected teachers legislative were tabulated mean, standard deviation and 't' value were calculated. The study indicated that the level of professional development of the government school teachers is significantly higher than the private school teachers. A study was conducted by Kumari and Verma (2024) on parental involvement in secondary education: A comparative study between private and government schools in India. The researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and academic performance analysis. The result revealed differences in the extent and nature of parental involvement between private and government schools influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status, parental education level, and school culture. While both type of schools benefit from parental involvement, private schools often exhibits more direct engagement from parents in shaping school policies and programmes. A study was conducted by Saira and Ghafoor (2024) on a comparative study of formative assessment practices in public and private secondary schools in District Gujrat, Pakistan. Descriptive survey method, a structured Likert-scale questionnaire was prepared and used to collect data from 400 teachers (200 public and 200 private) using quantitative research design. It was revealed that teachers in both sectors are actively engaging in formative assessment with levels of implementation of it being slightly higher among public school teachers than private school teachers.

A study was conducted by Akomolafe (2012) on a comparative study of principals' administrative effectiveness in public and private secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of teachers in both public and private schools. A sample of 295 subjects were sampled, 191 subjects from public institutions, 104 subjects from private institutions. Data were gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Principals' administrative effectiveness in secondary schools" (PAESS). The validity and reliability of the instrument was ascertained. The result of the study revealed that there was moderate level of administrative effectiveness in in public secondary schools while there was high level of administrative effectiveness in private secondary schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to comparative the effectiveness of private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.



## Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between effectiveness in private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## Hypothesis

The null hypothesis formulated to guide the study is:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between effectiveness in private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## Methodology

The descriptive survey was adopted as the design of this study. The population of the study consisted of 333 private secondary schools and 206 public secondary schools (Source: Ekiti State Ministry of Education, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria). A sample of 150 respondents was selected for the study. The number was made up of 96 teachers from private and 54 teachers from public secondary schools that were randomly selected. Effectiveness of Private and Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (EPPSSQ) was designed and adopted to collect data for the study. A 4-point rating scale was used for the instrument. Inferential statistics (t-test) was used for the study. The reliability co-efficient of (r) calculated was 0.78 through the test-re-test method which was high enough to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The instrument was made available to experts in the field of Educational Management, and Tests and Measurement. The experts determined the instrument at the face value. That is, the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what it is supposed to measure to ensure that it contains the items that will provide response on effectiveness of private and public secondary schools. Research experts checked the content validity to determine the extent to which the items 1-15 on the instrument represent the content and suitability of the concepts to be measured. The experts also reviewed the items 1-15 in terms of clarity to ensure that all words that could confuse respondents are removed.

## Result

**Table 1: t-test summary of effectiveness of private and public secondary schools**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	p-cal
Public	54	23.56	9.04	* 2.671	0.001
Private	96	17.84	7.11		

\* $p < 0.05$  (Significant Result)

Table 1 shows the difference between effectiveness of private and public secondary schools. The value of t-calculated (2.671) is greater than the value of p-calculated (0.001). Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier formulated is rejected. This then means that, there is significant difference between effectiveness of private and public secondary schools.

## Discussion of Findings

The result showed that there was statistically significant difference between effectiveness of private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This implies that private secondary schools are more effective than public secondary schools. This might be because; private schools have the necessary resources and the autonomy to use them more than the public secondary schools. This finding is in support of Okpara (2000) cited in Nwafor (2019) who observed that in NECO examinations, the performances of students in private schools are better than the performances of students in public schools, Okpara who stated that private schools are closely monitored and supervised by the School Management Boards, as a result, they perform better in external examinations; Ntim (2014) who submitted that learning outcomes of the private school pupils are high compared to those of the public schools; the World Bank Report (2022) cited in Kareem (2024) who that said, Nigerian private schools consistently performed better than public schools across all indicators, that a notable distinction was in



their management of human resources and that absence from school in public schools was more than double the absence rate among private school teachers: 16 versus 6 percent.

Furthermore, United States Department of Education (2012) stated that National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is representative at national level for the assessment of Americans' students' knowledge in various subject areas reported that private schools performed better than public schools in all major subject area including Mathematics and Science; Ajayi (2024) who revealed that there was a significant difference in academic achievements of private and public primary school pupils in favour of private schools; Sadaf et al. (2017) who revealed that students in the private higher secondary schools performed better than their counterparts in the public schools; Lin (2025) who revealed that teacher certification and professional autonomy differ significantly, with public schools emphasising formal standardise requirements and private schools offering more flexibility and that student demographics and academic outcomes differ, as public schools serve more diverse socioeconomic, whereas, private schools often have higher academic performance because of higher socioeconomic factors; Kumari and Verma (2024) who revealed differences in the extent and nature of parental involvement between private and government schools influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status, parental education level, and school culture.

While both type of schools benefit from parental involvement, private schools often exhibit more direct engagement from parents in shaping school policies and programmes; Sulyman et al. (2024) who found out that job performance in private secondary schools is more than public secondary schools; Amoran et al. (2017) who revealed that environmental health situation in private schools is better than that of public schools; Jameel et al. (2021) who found out that private schools have more qualified staff as compared to public schools; and Akomolafe (2012) who revealed that there was moderate level of administrative effectiveness in in public secondary schools while there was high level of administrative effectiveness in private secondary schools.

### **Conclusion**

Comparative analysis highlights notable distinctions between private and public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Private secondary schools tend to operate with more safe and conducive learning environment which brings about high learning outcomes, and resource availability; attractive highly qualified and engaged teachers but are facing challenges with teacher turnover and retention; communication directly and personally between the teachers and communities through social media; and tend to invest in better resources for tracking students' progress whereas, public secondary schools are aligned with standardised education with stricter accountability policies. Prospective researchers could carry out similar studies (effectiveness) in the rural and urban areas.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that public secondary schools should:

1. Emphasis on continuous assessment and examination preparation; and organise remedial classes for struggling students.
2. Have regular meetings with the parents and have transparent communication about student performance and behaviour.
3. Make sure, teachers are engaged in commensurate with the salary they earn every month.
4. Provide security outfits for healthy environment.
5. Through the appropriate agency, request for qualified teachers.

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