

An Assessment of Human Resources and Educational Facilities in Private Pre-Primary Schools in Ogun State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Eighty (80) private nursery schools were randomly selected in Ogun State, Nigeria, out of 196 available in the state government's education handbook. Two questionnaires, namely Student Teachers Questionnaire on Nursery School Facilities (STQNSF), and Nursery School Resources Questionnaire for Head teachers (NSRQH) were used to gather data concerning human resources and facilities available in the nursery schools. Based on the federal government's Guidelines on Minimum Standards in Schools nationwide, the adequacy or otherwise of the human resources and facilities were determined using simple percentages. The three research questions designed for the study are: How suitably located are private pre-primary schools in Ogun State Nigeria? How adequate are the teaching staff and head teachers of private pre-primary schools in Ogun State Nigeria? How adequate are the facilities provided in pre-primary schools in Ogun State Nigeria? It was found that most of the private nursery schools were located in conducive environment, but most were accommodated in substandard buildings. Pupil-teacher ratio in the schools was adequate, head teachers' qualifications were adequate but teaching staff qualifications were generally inadequate. Most of the schools had inadequate facilities. Over-all, only 44.37% of the schools' facilities were included in the study. It is recommended that an independent Pre-primary School Commission, separate from the State Ministry of Education, be put in place by each state in Nigeria, to solely see to the actualization of national standards in all private pre-primary schools. This is to ensure adequate provision of teaching staff and facilities and educational standards therein.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Public schools at all levels in Nigeria's education system are generally believed to have inadequate/poor resources for teaching and learning than their private counterpart. By extension, they are believed to offer less quality education than private institutions. The belief is supported by some investigation that had been made into the assessment of the status of the public schools. Iginla (2008) observed that, in Nigeria's public educational institutions at all levels, there was gross inadequacy of resources, and as such, teaching was conducted more in theory rather than practical. According to him, equipment available in such schools was largely obsolete. Fafunwa (1994) reported a study on Nigerian public primary schools which reflected that:

- A substantial number had no building.
- There was a shortfall of furniture for teachers and pupils by 62.4% and 62.5% respectively.
- Only 68.9% had access to potable water, 59.2% obtained water from wells whilst 2.1% obtained water from ponds.
- Less than 6% had access to health facilities.
- Only 68% had toilet facilities. Out of that, 41.9% had pit latrines and 12.1% used bush, dunghill, open spaces or stagnant water as toilet.

- 77% of the pupils had no textbook at all while 36% had no writing materials.
- The most common instructional materials in the schools were chalkboard and chalk, and even up to 3% had no chalk. In many schools, chalks were provided by teachers.
- Equipment for science, agricultural science, home Economics, and arts and crafts were lacking.

Awoyele (1988) assessed the resources allocated to public junior secondary schools in Ogun State. He found in the study that only 23.79% of all resources required in the state were allocated, thus generating acute shortage of physical, material and human resources. The current situation of public schools is not better either. Soyinka (2007) cited sources from the Federal Ministry of Education that just 50.95% of public primary schools in Nigeria had rooms in good condition while only 50.25% of public secondary schools had. The situation was accentuated by the multitudinous enrollment in the schools where, contrary to statutory standard of teacher-pupil ratio from 1:30 to 1:40, public schools now have a ratio of 1:70 at primary and secondary school levels. Even in the northern states, perceived to be more educationally trepid than the south, over-population in classes is now palpable. Affe (2008) observed that, though only 60% of primary school students transit to junior secondary school class, in Kano, student enrolment per class is now up to 150 instead of between 30 and 40. On the other hand, school attendance is poor nationwide. According to Weltz (2008), pupils who attended schools with large population were prone to failure and because of their behavioral and education difficulties, crime rate correspondingly increased.

Private Schools Status and Parents' Preference

The general public rates private institutions high on resource allocation and education quality (CAPE, 2014). In recent times, dwindling enrolment in public primary and secondary schools have been noticed. At the same time there is ascending patronage of private schools (*PM News*, 2011). Awoyele (2005) cited Lassa that private schools were receiving stupendous patronage from the society in spite of exorbitant fees they charge. This is also happening in other places. Toolkey, Olaniyan and Adedeji (2006) discovered that even the poor and the down-trodden in Hyderabad, India, and in Ghana and Lagos in Nigeria, prefer private schools. They found in their research that, in the three low income areas in Lagos, only 34.3% of the schools were government-owned while 65.7% were privately owned. In addition, they found that the proportion of pupils in government and private registered schools in Lagos State in 2002–2003 were 38% and 62% respectively.

