

**DISPARITIES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY
SCHOOLS' ENROLMENTS, CLASSROOMS AND TEACHERS IN NIGERIA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS AND EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

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Abstract

School enrolment figures, number of classrooms and teachers are important statistical data essential for educational planning; their disparities in public and private pre-primary and primary schools should be equally reflected in the plan. Moreover, experience of educational sector and operational planning just concluded in Bauchi, Jigawa and Niger states of Nigeria with 2005/2006 as baseline academic year gave impetus to the study. Three research questions guided the study. A pool of secondary source data from the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) was organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Among other things, the private sector contributed 7.71% of total enrolments for pre-primary and primary schools; gender disparity in enrolments between public and private schools was not so pronounced at both levels; pupil class ratio (pcr) was 112.50 for public schools and 43.27 for private schools; there was not much disparity between number of male and female teachers in public schools (52.20% male and 47.80 female); but there was wide disparity between number of male and female teachers in private schools (35.19% male and 64.81% female). It was recommended that the private sector be encouraged to establish more schools to increase access to education; more incentives to be provided for school age girls especially in the North to increase their enrolments; more classroom blocks should be built

in public schools to reduce the high pcr, and male teachers to be encouraged to take up teaching as a career especially in the private schools where they constitute only 35. 19% of the teaching force.

Keywords: Public, Private, Schools, Disparities, Enrolment, Teachers.

Introduction

There was a total number of 60, 189 pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria by 2005. Of this number, 50,871 were public, and 9,318 privately owned and managed (Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2006). The year 2005 was selected for the latitudinal study because it was the baseline year (2005/2006 academic year) for the 10 year Education Sector Operational Plan (ESOP) of Bauchi, Jigawa and Nigeria States which was finalized by November 2008 preparatory for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Moreover, the difficulties encountered in course of trying to obtain credible and reliable data gave an impetus to investigate disparities in public and private pre- primary and primary schools enrolments, classrooms and teachers in Nigeria as these have implications for access and educational management.

During the education sector planning of the three states, the private sector school proprietors could not quickly respond to the invitation to make their contribution in terms of the appropriate statistics of their schools with respect to enrolment figures, number of classrooms, and number of teachers disaggregated by gender. Perhaps their fear and suspicion was that the government would use the information as a basis for an upward review of their tax. Moreover, many of the private schools were established and managed illegally as they were not dully registered. Although the situation varied from state to state, it was considered necessary to have an overview of the national enrolment figures, number of classrooms, and number of teachers disaggregated in both public and private schools at this level and their disparities thereof as this would serve as a guide in determining the situation in each of the 36 states of the Nigerian Federation plus the Federal Capital Territory (FTC), Abuja.

Statement of the Problem

The responses of stakeholders in education in Bauchi, Jigawa and Niger states where Education Sector Planning (ESP) and ESOP have just been completed suggest that although the private sector is known to have been contributing to educational development, the status of their enrolments, classrooms and teachers is doubtful. If this uncertainty is not resolved in Nigeria as a whole it would question the reliability of subsequent education sector plans in the rest of the states. It therefore becomes pertinent to place in proper perspective the disparities in enrolments, classrooms and teachers by gender, between public and private pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria through this investigation

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What enrolment disparities exist between public and private pre-primary and primary schools?
2. How does classroom accommodation in pre-primary and primary schools compare with their private counterparts?
3. What gender disparities exist in the teaching staff of public and private pre-primary and primary schools?

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine, so as to place in proper perspective, the disparities in enrolments, classrooms and teachers between public and private pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria as a basis for discussion on access and management of education.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the enrolment disparities existing between public and private pre-primary and primary schools.
2. To investigate how classroom accommodation in public pre-primary and primary schools compare with their private counterparts.
3. To investigate the gender disparities existing in the teaching staff of public and private pre-primary and primary schools

Methodology

The descriptive research methodology was adopted in the study. Relevant data were extracted from a pool of secondary source data obtained from Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004 and 2005 of the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) (2006). The methodology employed latitudinal approach using 2005 as the baseline year. This cuts across all the 36 states of the federation plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The baseline year, 2005 was chosen for the fact that frontline states in the MDG long term education sector plan namely Bauchi, Jigawa, and Niger states, adopted 2005/2006 academic year as their baseline. The 10 year plan will therefore end by 2015. The same is likely to apply to other states joining them. The findings of the study would guide the determination of policy objectives in their education sector planning.

