



A Comparative Analysis of Constraints in the Provision and Utilization of School Facilities in Public and Private Secondary Schools in South Western Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study is a comparative analysis of constraints in the provision and utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools in South Western Nigeria. Two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a comparative research design. The population of the study was 113,116 teachers comprising 44,526 public and grant aided secondary school teachers and 68, 590 private secondary school teachers in the South Western, Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 382 teachers. The sample size was selected using proportionate stratified, systematic and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire validated by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer research questions while independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria. It also revealed that the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools significantly differ in South West Nigeria in favour of the private schools. The study concluded that, public and private secondary schools in South West Nigeria face distinct yet overlapping constraints in the provision and utilization of school facilities, with public schools experiencing more severe challenges due to inadequate funding, overcrowding, poor maintenance, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, while private schools contend with land limitations, security issues, and weak public-private partnerships. The study therefore recommended among others that Governments and educational stakeholders should allocate more financial resources to public schools and streamline bureaucratic processes to ensure timely maintenance, facility upgrades, and effective utilization of resources. Also, private schools should be encouraged to engage in stronger collaborations with public institutions through shared training programs, resource-sharing agreements, and knowledge exchanges.

Keywords: School Facilities, Provision, Utilization, Constraints, Public Secondary Schools and Private Secondary Schools

Introduction

The provision and utilization of school facilities are critical determinants of educational quality, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. School facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and recreational areas, are essential components of the learning environment. They play a significant role in shaping students' academic outcomes and overall development. According to Ajayi and Ayodele (2001), the availability and adequacy of these facilities directly influence the quality of education provided. Public secondary schools in Nigeria, managed and funded by the government, often face significant challenges in the provision of these essential facilities. In contrast, private secondary schools, funded through tuition fees and private investments, are generally perceived to provide better facilities, thereby creating a conducive learning environment (Ojukwu, 2022). However, despite these differences, both public and private schools encounter constraints in the utilization of facilities, which necessitates a detailed comparative analysis to understand and address these issues effectively.

Public secondary schools in Nigeria face chronic underfunding, which hampers the provision and maintenance of school facilities. Government budgets allocated to education are often insufficient to meet the growing demands of an increasing student population. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommends that nations allocate at least 15-20% of their national budgets to education. However, Nigeria consistently falls short of this benchmark, allocating less than 10% in recent years (UNESCO, 2023). This underfunding has resulted in overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and insufficient teaching aids in public schools. Ajayi and Ayodele (2001) argue that the lack of adequate facilities in public schools significantly hinders teaching and learning processes. The situation is further exacerbated by the high student-to-teacher ratio, which stretches available resources beyond their limits. These constraints underscore the urgent need for improved funding and efficient resource management in public secondary schools.

Private secondary schools, on the other hand, generally have better provision of facilities due to their ability to generate funds through tuition fees and private investments. Studies indicate that private schools in Nigeria often boast well-equipped classrooms, modern laboratories, and adequate recreational facilities, which create a conducive learning environment (Ojukwu, 2022). However, the profit-oriented nature of some private schools may lead to cost-cutting measures that compromise the quality and maintenance of these facilities. Additionally, the financial burden placed on parents to fund private education can limit access for students from low-income families, thereby perpetuating educational inequality. While private schools are perceived to offer superior facilities, challenges such as high operational costs and inconsistent regulatory oversight can hinder their ability to maintain and upgrade these facilities sustainably. Thus, while private schools may have an edge over public schools in terms of facility provision, they are not immune to constraints that affect the effective utilization of these resources.

The utilization of school facilities in both public and private secondary schools is influenced by several factors, including student enrollment, maintenance culture, and management practices. In public schools, high student enrollment often leads to the overutilization of limited facilities, resulting in rapid wear and tear. For instance, overcrowded classrooms can hinder effective teaching and learning by creating a noisy and distracting environment. Ajayi and Ayodele (2001) note that the overutilization of school facilities in public schools contributes to their quick deterioration, further exacerbating the challenges faced by these institutions. Conversely, private schools, with their controlled student populations, can utilize their facilities more effectively, ensuring regular maintenance and optimal use. However, the lack of stringent regulatory frameworks for private schools can lead to disparities in the quality of facility utilization across different institutions (Adeyemi, 2020). This highlights the need for comprehensive policies to ensure equitable access to quality education in both public and private sectors.