Okwilagwe (2007) in a comparative study of public and private schools in Ibadan found teacher-student ratio from 1:30 to 1:43 in public schools while a ratio from 1:4 to 1:20 in private schools and that private schools were better funded than public schools. His study also showed that public school enrolment was generally large, (between 2,000 and 3,000 students) while private school enrolment was much smaller (between 30 and 250 students). Average class size in private schools is between 3 and 25 as against 30 and 38 in public schools. Success rate in public examinations is higher in private schools than in public schools. Contrarily, Taiwo (2005) observed that

private primary schools generally had poor resources. Many uncompleted or dilapidated buildings, makeshift sheds or verandas were converted to nurseries or primary schools by brisk businessmen who took advantage of the citizens' desire for an alternative to the public primary school. He stressed further that, except for a few, most of the private schools were substandard and grossly inferior to public primary schools in several respects. Most of the school compounds are choked up with little or no space for recreational facilities. Classrooms are poorly ventilated. Teachers are largely untrained, and teachers' salaries fall below the minimum wage.

Illustrative of the above-stated assertion, the Lagos State Government identified over 300 substandard private nurseries and primary schools in the state and started outright closure of such schools (Olanrewaju, 2008). The State Commissioner for Education claimed that the proprietors of schools failed to abide by the rules and guidelines for setting up schools, failed to seek approval and operated in unhygienic environment. They also employed unqualified teachers.

Resource Standard for Private Nursery and Primary Schools

Pre-primary education is fast becoming the foundation of formal education, judging by its profuse patronage by Nigerians. It is a very important level of education that requires the best of teachers and facilities for its operation. Hence the federal government has packaged guidelines on minimum standards for private nurseries and primary schools nationwide. The guidelines are put in place to:

- a) Provide guidelines on general and specific principles of inspection and monitoring of schools;
- b) Provide tools for the efficiency of school management;
- c) Guide proprietors in providing funds for the schools;
- d) Use the guide for accrediting schools

(FGN, 2002)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Resources allocated to education, in quality and quantity, go a long way in improving the quality of the output of educational programs in Nigeria. This perhaps explains why regulatory bodies set the minimum requirements for the establishment of educational institutions. Enforcement of the guidelines prescribed through monitoring and evaluation of the institutions is important if standard is to be maintained and sustained. (Akinsotu, 2011, Alani, 2005). This study was designed to examine the level of adequacy of the human and material resources available for nursery education in private nursery schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i) How suitably located are private pre-primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- ii) How adequate are the qualifications of teaching staff and head teachers of private pre-primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria?

- iii) How adequate are the facilities provided in private pre-primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is all pre-primary private schools in Ogun State of Nigeria. Eighty (80) of the schools in that category were randomly sampled from the 196 available on the State Government's Education Handbook. The number constitutes 40.82% of all the existing private pre-primary schools in the Ogun State of Nigeria. Only the pre-primary segment of schools that operate nursery and primary schools were included in the study. The variables of the study are school location, pupil-teacher ratio, pupil-class ratio, teachers' qualifications and staff rooms, head teachers' qualifications and office allocation and facilities.

Two instruments were used for the study, namely:

- a) Student-Teachers' Questionnaire on Nursery School Facilities (STQNSF) and
- b) Nursery School Resources Questionnaire for Head teachers (NSRQH).

Both were designed by the researchers from the document *Guidelines on Minimum Standard in Schools Nationwide*, released by the federal government. STQNSF required information on location of each school selected for study and the facilities therein. NSRQH demanded information about the adequacy of number and qualifications of the teaching staff and the head teacher of each school, and the number of staff rooms and head teachers' offices allocated respectively. The STQNSF was administered to students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode. It was posted to nursery schools in Ogun State for six weeks. NSRQH was administered to the head teachers of the nurseries and primary schools to which the same students were posted, through the students, for the head teachers to respond.

DATA ANALYSIS

The resources available in each school were determined. The percentage of available data was then worked out based on federal government's prescribed standards. This revealed the level of adequacy of the resources. The over-all level of resource adequacy was finally determined by calculating the mean of all mean percentages (weighted means) of resources available in all the schools. Percentage score of 70 and above was taken to represent adequacy while below 70% was deemed inadequate.