The population of the study was made up of all the 60,189 pre-primary and primary schools in the 36 states of the federation plus Abuja. Worthy of note is the fact that public pre-primary and primary schools are not separated as different schools. Rather a new policy of establishing pre-primary section in public primary schools which was implemented to increase primary school enrolment made them answer pre-primary and primary schools. They have the same administration and teaching staff but different enrolment records.

Relevant data (as already indicated) extracted from the pool of secondary source data in respect of enrolments, classrooms, and teachers from both public and private schools were organized and analyzed in respect of the research questions. Descriptive statistics using figures, percentages and ratios were employed in the analysis which was tabulated.

Literature Review

According to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria, access to quality education is the right of every Nigerian child (whether in public or private schools). Nigerian children are both in public and private schools with curricula guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. However, their management could influence the disparities being investigated in respect of enrolments, classrooms and teachers. The private sector is known to have been contributing immensely to the development of education in the country and should be considered in education sector planning for the MDGs to be attained.

Gender disparity which touches on the first target set for Education For All (EFA) (Federal Ministry OF Education, 2005) is an aspect of the investigation. To promote gender equity and empowerment of women which is the third MDG goal would require, at least, 50% estimated education sector contribution (Obanya, 2007). This expert view informs addressing gender disparities both in enrolment and teaching force starting from pre-primary and primary levels both in public and private schools as fundamental. To this end, Zhawa (2007), in respect of National Policy on Gender in Basic Education observes that the attainment of equality in gender is not only seen as an end in itself, being a human rights issue, but is also a pre-requisite for the achievement of national and international development goals - Education for All and MDGs targeted by the year 2015. Therefore establishing the disparities in enrolments, classrooms and teachers in public and private pre-primary and primary schools is very essential.

Disparity in pupil-teacher ratio (ptr) is also an aspect of the investigation. Given the widening scope of the curriculum in the era of globalization, the teacher has more work to do. This idea wins support from Edozie (2005) citing Maduwesi's (2001) view that the curriculum content is continually expanding and becoming overloaded as a result of additions and/ or integration of new materials and of global issues and concerns. Therefore it stands to reason to ascertain the teacher-pupil ratio in public and private pre-primary and primary schools with a view to making provision for such in educational planning and management. If teachers are in short supply resulting to high pupil- teacher ratio, this grossly affects content coverage and the overall attainment of curriculum objectives.

Pupil-class ratio (pcr) is related to pupil-teacher ratio (ptr). Although there may be a balance in pupil-teacher ratio, if there is not enough classroom accommodation, classrooms will be overcrowded. Even where there may be more than one teacher in the overcrowded classroom the situation would rub off on access to quality education as access does not stop at the level of a child getting to the

school and entering a classroom not minding the nature of the classroom. Therefore, knowledge of the pcr would inform arrangements for provision of more classrooms if and when the need arises.

Research Question 1

What enrolment disparities exist between public and private pre-primary and primary schools?

Table 1: Number of Schools and Percentage Enrolment by Gender in Pre-primary and Primary Schools.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO OF SCHOOLS	ENROLMENT						TOTAL
		PRE PRIMARY (PP)			PRIMARY(P)			
		MALE (M)	FEMALE (F)	TOTAL	MALE (M)	FEMALE (F)	TOTAL	
PUBLIC	50,871 (84.52%)	533,034 (51.49%)	502,144 (48.51%)	1,035,178	11,458,353 (55.38%)	9,230,419 (44.62%)	20,688,772	21,723,950
PRIVATE	9,318 (15.48%)	423,441 (51.32%)	401,625 (48.68%)	825,093	814,693 (51.61%)	763,942 (48.39%)	1,578,635	2,463,728
TOTAL	60,189	956,475 (51.44%)	903,796 (48.58%)	1,860,271 (7.7%)	12,273,046 (55.17)	9,994,361 (44.88%)	22,267,407 (92.29%)	24,127,678

Source (Adapted): Federal Ministry of Education (2006). Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004 and 2005.

From table one, total enrolment figures for public and private schools stood at 24,12678. Of this figures, public schools recorded as high as 21,723950 while private schools had as low as 2,463738 representing 92.29% and 7.71% respectively.

Gender disparity in enrolment was not so pronounced - almost imperceptible both within the school types (public or private) and between them, especially at the pre-primary level. For public pre-primary, while male enrolment was 533,034 (51.49%), that of female was 502,144 (48.51%). It followed a similar trend in private primary with 423,441 (51.32%) and 401,652 (48.68%) male and female respectively. A some worth similar trend was observed at the primary level where male and female enrolments were 11,458353 (55.38%) and 9230419 (44.62%) respectively for public schools; and 814,693 (51.61%) and 763942 (48.39%) male and female respectively for private schools.