The regional context also plays a significant role in the provision and utilization of school facilities. In South-Western Nigeria, disparities between public and private secondary schools are particularly pronounced. A study conducted by Adekunle et al. (2021) revealed that private schools in this region consistently outperform their public counterparts in terms of facility provision and maintenance. The study attributed this disparity to factors such as better funding mechanisms, effective management practices, and a higher level of accountability in private schools. However, public schools in the region often struggle with inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a lack of community involvement in school administration. This regional disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by public and private schools in South-Western Nigeria. Such interventions should aim to bridge the gap in facility provision and utilization, ensuring that all students have access to quality education regardless of the type of school they attend.

The importance of adequate school facilities in enhancing students' academic performance cannot be overstated. Research has consistently shown a positive correlation between the availability of school facilities and students' academic achievements. For instance, a study conducted by Ojukwu (2022) in Lagos State found that schools with adequate facilities reported higher student performance in standardized examinations compared to those with inadequate facilities. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which posits that a conducive learning environment is essential for students to achieve their full potential. Adequate school facilities not only enhance academic performance but also contribute to students' overall well-being and motivation. Therefore, addressing the constraints in facility provision and utilization is crucial for improving the quality of education in Nigeria's secondary schools.

Despite the efforts of the Nigerian government and private stakeholders to improve the provision and utilization of school facilities, significant challenges remain. In public schools, issues such as bureaucratic bottlenecks, mismanagement of funds, and a lack of accountability hinder progress. Ajayi and Ayodele (2001) argue that beyond funding, factors like poor maintenance culture and ineffective management practices contribute significantly to the deplorable state of facilities in public secondary schools. In private schools, while the provision of facilities is generally better, the high cost of education and inconsistent regulatory oversight pose challenges to ensuring equitable access and sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that involves increased funding, effective resource management, and robust regulatory frameworks to ensure accountability and equity in both public and private schools.

Theoretical Framework

The study aligns closely with the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model, a framework widely used in educational research to analyze the interplay between resources, processes, and outcomes. The IPO Model, initially conceptualized within systems theory, provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how inputs (such as school facilities) are transformed through processes (such as utilization practices) to yield desired outputs (such as academic performance and student development). According to Agabi (2010), this model is particularly useful in examining the effectiveness of educational systems, as it highlights the dynamic relationship between resources, organizational practices, and outcomes. In the context of this study, the IPO Model is relevant because it provides a structured framework for comparing the constraints faced by public and private secondary schools in the provision and utilization of facilities. By focusing on inputs such as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, the study examines how these resources are utilized (process) to influence student outcomes (output). The model's emphasis on efficiency and resource optimization is particularly pertinent given the disparities in funding and management practices between public and private schools in Nigeria. Furthermore, the IPO Model underscores the importance of feedback mechanisms, which can inform policy interventions aimed at addressing the challenges identified in the study. Thus, the theoretical framework not only guides the research design but also provides valuable insights into potential strategies for enhancing the quality of education through improved facility provision and utilization.

Objectives

Specifically, the study compared the:

- i. constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools
- ii. constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How do the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities differ in public and private secondary schools?
- ii. How do the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities differ in public and private secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- i. Constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria
- ii. Constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria

Methodology

This study employed a comparative research design. The population comprised 113,116 teachers, including 44,526 public and grant-aided secondary school teachers and 68,590 private secondary school teachers from 13,350 secondary schools. These schools consisted of 2,699 public secondary schools and 10,651 private secondary schools in South Western Nigeria. A sample size of 382 teachers and 370 secondary schools was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size calculation. The sampling process involved proportionate stratified sampling, systematic sampling, and convenience sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire validated by three experts: one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation and two from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning. To establish the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted on 60 teachers (30 from public and 30 from private secondary schools) in four schools (two public and two private) in South Western Nigeria. These teachers were part of the study population but excluded from the main sample. The reliability coefficient of the instrument, determined using Cronbach's Alpha method, was 0.75, indicating a high level of reliability. The collected data were analyzed using means and standard deviation to address the research questions, while independent t-tests were employed to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance..

Results

Research Question 1: How do the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities differ in public and private secondary schools?