Findings

As indicated in Table 1a below, it can be seen that 87.5% of the nursery schools are adequately located – either in quiet environment within township (62.5%) or totally outside the town (25%). Only 10 out of the schools (12.5%) are located in noisy environment. The schools are thus generally suitably

located. Only 62.5% of the schools are however operating in standard school buildings as indicated in Table 1b. This is inadequate.

Table 1a: Private Nursery Schools by Location in Ogun State, Nigeria.

| Location | Number | % | Remark |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Quiet Environment Within Town | 50 | 62.5 | Adequate |
| Outside Town | 20 | 25 | Adequate |
| Noisy Location | 10 | | Inadequate |
| | 12.5 | | |
| % Adequate | | 87.5 | |

Table 1b: Private Nursery Schools by Type of Building in Ogun State, Nigeria.

| Type of Building | Number | % | Remark |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Residential | 10 | 12.5 | Inadequate |
| Make-Shift | 20 | 25 | Inadequate |
| Standard | 50 | 62.5 | Adequate |
| % Adequate | | 62.5 | |

Table 2a displays the Guidelines on Minimum Standards in Schools nationwide. Table 2b reveals that 75% of the schools had pupil-teacher ratio within the national mandatory optimum standard of 20:1; 65.18% of the teachers had standard qualifications required to teach at that level. This is inadequate. Over-all, the percentage of teachers with standard qualifications was below 70%. However, 77.5% of the head teachers had standard qualifications for the position they held.

Table 2a: Staff Supply Minimum Standard set by the Regulatory Body.

| | Mandatory | Ideal | Optimum |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) | 20:1 | 10:1 | 20:1 |
| Pupil-Class Ratio (PCR) | 20:1 | 10:1 | 20:1 |
| Teachers' Qualification (TQ) | NCE | B.Ed. | B.Ed. |
| Head teachers' Qualification (HTQ) | NCE + 5 Years Teaching | B.Ed + 5 Teaching Years | B.Ed + 5 Years Teaching |

Source: FGN (2002). *Guidelines on Minimum Standards in Schools Nationwide.*

Table 2b: Level of Compliance to Staff Supply Minimum Standard in Ogun State, Nigeria.

| | Up to Standard % | Below Standard % |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) | 75 | 25 |
| Pupil-Class Ratio (PCR) | 50 | 50 |
| Teachers' Qualification (TQ) | 65.18 | 34.2 |
| Head teachers' Qualification (HTQ) | 77.5 | 22.5 |

Table 3: Facilities Availability in Selected Private Pre-primary Schools in Ogun State of Nigeria.

| RESOURCE STANDARD | | | | | RESOURCE AVAILABLE | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | Item | Mandatory | Ideal | Optimum | Mandatory/ Ideal/ Optimum | Below Standard | % Standard | % Below Standard |
| 1 | Water Supply | Borehole | Portable water | | 40 | 40 | 50 | 50 |
| 2 | Clinic | equipped | equipped | Equipped | 05 | 75 | 6.25 | 93.75 |
| 3 | Sick Bay | Availability | Availability | Availability | 05 | 75 | 6.25 | 93.75 |
| 4 | First Aid Box | Availability | Availability | Availability | 53 | 27 | 66.25 | 33.75 |
| 5 | Resident Nurse | Availability | Availability | Availability | 4 | 76 | 5 | 95 |
| 6 | Toilets | | | | | | | |
| a | 1:40 Pupils | 1:40 Pupils | 1:40 Pupils | 1:40 Pupils | 4 | 76 | 5 | 95 |
| b | Separate for Boys & Girls | | | | 60 | 20 | 75 | 25 |
| c | Separate for Male & Female Teachers | | | | 80 | - | 100 | 0 |
| d | Separate for Head teachers | | | | 72 | 8 | 90 | 10 |
| 7 | Playgrounds | | | | | | | |
| a | Availability | | | | 60 | 20 (N/A) | 75 | 25 |
| b | Fenced | | | | 45 | 35(N/A) | 56.25 | 43.75 |
| c | Grassed | | | | 60 | 20(N/A) | 75 | 25 |
| d | Hard-Surface track | | | | 3 | 77 | 3.75 | 76.25 |
| 8 | Playground Facilities | | | | | | | |
| a | Climbing | | | | 80 | - | 100 | 0 |
| b | Jumping | | | | 30 | 50 | 37.5 | 62.50 |
| c | Pulling | | | | 30 | 50 | 37.5 | 62.50 |
| d | Swinging | | | | 80 | - | 100 | 0 |
| e | Balancing | | | | 57 | 23 | 72.25 | 27.75 |
| f | Rocking | | | | 20 | 60 | 25 | 75 |
| 9 | Electricity | Generator | Generator & Public Supply | Public Supply | 50 | 30 | 62.5 | 37.50 |
| 10 | Bus Service | Availability | Availability | Availability | 25 | 55(N/A) | 31.25 | 48.75 |
| 11 | Electronic Gadgets | | | | | | | |
| a | Radio | Availability | Availability | Availability | 30 | 50(N/A) | 37.5 | 62.50 |
| b | TV | Availability | Availability | Availability | 10 | 70(N/A) | 12.5 | 87.50 |
| c | PAS | Availability | Availability | Availability | 14 | 66 | 17.5 | 82.50 |
| d | Telephone | Availability | Availability | Availability | 72(GSM) | 8 | 90 | 10 |
| e | Computer | Availability | Availability | Availability | 54 | 26 | 67.5 | 32.5 |
| f | Computer Lab | Availability | Availability | Availability | 5 | 75 | 6.25 | 93.75 |
| g | Video | Availability | Availability | Availability | 5 | 75 | 6.25 | 93.75 |
| | OVERALL | | | | | | 47.04 | 51.52 |