Research Question 2

How does classroom accommodation in public pre-primary and primary schools compare with their private counterparts?

Table 2: Number of Schools, Classrooms, Enrolment and Pcr in Public and Private Schools.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO OF SCHOOLS.	NO OF CLASSROOMS	ENROLMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY (PP)	ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY (PP)	TOTAL ENROLMENT (PP+P)	PCR
PUBLIC	50,871	193,096	1,035,178	20,688,772	21,723,950	112.50
PRIVATE	9,318	61,223 (24.07%)	825,093	1,578,635	2,403,728	43.27
TOTAL	60,189	254,319	1,860,271	22,267,407	24,127,678	94.87

Source (Adapted): Federal Ministry of Education (2006). Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004 and 2005.

From table two, a total number of 254,319 classrooms existed in the 60,189 public and private pre-primary and primary schools. For the public schools, there were 193,096 classrooms for their 50,871 schools with 2,172,395 enrolment figures representing 75.93% of the total number while the private schools had 61,223 classrooms for their 93,184 schools representing 24.07% with enrolment figures of 2,403,728.

The pupil –class ratio (pcr) for all the schools (public and private) was 94.8. While the pcr for public schools was as high as 112.50, that of private schools was 43.27.

Research Question 3

What gender disparities exist in the teaching staff of public and private pre-primary and primary schools?

Table 3: Number of Schools, Classrooms, Teachers by Gender and Percentage, Enrolment, Ptr and Pcr

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO OF SCHOOLS	NO OF CLASSROOMS	TEACHERS					ENROLMENT	PTR	PCR
			M	F	TOTAL (M+F)	%M	%F			
PUBLIC	50,871	193,096	258,287	236,559	494,846	52.20	47.80	21,723,950	38.48	112.50
PRIVATE	9,318	61,223	37,060	68,266	105,326	35.19	64.81	2,403,728	22.61	43.27
TOTAL	60,189	254,319	295,347	303,47	600,172	49.21	50.79	24,127,678	40.20	94.87

Source (Adapted): Federal Ministry of Education (2006). Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004 and 2005.

From table three, there were 600,172 teachers in both public and private pre-primary and primary schools. Of this number 295,347 were males while 304,825 were females representing 49.21% and 50.79% respectively. For the public schools, of the 494,846 teachers, 258,287 were males while 236,559 were females representing 52.20% and 47.80% respectively. For the private schools, of the 105,

326 teachers there were 37,060 males and 68,266 female representing 35.19% and 64.81% respectively.

While there were slightly more male teachers (52.20%) than females (47.80%) in the public schools, the reverse was the case in the private schools with males having as low as 35.19% and females as high as 64.81% of the teaching force.

Summary of Findings

- ❖ There were 60, 189 public and private pre-primary and primary schools (50,871 public and 9,318 private).
- ❖ Total enrolment figures stood at 24,127,678, {21,723,950 (92.29%)- public and 2,463,738 (7.71%) –private }:
- ❖ Gender disparity in enrolment between public and private schools was not so pronounced at both levels, pre-primary and primary. For instance, public pre-primary male was 51.49% while private pre-primary was 51.32%; public primary female was 44.62% while private primary was female 48.39%.
- ❖ PCR for public schools was as high as 112.50 (approx. 113).
- ❖ PCR for private schools was 43.27 (approx. 43).
- ❖ Disparity between the number of male and female teachers in public schools was not much as 52.20% of the number were males and 47.80% females.
- ❖ There was wide disparity between the number of male and female teachers in the private schools: 35.19% were males and 64.81%, females.

Discussion of Findings with Implication for Access in Educational Management

There were 60,189 public and private pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria by 2005. Of this number 50, 871 were public while 9,318 were privately owned and managed. These figures represent 84.52% public sector and 15. 48% private sector contributions respectively to the number of schools at that level of education. Public schools recorded much higher enrolment than private schools at the rates of 92.29% and 7.71% respectively. The low number of schools with comparatively low enrolment by private schools suggests that the private sector needs to be encouraged to establish more schools and/ or expand the existing ones. This would help to increase access to education at the basic level.