Table 5: Constraints faced in the provision of School Facilities in Public and Private Secondary Schools

	Constraints of Provision	Public Schools		Private Schools	
		Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	Inadequate Funding	3.87	.98	3.57	.87
2	Overcrowding	3.77	.89	2.49	.99
3	Lack of community involvement and support	3.64	.91	2.85	.94
4	Land and Space Limitations	2.46	.84	3.89	.86
5	Security Concerns	3.00	.83	3.76	.90
6	Weak Public-Private Partnerships	3.21	.89	3.74	.90
7	Power supply issues	3.73	.94	3.79	.93
8	Infrastructure Decay	3.84	.88	3.04	.84

The result presented in table 1 reveal that both public and private secondary schools face distinct constraints in the provision of school facilities. Public schools experience more severe issues with inadequate funding (3.87), overcrowding (3.77), lack of community involvement (3.64), and infrastructure decay (3.84). Conversely, private schools struggle more with land and space limitations (3.89), security concerns (3.76), and weak public-private partnerships (3.74). Both public and private schools face similar challenges with power supply issues, indicating a common infrastructural problem.

Research Question 2: How do the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities differ in public and private secondary schools?

Table 2: Constraints faced in the utilization of School Facilities in Public and Private Secondary Schools

	Constraints of Utilization	Public Schools		Private Schools	
		Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	Poor maintenance of school facilities	3.88	.93	2.52	.79
2	Limited access	3.74	.87	2.73	.80
3	Time constraints	3.52	.89	2.49	.85
4	Lack of awareness	3.01	.95	2.44	.78
5	Incompetence	3.23	.90	3.03	.82
6	Lack of proper training	3.21	.88	2.99	.82
7	Out datedness of school facilities	3.82	.83	2.54	.85
8	Poor coordination	3.01	.91	2.47	.81

The results in Table 2 indicate that public secondary schools face greater constraints in the utilization of school facilities compared to private secondary schools. Public schools report higher mean values for poor maintenance (3.88 vs. 2.52), limited access (3.74 vs. 2.73), time constraints (3.52 vs. 2.49), lack of awareness (3.01 vs. 2.44), outdated facilities (3.82 vs. 2.54), and poor coordination (3.01 vs. 2.47). Both types of schools face similar levels of incompetence (3.23 vs. 3.03) and lack of proper training (3.21 vs. 2.99), but these issues are slightly more pronounced in public schools. Overall, the data suggest that public schools require more attention and resources to address these constraints effectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on the significance of constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools

School Type	N	Mean	F	t-value	df	Sig. value	α -level	Decision
Public Schools	141	3.44						
			.098	.189	359	.853	.05	Not Significant
Private Schools	220	3.39						

N = Number of Respondents, F = F-Ratio, NS = Not Significant, df = Degree of Freedom

The result of the study as presented in Table 3 shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools. Result showed that a t-value of .189 with a degree of freedom (df) of 359 and a significant or probability value of .853 was obtained. Since the probability value of .853 is greater than than 0.05 level of significance ($P > 0.05$) set as benchmark, the null hypothesis which states that the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria is not rejected. This means that the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the significance of constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools

School Type	N	Mean	F	t-value	df	Sig. value	α -level	Decision
Public Schools	141	3.44						
			3.17	5.10	359	.000	.05	Significant
Private Schools	220	2.65						

N = Number of Respondents, F = F-Ratio, NS = Not Significant, df = Degree of Freedom

The result of the study as presented in Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools. Result showed that a t-value of 5.10 with a degree of freedom (df) of 359 and a significant or probability value of .000 was obtained. Since the probability value of .000 is less than than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$) set as benchmark, the null hypothesis which states that the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria is rejected. This means that the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools significantly differ in South West Nigeria.