Table 3 above reveals that the provision of facilities in the nursery schools was generally poor. Except in the provision of toilet facilities, telephone, playground and playground facilities (climbing, swinging and balancing facilities), most of the schools had amenities

below required standard. Only 50% of the schools had acceptable source of water; 6.25% had clinic and sick bay respectively; 66.25% had First Aid Box; 5% had resident nurse; 5% had 1 toilet for 40 pupils. But on a positive note, 75% had separate toilet for boys and girls; 100% had separate toilet for male and female teachers; and 90% had separate toilet for head teachers. Seventy-five percent of the schools had playgrounds but only 56.25% of them had fenced playgrounds. Seventy-five percent of them fenced their playgrounds generally as part of their school premise. Only 3.75% used hard surface track on which the pupils run, and only 62.50% had a source of electricity. Only 31.25% had bus service. Only 67.5% of them had computers; a mere 37.5% had radio. Only 12.50% had television; 17.50% had public address system, and 6.25% had computer laboratories and video set respectively. On the whole, the acceptable level of amenities available in the private pre-primary schools in Ogun State of Nigeria was 44.37%. This is grossly inadequate.

Thus, in answer to the research questions in this study,

1. Most private pre-primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, are suitably located, but they are mostly operated in substandard buildings.
2. The qualifications of teachers in Ogun State private nursery schools are not adequate, but they are adequate in number. Head teachers' qualifications are adequate.
3. Toilet facilities in Ogun State private nursery schools are adequate except in the ratio of pupils' population to a toilet. Telephone is generally available. Only climbing, swinging and balancing facilities are generally available. Though each of the schools has playground in its own way, it is generally not fenced as required and hard surface track is far-fetched. Electricity is not up to acceptable standard. Bus service is also not common, so are computers. Computer laboratory and video set are hardly available in the schools.
4. Resource provision in private nursery schools is inadequate in Ogun State.

CONCLUSION

The scenario of inadequacy, especially in the area of head teachers' and teachers' qualifications, types of school building as well as facilities, is reflective of the general lethargy at all levels of Nigerian education system concerning resource allocation. Pre-primary school proprietors in particular are believed to establish these services because of profit rather than service. This was corroborated by Mrs. Sosan, the Lagos State Commissioner for Education (cited by Olanrewaju, 2008), who viewed that many proprietors of private schools had no business in the education project as the standard of their schools are so poor that they cannot be called educational institutions. A probable reason for the existing decay is ineffective supervision or even non-supervision of such schools by the relevant educational authorities. The specific guidelines on resource provision in private pre-primary schools and private secondary schools are that the mandatory structures and materials should be put in place at the inception of any such

school or within the first 5 years of its establishment. The ideal and the optimal levels should thereafter be reached (FNG 2002). Pre-primary institutions are particularly not supposed to open without the approval of the State Ministry of Education which must give approval for its site, buildings and facilities, to ensure attainment of required standards before giving approval.

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