Although gender disparity between public and private schools at this level was not pronounced, it is important to note that generally there were more girls enrolment in public primary schools in the southern states than in the northern states of the federation (FME, 2006) For instance, in the south, the following seven states have their girls enrolment as follows: Akwa Ibom – 51.36%, Anambra – 51.06% Bayelsa - 49.29%, Ebony 50.46%, Imo - 49.86%, Onodo-50. 81% and Rivers 50.70% - all above the overall mean girls enrolment of 44.62% from the study. These are compared with the following seven states in the North: Bauchi – 39.37%, Jigawa- 37.4%, Kastina- 35.49%, Kebbi – 33.41, Niger- 36.33%, Sokoto- 28.71 and

Zamfara- 28.08% - all below the overall mean girls enrolment (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). The result is that this trend goes on to higher levels of education with female enrolment even going down in the Northern states. However, in realization of this phenomenon, most states in the North have embarked on Girl Education Project (GEP) with a view to increasing girls access to education.

Pupil class ratio (Pcr) for public schools was as high as 112.50 as against 43.27 for private schools. The situation of pcr is a big challenge for public schools because it rubs off on access. Granted that accessibility relates to two geographic concepts of distance and location and is a good measure of the efficiency of any public good and service (Adeyemi and Gbadamosi, 2007) it is important to note that access to school or education does not end at the point of a child getting to school and entering the classroom. If the classroom is not conducive, perhaps because it is as overcrowded as 112.5 pcr, then it affects adversely the pupils' access to quality education.

A wide gender disparity was observed in the private schools in respect of teaching staff. While the male staff constituted 35.19% the female constituted 64.8%, a situation which endangers the match towards gender equity and parity! It is not worthy to recall that the National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007:6) states as follows: "The vision for gender in basic education is to promote gender sensitivity at all levels in pursuit of the National Policy on Education (NPE), and the attainment of EFA and MDGs targets". If the vision must be realized, it therefore becomes necessary that both enrolment and staffing issues should be addressed in terms of gender sensitivity, more so to achieve the EFA and MDGs target.

Still in relation to access, it is necessary to point out that by 2005 the number of unenrolled school age children (6-12 years) was 2,448,588 while the gross unenrolled (6-11 years) was 3,516,476 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). The worrying situation gives a clear picture of the need to intensify awareness spirit of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and in respect of Education for All.

The ugly situation of unenrolment of school age children may be as a result of factors beyond the control of parents such as poor terrain and school being too far away from the child's home which, in turn, calls for appropriate school mapping.

Conclusion

Disparities in public and private pre-primary and primary schools enrolment, classrooms and teachers in 2005 have been investigated using secondary source data from the Federal Ministry of Education. Major highlights covered 7.71% enrolment of the private sector which should be improved upon to increase access to education; gender disparities in enrolment is not pronounced; high pupil - class ratio of 112.50 for public schools as against 43.27 for private schools which offers the private schools learning advantage; and the wide disparities between male and female teachers (35.19% and 64.81% respectively).

The disparities discovered in relation to the provision and goals of the National Policy on Education (NPE), the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, National Policy on Gender, EFA and MDG provisions. If the recommendations made are implemented, it is hoped that remarkable success would be recorded.

Recommendations

The findings of the study and the discussion thereof with implications for access and educational management, the following recommendations are made.

There is need to encourage the private sector to establish and manage more pre-primary and primary schools by relaxing some of the conditions which may be too stringent for intending schools; proprietors and proprietresses. At the moment, the 15.48% contribution of the private sector representing their total number of schools (9,318 out of a total of 50,871) appears too low. If they establish more schools, that would help to increase access to education.

With most of the states in the North having their percentage mean girls enrolment in public primary schools below the overall national mean of 44.62% more incentives should be provided for school age girls. This would help to catch them young at the pre-primary and primary levels as this would encourage them to continue their education even at the higher levels.

The pupil class ratio (pcr) in the public schools which is as high as 112.50 should be reduced by building additional classroom blocks. This is important because it will improve access and management of education if the pcr is adequate. It will make the class more manageable, allow free movement, increase the health condition of the classroom as it would improve ventilation thereby enhancing teaching and learning.

The wide disparity between the male and female teachers (35.19% male and 64.8% female) in private pre-primary and primary schools should be addressed by making teaching job more attractive to the males to move close to gender parity and equity. Both males and females have their natural influence which should impact on the school child to make for a balanced character.

Since there were many unenrolled school age children, perhaps, due to factors beyond the control of parents/guardians, effort should be intensified to find out what is actually responsible for the worrying situation. Perhaps, more awareness creation and appropriate school mapping should be embarked upon especially in areas of poor terrain and schools far away from the children's home. This would improve access to education.

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