Discussion

Further, the findings of the study revealed that the constraints faced in the provision of school facilities in public and private secondary schools do not significantly differ in South West Nigeria. It was shown that both public and private secondary schools face distinct constraints in the provision of school facilities. Public schools experience more severe issues with inadequate funding overcrowding lack of community involvement, and infrastructure decay. Conversely, private schools struggle more with land and space limitations, security concerns, and weak public-private partnerships. Both public and private schools face similar challenges with power supply issues, indicating a common infrastructural problem. This finding resonates with empirical studies such as Yangeve (2019) and Adeyemi (2014), which highlight the systemic disparities in resource allocation and management between the sectors. Public schools, reliant on government funding, often contend with inadequate financial resources and bureaucratic delays in infrastructure maintenance and development. Muhammad (2009) found that public schools in Punjab, Pakistan, had better physical facilities in some areas, such as buildings, libraries, and playgrounds, while private schools excelled in others like computer laboratories. This mixed picture aligns with the current study's finding of varied constraints across school types. Farooqi et al. (2015) discovered that public sector schools in Punjab, Pakistan, had better facilities than private sector schools in every aspect, contrasting with the current study's more balanced view of constraints. Kolo et al. (2017) revealed insufficient toilet facilities in both public and private schools in Maiduguri, supporting the notion of shared challenges across school types. The present study's findings of similar yet distinct constraints in public and private schools could be attributed to several factors. Both school types operate within the same broader societal context, facing similar basic infrastructure challenges such as power supply issues, which transcend school type and reflect wider societal problems. However, the nature of these shared challenges may manifest differently due to the distinct operational models of public and private schools. Public schools, relying on government funding, may face more severe issues with inadequate funding, overcrowding, and infrastructure decay.

These challenges could stem from broader fiscal constraints at the government level, policies on universal access to education leading to high enrollment rates, and potentially inefficient bureaucratic processes for maintenance and upgrades. The lack of community involvement reported in public schools might be due to a perception that school management is solely the government's responsibility, potentially leading to a disconnect between schools and their local communities. Private schools, on the other hand, appear to struggle more with land and space limitations, security concerns, and weak public-private partnerships. These issues could be attributed to the often urban locations of private schools, where land is scarce and expensive, and the perception of private schools as targets for security threats due to their potentially wealthier student populations. The challenge of weak public-private partnerships suggests a need for better frameworks for collaboration between the public and private education sectors. The different funding models – government allocations for public schools versus tuition fees for private schools – likely contribute to the distinct patterns of constraints. While public schools might have more stable but potentially insufficient funding, private schools may face fluctuations based on enrollment and economic conditions affecting their client base. The regulatory environment, presumably similar for both school types, could impose certain constraints equally, such as standards for facility provision, while allowing for differences in how schools can address these requirements. The scale of operations, with public schools often serving larger student populations, could exacerbate challenges related to overcrowding and facility wear and tear. Community involvement dynamics may differ, with public schools potentially struggling more to engage communities that view education as a government responsibility, while private schools might face challenges in justifying community involvement beyond their immediate stakeholders. It is important to note that while constraints may be similar in some aspects, their impact and the capacity to address them may vary significantly between public and private schools. The specific context of South West Nigeria, including regional economic conditions, cultural attitudes towards education, and local governance structures, likely plays a crucial role in shaping these constraints and the ability of schools to overcome them. This finding underscores the need for nuanced, context-specific approaches to addressing facility provision challenges in both public and private educational sectors.

The study's findings also revealed that the constraints faced in the utilization of school facilities in public and private secondary schools significantly differ in South West Nigeria in favour of the private schools. Most notably, the result showed that public secondary schools face greater constraints in the utilization of school facilities compared to private secondary schools. Public schools report higher challenge for poor maintenance, limited access, time constraints, lack of awareness, outdated facilities and poor coordination. Both types of schools face similar levels of incompetence and lack of proper training but these issues are slightly more pronounced in public schools. The study's finding that public secondary schools face greater constraints in the utilization of school facilities compared to private secondary schools in South West Nigeria provides valuable insights into the operational challenges within the education system. This finding suggests a complex interplay of factors affecting how schools make use of their available resources, with public institutions facing more significant hurdles. The empirical review offers some context for understanding these findings, although direct comparisons are limited. Malero et al. (2015) found better ICT usage readiness in private schools in Dodoma, Tanzania, which aligns with the current study's finding of fewer utilization constraints in private schools. Similarly, Asaolu and Fashanu (2012) reported better ICT facility utilization in private schools in Lagos State, further supporting the trend of more effective resource use in private institutions. However, some studies in the review present findings that are not directly comparable but offer relevant insights. Inyang (2021) found low availability but high utilization of available sporting facilities in public schools in Akwa-Ibom State, suggesting that utilization challenges may vary by facility type and region. Adamu and Salihu (2019) found no significant difference

in computer instruction use between private and public schools in Adamawa state, indicating that in some contexts, utilization patterns may be similar across school types.

The present study's findings of greater utilization constraints in public schools could be attributed to several factors. Resource allocation likely plays a significant role, with public schools potentially having limited budgets for facility maintenance and staff training on facility use. This could lead to situations where facilities exist but are underutilized due to poor condition or lack of knowledge on how to incorporate them effectively into teaching practices. Bureaucratic processes in public institutions might create more administrative hurdles in addressing facility issues or implementing changes in utilization strategies, leading to delays and inefficiencies. Staff motivation could be a factor, with private school teachers potentially having more incentives or requirements to fully utilize available facilities, possibly tied to performance evaluations or competitive market pressures. Overcrowding in public schools, often facing higher student populations due to policies of universal access to education, could lead to overuse and quicker deterioration of facilities, making consistent and effective utilization more challenging. Management efficiency may differ, with private schools potentially having more streamlined decision-making processes for facility utilization and problem-solving, allowing for quicker adaptations to needs and opportunities. The issue of poor maintenance reported in public schools might stem from inadequate funding allocations for upkeep and repairs, or from inefficient management practices, leading to facilities becoming unusable or suboptimal for their intended purposes. Limited access to facilities in public schools could result from a combination of factors including overcrowding, stringent regulations, or poor scheduling practices. Time constraints might arise from rigid curricula or administrative burdens that leave little room for creative use of facilities, particularly in public schools where standardized teaching approaches may be more prevalent. The lack of awareness about available facilities or their potential uses, more pronounced in public schools, could be due to insufficient communication or training for staff, possibly exacerbated by higher staff turnover or larger school sizes making comprehensive training more challenging.

The presence of outdated facilities suggests a lag in upgrading resources, likely due to budget constraints or bureaucratic hurdles in procurement processes, which may be more severe in the public sector. Poor coordination, another challenge more evident in public schools, might reflect broader management issues within the public school system, possibly due to more complex organizational structures or less direct accountability measures. The finding that both types of schools face similar levels of incompetence and lack of proper training, with these issues being slightly more pronounced in public schools, indicates a shared challenge in human resource development across the education sector. This suggests that while private schools may have some advantages in facility utilization, there are underlying issues affecting the entire educational landscape in the region. It's important to note that these constraints don't necessarily imply that public schools are not striving to improve or that all public schools face the same level of challenges. The identification of these issues could serve as a starting point for targeted interventions. The relatively better position of private schools in facility utilization could be attributed to factors such as more flexible management structures, greater accountability to fee-paying parents, or more resources allocated to staff training and development. However, it's crucial to consider that private schools may also face unique challenges not captured in this comparison, such as pressure to maintain facilities to justify high fees or difficulties in balancing facility investments with other operational costs. The significant difference in utilization constraints between public and private schools underscores the need for tailored approaches to improving facility use in different educational settings. It also highlights the potential for knowledge sharing and collaboration between public and private sectors to address these challenges more effectively. The specific context of South West Nigeria, including factors such as local educational policies, economic conditions, and cultural attitudes towards education, likely plays a significant role in shaping these utilization patterns and the constraints faced by different types of schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that public and private secondary schools in South West Nigeria face distinct yet overlapping constraints in the provision and utilization of school facilities, with public schools experiencing more severe challenges due to inadequate funding, overcrowding, poor maintenance, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, while private schools contend with land limitations, security issues, and weak public-private partnerships. Public schools also face greater utilization constraints, such as poor maintenance, outdated facilities, and limited staff training, which hinder effective resource use. These differences highlight the systemic disparities between the two sectors, shaped by distinct funding models, operational structures, and regional socio-economic factors. The findings emphasize the need for tailored interventions that address the unique and shared challenges of each school type, promote efficient resource management, and foster collaboration between public and private sectors to enhance the overall quality of education in the region.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Governments and educational stakeholders should allocate more financial resources to public schools and streamline bureaucratic processes to ensure timely maintenance, facility upgrades, and effective utilization of resources. Initiatives should include increased community involvement and partnerships to address infrastructure decay, overcrowding, and outdated facilities, creating a more supportive and resource-rich learning environment.
2. Private schools should be encouraged to engage in stronger collaborations with public institutions through shared training programs, resource-sharing agreements, and knowledge exchanges. Both public and private schools should invest in regular staff development initiatives focused on effective facility utilization, particularly in integrating technology and innovative teaching practices, to overcome shared challenges like lack of awareness and limited staff competency.

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